



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

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Provisional

President: Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia)

Members:

Algeria.....	Mr. Bendjama
China.....	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador.....	Mr. De La Gasca
France.....	Mr. Dharmadhikari
Guyana.....	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan.....	Mrs. Shino
Malta.....	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique.....	Mr. Afonso
Republic of Korea.....	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation.....	Mr. Polyanskiy
Sierra Leone.....	Mr. Kanu
Switzerland.....	Mr. Hauri
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America.....	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Linda Al Obahi, Senior Political Affairs and Mediation Adviser, Peace Track Initiative.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: It has now been over one 100 days since Ansar Allah commenced a wave of detentions, targeting Yemenis engaged in critical efforts related to humanitarian assistance, development, human rights, peacebuilding and education. I reiterate the Secretary-General's and the High Commissioner for Human Rights' unequivocal demand for Ansar Allah to immediately and unconditionally release all those detained. That includes United Nations personnel, members of civil society, staff of diplomatic missions, private-sector employees and individuals from minority religious communities. The continued detention of those individuals is a profound injustice to those who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of Yemen. Those detentions are shrinking civic space and negatively impacting humanitarian efforts critical to Yemenis. I call on Ansar Allah to do the right thing, to release those detained immediately and unconditionally and refrain from any further arbitrary detentions.

In these difficult circumstances, my primary objective remains the mediation of a sustainable and just resolution to the conflict in Yemen. Unfortunately, the ongoing war in Gaza, and the regional escalation associated with it, complicates my efforts. I echo Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo in her recent call to the Council for an immediate ceasefire, the immediate

and unconditional release of all remaining hostages and a massive scale-up of humanitarian aid to Gaza, as the war continues to inflict unspeakable suffering on hundreds of thousands and has extended its destabilizing effects across the broader region.

Those destabilizing effects have also affected Yemen negatively. Ansar Allah has continued attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, threatening regional stability and international maritime security. In response, the United States and the United Kingdom have continued to strike military targets inside of Yemen. I reiterate my concern over that escalatory trajectory and repeat my call for the parties to put Yemen first and to prioritize a settlement of the conflict in Yemen.

A development of particular concern is Ansar Allah's recent targeting of the Greek-flagged oil tanker *M.V. Delta Sounion*, which forced the abandonment of the ship and raises the imminent threat of a catastrophic oil spill and an environmental disaster of unprecedented scale. An oil spill of that scale would have dire consequences for both Yemen and the broader region. I therefore express my gratitude to those Member States, in particular from the region, that are currently working against the clock to bring about the urgently needed salvage operation, and I take this opportunity to strongly urge Ansar Allah to end their dangerous targeting of civilian vessels, in the Red Sea and beyond.

Allow me to turn now to the situation inside of Yemen. Unfortunately, the military situation is unimproved from my previous briefing (see S/PV.9707). We continue to witness worrisome military activities along the front lines and escalatory rhetoric between the warring sides. While levels of violence still remain below the pre-2022 truce period, clashes in Al-Dhale, Al-Hudaydah, Lahj, Ma'rib, Sa'da, Shabwa and Taiz are often resulting in unnecessary and tragic loss of life. The current dynamic is a stark reminder that the threat of a return to full-scale war remains ever-present.

On the economic front, the understanding reached between the parties on 23 July on economic de-escalation has staved off an acute crisis. Yet the status quo is untenable, and the economic situation of most Yemenis continues to decline. Adding to those challenges, the Yemeni people have been suffering from natural disasters that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, regardless of their alignment in the conflict. The recent severe flooding in Al-Hudaydah and Hajjah governorates is a tragic example of that, and

I extend my deepest condolences to the families that have lost loved ones in that disaster. The magnitude of that loss serves to underscore the importance of remaining focused on the needs of the Yemeni people. It is also crucial that Yemenis work collaboratively across conflict lines to respond to such emergencies with urgency and without allowing political considerations to impede life-saving efforts.

Despite — and indeed because of — the complex challenges before us, my Office remains resolute in its commitment to engage with all parties involved in the conflict to find immediate and longer-term solutions. In recent weeks, my colleagues and I have engaged in extensive discussions with key interlocutors in Aden, Taiz, Al-Dhale, Muscat, Riyadh, Cairo and London. Those engagements have been constructive across various areas, including economic matters, where we seek to use the 23 July understanding as a steppingstone to de-politicize the economy and shift the parties away from a zero-sum mindset to one of collaboration. We have also had constructive discussions on the release of conflict-related detainees, a vital issue that remains a top priority. While I commend the parties for their constructive engagement in recent discussions, I must stress that positive signals alone are insufficient. We expect that priority be given to the Yemeni people and that positive signals be followed by concrete actions that contribute to de-escalation and the advancement of peace.

Moving forward, I will continue engagements with unwavering determination. Specifically, my office will work to assist the parties in implementing the July understanding on de-escalation in the banking sector and Yemenia Airways, through continued engagement with relevant representatives and with the objective of convening the parties without preconditions to address important economic issues. We will also continue our regular communication with military commanders to ensure that any future ceasefire mechanism can function effectively.

In parallel, my office is also preparing for further consultations with political parties and civil society to promote a vision for an inclusive peace process in Yemen. To date, those consultations have gathered several hundred Yemenis, including women, youth, tribal leaders, human rights defenders and vulnerable groups. I remain deeply committed to such consultations to ensure that the voices of all segments of Yemeni society are heard, and in that regard, I look forward

to the briefing by Ms. Linda Al Obahi from the Peace Track Initiative.

The International Day of Peace, which we will honour on 21 September, highlights our shared responsibility to prioritize peace and promote stability in Yemen. That is not just a symbolic occasion; it is a call to action. The Yemeni people deserve the peace they have long been waiting for. I remain steadfast in my belief that, despite the numerous challenges we face, it is only through sustained and focused engagement on fundamental issues — such as the economy, a nationwide ceasefire and a comprehensive and inclusive political process — that Yemen can achieve lasting peace. Those elements were central to the commitments towards a road map made by the parties in December of last year, and they continue to be as vital now as they were then.

As always, I continue to count on the Council's steadfast support for my efforts, especially in seeking the release of detained United Nations personnel and also in refuting baseless accusations against the United Nations such as those made recently against UNICEF, UNESCO and other humanitarian partners. Those allegations have been firmly refuted by the United Nations. Let me be absolutely clear: the United Nations through all its agencies will continue to work relentlessly for the well-being of the Yemeni people. I count on the Council's support and unified approach in that regard. It is more important now than ever.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Msuya.

Ms. Msuya: I thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his update and for his tireless efforts for peace in Yemen.

I want to start by expressing once again our deep concern about the continued arbitrary detention of United Nations personnel, non-governmental organization staff and civil society representatives, among others, by the Houthi de facto authorities. Those colleagues have now been detained for more than three months. Four additional colleagues have remained in detention since 2021 and 2023. I reiterate in the strongest terms the Secretary-General's demand for their immediate and unconditional release. And I stress that while they remain deprived of their liberty, they must be treated with full respect for international humanitarian law and

human rights. That includes allowing them contact with their families and legal representatives.

We are continuing diplomatic efforts with the Houthi de facto authorities and other interlocutors to that end. We urge all Member States to exert any and all influence they have in support of those efforts.

Additionally, we strongly reject false allegations by the Houthi de facto authorities against humanitarians, including recent claims of interference in Yemen's education system. Those allegations threaten the safety of staff, further hinder the ability of the United Nations and its partners to serve the Yemeni people and must cease immediately.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is steadily deteriorating. Sixty-two per cent of surveyed households report they do not have enough food to eat. That is historically high. For the first time on record, three districts — two in Al-Hudaydah and one in Taiz — are facing extremely critical levels of malnutrition — Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 5. Four more districts are projected to reach that level by October. By the end of 2024, more than 600,000 children in Government of Yemen-controlled areas are estimated to be acutely malnourished, and approximately 118,000 are projected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition — a 34 per cent increase since 2023.

Time is of the essence if we are to prevent catastrophe. The United Nations, together with international and national non-governmental organizations, is committed to an integrated approach that addresses the main drivers of the crisis, including disease outbreaks and poor water, sanitation and hygiene services. Scaling up our response will require support from the international community and the cooperation of the parties.

Meanwhile, while needs are surging, attacks against vessels in the Red Sea continue to pose substantial environmental risks. In that regard, we are monitoring the salvage attempt of *MV Sounion* closely.

Yemen is also dealing with the effects of devastating rains, flooding and landslides, as well as an expanding cholera epidemic. More than half a million people have been affected by recent weather events. More than 270,000 have been displaced. The floods have contributed to the spread of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea. There have been more than

180,000 suspected cases across the country since the outbreak began.

The humanitarian community, notably our local partners on the front lines of the response, is working hard to provide support to those who have been impacted by those weather events. To date, 177,000 people have received some form of emergency assistance, including cash, food and shelter kits. However, that critical support is underfunded, limiting the supplies that are available — a challenge seen across the humanitarian response in Yemen.

As we approach the final quarter of the year, the coordinated humanitarian appeal is only 29 per cent funded. Food security and agriculture programming is only 12 per cent funded. Shelter support activities are only 16 per cent funded. And the rapid response mechanism — our main tool for responding to sudden onset emergencies — has received just \$6.4 million of the \$17.9 million needed. In response to the seriousness of the funding shortage, I have recently agreed to release \$20 million from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund for the response in Yemen. I should stress, however, that this allocation is insufficient to sustain the breadth of critical programmes that the people of Yemen rely on. This allocation does not obviate the need for Member States and other donors to increase their financial support for the humanitarian response.

In addition to adequate funding, an effective response in Yemen requires that parties comply with their obligations to facilitate humanitarian relief operations. It is worrisome therefore that access impediments and interference with humanitarian activities remain as prevalent as they are. I have already mentioned the abhorrent detention of humanitarian workers. In addition, during the first seven months of 2024, our humanitarian partners reported 572 access incidents across Yemen. Of these, direct interference in humanitarian activities by the parties accounted for 217 incidents — a noticeable increase from the 169 such incidents reported in 2023.

We have recently received assurances from the new Cabinet formed by the Houthi de facto authorities that they will work with the United Nations and the humanitarian community at large to address those challenges. We urge them to take concrete steps to fulfil these commitments, protect humanitarian workers,

release all those arbitrarily detained and facilitate humanitarian assistance.

In the meantime, we have taken steps to minimize the exposure of staff to risk in Houthi-controlled areas. To that end, the United Nations has recently undertaken a programme prioritization exercise. The result will be a narrower response focused on essential life-saving and life-sustaining activities. Broader activities, such as capacity-building and institutional support, will be deprioritized. United Nations agencies are now engaging with their donors on their respective programmes and next steps. It is our sincere hope that we can once again expand programming when the minimum requirements are met for the safety and security of United Nations personnel and other humanitarian workers.

As I have previously stated in the Council, the humanitarian community is committed to staying and delivering in Yemen — as best it can, for as long as it takes. To do that, we need the parties to respect international humanitarian law by immediately releasing our detained colleagues, protecting civilians and humanitarian workers and facilitating unimpeded humanitarian access.

But as we have also repeatedly stated, humanitarian assistance cannot provide a long-term solution. I urge the parties to turn aside from the path of conflict and prioritize progress on a sustainable peace. I once again urge the Council and all Member States to support them on that path.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Al Obahi.

Ms. Al Obahi (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to brief the Council today. My name is Linda Al Obahi. I am a Senior Political Affairs and Mediation Adviser, representing the Peace Track Initiative and the Women Solidarity Network. Our work focuses on supporting inclusive peacebuilding in Yemen and advocating women's rights.

My statement today will focus on the deterioration of women's rights in Yemen. Women and girls comprise 49 per cent of the 18.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. They face food insecurity, water shortages, disease and lack of access to basic life-saving services, such as health care and education, along with poverty, a lack of economic opportunities, systematic exclusion and suppression of their rights.

Some 6.3 million Yemeni women and girls are at heightened risk of gender-based violence, including domestic and sexual violence. Many have been forced to adapt and resort to extreme coping mechanisms, including forced and early marriage, with over 30 per cent of girls married by the age of 18. Women and girls from marginalized and minority groups, including Baha'i women, are more vulnerable to serious harm than others. Marginalized women and girls are increasingly subjected to acts of aggression, sexual violence, torture and exploitation.

Women's human rights, particularly their freedom of movement, are heavily restricted by all the warring parties in Yemen. The imposition of a mahram, dress codes and restrictions on freedom of expression, especially in Houthi-controlled areas, impedes women's ability to work, including in the humanitarian sector, as well as to access health care and education and to participate in public life.

Yemeni women human rights defenders and peacebuilders are often subjected to public defamation, violence and online threats. In the past few years, the Peace Track Initiative has supported and protected more than 150 women human rights defenders, 90 per cent of whom fled from Houthi-controlled areas.

During this conflict, all parties have carried out enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests. United Nations experts on Yemen have consistently documented arbitrary detention, physical and mental torture, rape and forced confessions of women and girls, particularly in Houthi prisons, with some detainees as young as 14 years of age. Local Yemeni women's organizations have further documented brutal forms of sexual violence during detention, such as mutilation and forced abortion. Women detainees have been kept incommunicado and, in some cases, they are kept in solitary confinement. Women who have completed jail sentences are denied release without a male guardian and are deprived of their legal rights, including communication with lawyers and family members.

Releasing detained women must be a priority in all negotiations, as their suffering is often overlooked and compounded by violence, neglect and societal shame. The efforts of local women leaders and mediators to support women detainees are curtailed by significant impediments, including access and resource constraints. It is deeply concerning that no women are part of the prisoner and detainee exchange committees and that

women are almost entirely excluded from the lists of those to be released.

Yemeni civil society organizations have documented the detention of at least 3,600 individuals since 2017, often without legal proceedings, proper warrants, charges or communication with their families. However, the recent Houthi crackdown, starting 31 May, targeting individuals working for the United Nations and international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and accusations of espionage, is unprecedented. The United Nations has documented the arbitrary detention of at least 60 Yemeni civilians — including six women, some with their children and spouses — but we are concerned that the number is likely much higher. Furthermore, United Nations and NGO men and women staff who remain in areas under Houthi control have been instructed to conduct business as usual, without proper and adequate safety measures, placing them at further risk. Support for detainees' families has been inadequate, with limited information, financial resources and psychological support.

These blatant violations of human rights and international humanitarian law appear to be part of a broader strategy to suppress the remaining civic and political rights in Houthi-controlled territories, cause significant fear and threaten humanitarian operations in Yemen. Today I am here to convey not only the gravity of those violations, but also the profound disappointment felt by the majority of male and female Yemenis regarding the tepid international response to those developments. I urge United Nations agencies and international organizations operating in Yemen to strongly demand the immediate and unconditional release of the men and women detainees and to do much more to defend them and publicly address the Houthis' unfounded allegations of espionage levelled against some of them. Most importantly, I urge the international community to act decisively to protect humanitarian efforts and operations in Yemen, which are so critical for the lives of millions of Yemenis. That must include setting clear red lines on actions regarding aid distribution and engagement with civil society while consistently upholding and respecting human rights and international humanitarian law as well as holding the Houthis accountable for their actions.

Yemenis are exhausted by the ongoing conflict and desperately seek security, peace and stability.

Deep divisions and mistrust among Yemeni parties, compounded by external interference and attempts to pursue unilateral agreements, continue to impede the achievement of a political solution. Despite those challenges, there is hope for a breakthrough in resolving the Yemeni crisis. The Special Envoy's efforts to advance negotiations towards an inter-Yemeni political process, while addressing urgent humanitarian and economic challenges, represent the most viable path to realizing stability. Although consulting with women's representatives is a positive step in the right direction, it might remain symbolic without the opportunity for women to meaningfully influence the United Nations-led peace process.

For the first time in 24 years, there are no women holding government positions, nor are they part of the Presidential Leadership Council. Women are nominally represented, constituting 10 per cent of the consultation and reconciliation committee, 14 per cent of the economic team and 22 per cent of the legal team supporting the Presidential Leadership Council as advisers. They are entirely absent from the presidential committee recently formed to address the demands of the people of Hadhramaut. Furthermore, women are completely absent from peace process negotiation committees, including those under United Nations auspices, such as the committees on prisoner exchange, security, the army and Taiz, despite statements and resolutions by the Council calling for women's meaningful participation. Yemeni women leaders and civil society have worked to combat that exclusion by developing a feminist peace road map. Despite those attempts, and more than a decade after the adoption of a minimum 30 per cent quota for women's political participation during the National Dialogue Conference, we remain sidelined.

I would like to conclude by calling on the Security Council to take the following actions.

It should urge all parties to establish a comprehensive, inclusive, just and sustainable peace with transitional justice and human rights at its centre. All negotiations must ensure the meaningful participation of women, youth, minorities, people with disabilities, marginalized groups, victims and survivors of rights abuses, human rights defenders and civil society. Women must be included in all decision-making processes, including mediation and ceasefire efforts, and in all United Nations-supported peace committees, starting with the

implementation of the minimum 30 per cent quota for women's representation.

The Council should call upon all parties to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and ensure accountability for all crimes committed. I urge members to reject all forms of general immunities or selective justice.

The Council should demand that all parties respect the human rights of women, including by lifting restrictions on their movement, ending the targeting of women human rights defenders and immediately ceasing all acts of gender-based violence.

It should condemn all threats to male and female humanitarian workers and demand the immediate and unconditional release of all those who have been arbitrarily detained, including women, as well as all staff of United Nations and non-governmental organizations. Their human rights must be respected, and they must have access to their families and legal representatives and receive comprehensive support.

Yemen is in a state of stagnation — neither at war nor at peace. Our decades-long suffering will continue through generations to come if the conflict does not end. It is time for peace.

The President: I thank Ms. Al Obahi for her briefing.

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

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I am grateful to Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for their briefings. I also thank Ms. Al Obahi for her vital insights, which serve as a timely reminder of the importance of engagement with civil society and the Yemeni community, especially women, in order to achieve long-term stability and peace in Yemen. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in our meeting today.

Let me make three points.

First, I join the briefers in highlighting the plight of United Nations and non-governmental organization workers as well as staff and former staff of diplomatic missions who remain in Houthi captivity. It has been more than three months since their detention. That is three months of families being torn apart by the unprovoked and arbitrary act and three months of reducing the humanitarian community's capacity to

be able to fully support Yemenis in need. There is no justification for that. We once again call on the Houthis to immediately and unconditionally release those detained.

Secondly, I join Ms. Msuya in highlighting the severe constraints on humanitarian access in Yemen, especially in Houthi-controlled areas. The reckless actions of the Houthis are further restricting an already complex and hostile operating environment, making it almost impossible to get aid to those who need it. We must all be clear about the importance of safe and effective humanitarian access, so that we can continue to deliver critical, life-saving support to the Yemeni people.

Thirdly, we once again reiterate the Council's call for the Houthis to cease their dangerous and illegal attacks on maritime shipping. The recent attack on the *MV Delta Sounion* is a clear example of the Houthis' disregard for the catastrophic environmental and economic consequences of their actions for both Yemen and for the region.

We call for the immediate cessation of arms supplies to Houthis. The continued supply of advanced weapons, which enables those attacks, shows complete disregard for the United Nations arms embargo.

To conclude, the United Kingdom is grateful for Special Envoy Grundberg's efforts to facilitate economic dialogue, de-escalate tensions and preserve space for a future peace process. We are unwavering in our support for his efforts to secure an inclusive, sustainable peace in Yemen, and we continue to call on all parties to de-escalate tensions and preserve space for negotiations under United Nations auspices. Rather than pursuing reckless attacks and the detention of innocent civilians, we urge the Houthis to prioritize the needs of Yemenis by engaging with peace process negotiations.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Hans Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya and Linda Al Obahi of the Peace Track Initiative for their very relevant briefings.

(*spoke in English*)

"In the blink of an eye, the storm came and took everything."

(spoke in French)

That testimony by Ali, the father of a family already displaced by the conflict in Yemen, illustrates the impact of the unprecedented severe weather that has hit the country in recent weeks. Thousands of people have been displaced, and much essential infrastructure has been destroyed. Such weather events, exacerbated by climate change, aggravate the humanitarian situation. They also contribute to acute regional tensions that threaten the United Nations-supported political process. I would like to emphasize three essential points necessary to protect the Yemeni people and enable them to face those challenges.

First, the parties must refrain from any action that could worsen the environmental situation. In the Red Sea, the repeated attacks on oil tankers must cease. The repeated attacks on the tanker *MV Delta Sounion* in recent weeks are particularly shocking. Its drifting wreck, carrying some 150,000 tons of oil, is reportedly still burning. We call on all parties to ensure its prompt and unconditional salvage and safe berthing in order to avert a major humanitarian and environmental disaster. The Security Council must remain seized of this issue, just as it was unanimous in its support for the rescue of the *FSO SAFER* tanker. We therefore urge all parties to prioritize de-escalation and to choose the diplomatic route. In that regard, we call for the immediate release of the crew of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and the return of the vessel, as demanded in resolution 2722 (2024).

Secondly, it is crucial that humanitarian operations on the ground run smoothly. It is imperative for the population to have unconditional access throughout the country to the humanitarian assistance they require. Humanitarian aid must not be instrumentalized. Humanitarian personnel must be protected, as required by international humanitarian law and as stated in resolution 2730 (2024). In that respect, we reiterate the Organization's call, expressed once again today, for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained United Nations and humanitarian personnel. The efforts of the United Nations and other humanitarian actors on behalf of the population and to promote human rights must not be hindered, but rather facilitated. We welcome the return of the offices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the United Nations. We hope that that is the first of other positive steps to come.

Finally, only a political solution to the conflict will make it possible to meet the needs of the Yemeni people. Switzerland calls for the gains achieved in the peace talks in Yemen to be preserved and for peace talks to continue under the aegis of the United Nations. We reiterate our full support for Special Envoy Grundberg and his team. We welcome their efforts to ensure the full implementation of the agreement on banking measures and the transport sector.

The storm facing the people of Yemen has multiple, closely related facets. The current situation should prompt us to redouble our efforts and remain seized of the situation. In that respect, the Yemeni people can count on Switzerland's full support.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council plus (A3+), namely, Algeria, Guyana, Mozambique, and my own country, Sierra Leone.

We thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya and Ms. Linda Al Obahi for their comprehensive briefings and insights on the security and humanitarian situations in Yemen. We also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

At the outset, the A3+ reiterates its call for the immediate release of all United Nations staff and other aid workers who are being arbitrarily detained in Yemen. The illegal detention of United Nations staff and humanitarian aid workers in Yemen is a violation of international humanitarian law. We strongly condemn those attacks and call for the perpetrators to be held accountable for their unacceptable acts. The A3+ is deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation and the dire humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which has shown no signs of abating. This month, September, marks 10 years since the war in Yemen broke out — a decade of instability and immense hardship that has had a profound impact on millions of lives. Over those 10 years, Yemen has faced immense challenges, from political and security instability to severe economic decline and devastating humanitarian crisis. Yemen has been a battleground for competing factions, with devastating consequences for its people. The continued instability has drastically shrunk economic activity and has severely impeded the flow of essential goods and services. The flow of urgently needed humanitarian aid has been further impeded by

bureaucratic barriers, exacerbating the already dire conditions for millions of Yemenis.

As we reflect on that brutal reality for the country, it is important to acknowledge the resilience and enduring spirit of the people who, despite immense adversity, continue to hope for a better future. We must renew our commitment to finding a lasting resolution to the conflict. As we heard from our briefers, the condition of Yemeni civilians remains grim — a situation that is made even more precarious, given the intensification of attacks by the Houthis in the Red Sea and the broader region. As we meet today, the challenges to advancing the United Nations road map and efforts to end the suffering of Yemeni people appear intractable. Nevertheless, we must persevere. With that in mind, we would like to emphasize the following four points.

First, we are alarmed by the acts of the Houthis, who continue to jeopardize the active maritime ecosystem in the Red Sea and impede political solutions for a lasting peace. The escalating attacks on oil tankers, some of which have been set ablaze or sunk, pose significant economic, security and environmental threats to Yemen and the wider region. One such vessel is the *MV Delta Sounion*, and we note the efforts to salvage it and prevent an ecological disaster posed by its cargo of 1 million barrels of crude oil.

Those attacks are a clear signal that the Houthis are tightening their grip on commercial traffic in the Red Sea. The uptick of such attacks has posed a sustained threat to commercial activities in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. That has significantly reduced the volume of traffic through the Suez Canal and Bab Al-Mandeb Strait — vital arteries for international trade. If left unchecked, those actions could potentially destabilize the broader region and disrupt one of the world's most significant waterways. Those egregious actions have already adversely affected political discussions on bringing the country to a peaceful path. We therefore call on the Houthis to cease their destructive actions and to respect and implement all Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015), which demands, *inter alia*, that the Houthis “refrain from any provocation or threats to neighbouring States” (*para. 1 (e)*). The A3+ strongly believes that a prompt response and diligent action are needed to address the wider conflicts in the region, and the urgency of a ceasefire in Gaza cannot be overstated, as it remains key to the stability of the Middle East.

Secondly, we continue to express grave concern about the arbitrary detention of United Nations staff members and aid workers by the Houthis. For more than three months, United Nations staff and other humanitarian aid workers have been targeted and held captive by the Houthi *de facto* authorities. No access has been given to verify the well-being of the individuals being held, and they remain without legal protection. The sacrifices made by the United Nations and humanitarian personnel delivering critical aid in a country ravaged by war have been a lifeline to millions of Yemenis. The A3+ condemns those deliberate violations of international law. We reiterate our call for the unconditional and immediate release of all United Nations staff and humanitarian personnel detained by the Houthis. We urge the Houthis to ensure the safety and security of all humanitarian and United Nations personnel.

Thirdly, we reiterate our call for increased financial and logistical support for aid efforts in Yemen, as aid workers are dealing with one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Reports from United Nations agencies indicate that more than half of the country's population — more than 18.2 million people — require some form of humanitarian assistance, including the 17 million people facing severe food shortages. Limited access to clean water and sanitation has also resulted in a growing cholera outbreak. The impact of adverse weather events, including violent windstorms and floods from torrential rain, has been severe, claiming lives and halting the distribution of life-saving aid and essential supplies. The scale of the disaster demands our urgent attention and a swift, coordinated response to alleviate the suffering of those affected.

We urge United Nations agencies, donor countries and international organizations to fully fund and mobilize resources for the 2024 Yemen humanitarian response plan, which is targeted, *inter alia*, towards urgent emergency aid, the provision of essential services and cash injection interventions. The current level of aid falls short of addressing the magnitude of the crisis. It is imperative that we mobilize the necessary resources to provide comprehensive relief and support to the affected populations. Our collective response must match the scale of the disaster to mitigate its impacts and help Yemen to recover and rebuild. We emphasize the importance of targeted support towards emergency agricultural assistance, in collaboration with the relevant agencies, to support vulnerable rural

communities engaged in farming, fishing and livestock-rearing with cash assistance, the rehabilitation of productive infrastructure and other means of restoring and protecting livelihoods.

Fourthly, we express grave concern about the lack of progress in reaching agreement on a political road map. We are of the firm belief that dialogue and diplomatic efforts by the United Nations and regional actors are the surest path to lasting peace in Yemen. Influential regional actors should continue to engage all Yemeni parties towards the revitalization of a Yemeni-led and -owned political dialogue. The Yemeni people need to see an end to the current military operations in Yemen, including maritime military operations. In that regard, we commend the exceptional efforts of the Special Envoy for his commitment to addressing instability in Yemen and express our full support to him and his team.

In conclusion, the A3+ is aware of the complexity of the crisis in Yemen and certainly mindful that there are no quick fixes. However, the current stalemate on political talks provides little hope for the people of Yemen. We therefore urge all parties to engage in good faith to relaunch an inclusive political engagement process, including the recent diplomatic engagements in Aden, Muscat and Riyadh, to bring an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people. The A3+ remains committed to supporting a Yemeni-owned and -led political process that will lead to lasting peace, for the good of the Yemeni people who have suffered for far too long.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Joyce Msuya, for their briefings. We also listened carefully to Ms. Linda Al Obahi.

The situation in that country, as was affirmed by today's speakers, is steadily deteriorating. We are still failing to revitalize a Yemeni settlement. Internal infighting is exacerbated by the region-wide turbulence that is directly affecting developments in Yemen.

However, the fact that a large-scale escalation has thus far been averted proves that the Yemeni stakeholders are still interested in pursuing dialogue. It is important to support their willingness in order to prompt them to seek mutually acceptable solutions and to warn them against taking new abrupt steps, including

in the socioeconomic sphere, which in the long run could generate grave political risks and make the lives of ordinary Yemenis all the more difficult.

We trust that Mr. Grundberg will pursue his proactive efforts to revitalize the negotiation process, including through the launching of a road map involving all Yemeni protagonists, including the Ansar Allah movement, and leading players in the region. We also recall that the legal framework for a Yemeni settlement must be updated, over time.

Like our other colleagues on the Security Council, we are concerned about the situation of the 13 local United Nations employees detained in Yemen earlier in June. No matter how serious the allegations against them are, they should be provided with the necessary medical and humanitarian assistance and have the opportunity to communicate with their families. We consider any actions that violate the privileges and immunities of United Nations agencies and personnel to be unacceptable.

Such actions are unacceptable, however, not only in Yemen but also in other parts of the world — no double standards can be permitted. In that regard, we cannot comprehend how some Council members on the one hand insist on demanding that the Houthis release the detainees but, on the other, shamefully ignore what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank. Why do they fail to make similar demands of Israel, which has detained staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) without any compelling justification? Why are they not demanding their release? If West Jerusalem says that it needs to carry out further investigations into those detainees, then we all should insist that the deaths of humanitarian workers in Gaza and the West Bank be thoroughly investigated as well. Let us recall that during the current escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at least 286 humanitarian workers have been reported killed, 209 of whom are United Nations staff — these are mostly UNRWA staff, who represent 205 of those deaths. Yesterday there was another Israeli strike on a school that resulted in six further deaths of UNRWA staff. And that is just the humanitarian personnel.

Journalists have also increasingly fallen victim, 160 of whom have been killed, as have medical personnel, 500 of whom have died. However, to date, we have received no information regarding justice for those victims. We do not even know if any investigations are

under way. We call on Council members to demonstrate unity and consistency in that regard as well.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen has hit new lows. The number of starving people, including children, is growing. More than half a million people have been affected by devastating storms and flooding, especially on the west coast of the country. The cholera epidemic continues to rage, with hundreds of thousands infected, and hundreds of people have died. At the same time, insufficient funding severely limits the ability of humanitarian workers to curb the spread of the disease. The year is drawing to a close, but the United Nations humanitarian plan for Yemen is still only 29 per cent funded. The situation is critical and requires joint efforts by the entire international community. At the same time, we must all bear in mind the need to address the basic issues of maintaining peace and security, both within the country and in the region as a whole.

What is imperative here is, inter alia, ending the hostilities in the Red Sea. That, however, is impeded by the focus of the United States and the United Kingdom on continuing military confrontation with Ansar Allah. Instead of seeking effective ways to quell the current unprecedented escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which the Houthis have identified as the reason for their actions, the United States and the United Kingdom have resorted to aggressive actions against sovereign Yemen, further aggravating the situation.

I would like to be clear: we are not justifying the actions of Ansar Allah in the Red Sea. Russia condemns attacks on commercial vessels and calls for restraint concerning measures that violate the freedom of international navigation, as well as for the release of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew, who have been in detention for almost 10 months. We are also extremely concerned about the fate of the *MV Delta Sounion* tanker, which is adrift off the coast of Yemen, as the fire on board has still not been extinguished.

Nothing I have mentioned, however, can justify the gross violations of Yemen's sovereignty and strikes against its territory carried out by the Western coalition. There is a real risk that, if the situation remains unchanged, the results of the long and painstaking mediation efforts to find solutions acceptable to Yemenis on the conditions for the relaunch of the Yemeni political process will be jeopardized. We are convinced that the Council should do everything possible to avoid such a scenario.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): First and foremost, I would like to thank Hans Grundberg, Joyce Msuya and Linda Al Obahi for their briefings on the situation in Yemen. I would also like to welcome the presence among us of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

The Houthis must immediately cease their destabilizing activities in the Red Sea. Those attacks undermine the freedom of navigation, negatively affect our security interests and fuel the regional escalation, for which the Houthis bear a heavy responsibility, despite the resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

The Security Council, however, clearly condemned the attacks, notably by adopting resolutions 2722 (2024) and 2739 (2024). States have the right to defend their vessels against those attacks, in accordance with international law. We call on the Houthis to put an end to those attacks and immediately release the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew, who have been detained since November 2023. France strongly condemns the Houthi attack against the oil tanker *MV Delta Sounion* and its crew, which risks causing an environmental catastrophe. It also calls on Iran to cease its support for destabilizing actions in the region.

France reiterates its commitment to regional stability and the security of its partners in the region. It will remain engaged within the framework of the European Union's security and defence policy Operation Aspidos to protect maritime security and freedom of navigation, in accordance with international law and together with its partners.

Secondly, the Houthis must respect international humanitarian law and guarantee safe and unhindered humanitarian access. The restrictions imposed by the Houthis on humanitarian operations, the detentions of humanitarian personnel and disinformation only worsen the situation, at a time when civilians depend on the humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners. France condemns the arbitrary detentions of United Nations staff and local and international non-governmental organizations and demands their immediate release. Those detentions are disgraceful, run counter to international humanitarian law and are hindering the delivery of assistance and the emergency response, in particular with regard to the cholera epidemic. The Houthis must stop taking Yemeni civilians hostage. Yemenis are the

primary victims of the restrictions Houthis impose on humanitarian operations.

An urgent humanitarian response is needed in view of the worsening food situation and the floods that have affected the country, resulting in the displacement more than 200,000 people.

On the security front, there must be a complete and lasting cessation of hostilities to avoid any resumption of conflict on the ground. The Houthis must return to the negotiating table led by the Special Envoy, whose work is essential. France reiterates its full support for Mr. Grundberg, in particular in implementing his political road map. It supports the principle that the effective participation of Yemeni women in the negotiations must be guaranteed.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the briefers for their briefings and welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

China has always maintained that the Yemen issue should be resolved through diplomacy and political means. All relevant parties should stay committed to the overall direction of a political solution, make efforts to meet each other halfway and continue to accumulate consensus, so as to jointly promote the Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned comprehensive political process and resolve conflicts and disputes through dialogue and negotiation. China supports the mediation efforts of Special Envoy Grundberg and expects all parties, in particular those countries with influence on Yemen, to play a constructive role. In that regard, we call on the Yemeni Government and the Houthis to jointly promote the implementation of their agreement on financial and aviation issues.

We are concerned about the attacks on the oil tanker *MV Delta Sounion* in the Red Sea and a possible consequent oil spill and potential ecological and environmental impacts. We once again call on the Houthis to respect the rights of navigation of all merchant vessels in the Red Sea in accordance with international law, stop causing disturbances and maintain the safety of shipping lanes in the Red Sea. The relevant parties should exercise restraint, stop any action that exacerbates tensions and work to de-escalate the situation.

At present, many governorates in Yemen have been stricken by severe floods, making the already dire

humanitarian situation even worse. The international community should increase its humanitarian assistance efforts for Yemen. China is seriously concerned about the detention of United Nations personnel in Yemen, and it calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations personnel.

The tension in the Red Sea is a manifestation of the spillover of the Gaza conflict. It has been 11 months since the outbreak of the conflict in Gaza, and we have yet to see any hope for peace. The negative impacts of the conflict are fuelling regional turmoil. China once again calls for the comprehensive implementation of all relevant Council resolutions and an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza. China supports the Council in taking further actions to put an end to the fighting and save lives. We are ready to work with all parties to make unremitting efforts to find a political solution to the Yemeni issue and maintain peace and stability in the Middle East.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Al Obahi for their statements, and I welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting.

I would like to begin by reiterating Ecuador's support for Special Envoy Grundberg's efforts to ensure de-escalation in Yemen in the midst of heightened regional tensions. Undoubtedly, the dialogues held by the Special Envoy with different national and regional actors on the most recent events and their implications will contribute to achieving that objective.

It is imperative that the Council maintain a consistent and unified message on the importance of resuming an inclusive Yemeni-led political transition that preserves the truce and makes a sustainable and lasting peace possible. That message of unity should also be reflected in the condemnation of the unjustified Houthi attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, which disrupt global trade and threaten to cause environmental catastrophes, as was the case with the attack on the *MV Delta Sounion*.

The humanitarian and development situation in Yemen is critical. More than 18 million people, including 4.5 million displaced persons, are suffering the consequences of economic instability, the lack of basic services and infrastructure and deteriorating living conditions. The levels of food insecurity and malnutrition continue to rise and are exacerbated by the

cholera outbreak and the impact of torrential rains and flooding in many areas of the country.

Humanitarian organizations are working tirelessly to address those challenges. According to a recent report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in the first five months of 2024, an average of 2.7 million people per month received humanitarian aid. In order to carry out their work, the safety of humanitarian workers must be guaranteed, and they must not, under any circumstances, be subject to attacks, detention or imprisonment in the course of their duties, in accordance with international humanitarian law and resolutions adopted by the Council, including resolution 2730 (2024). In that regard, the humanitarian workers arbitrarily detained by the Houthis must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Finally, my country reiterates its concern about the lack of funding to cover the most critical humanitarian needs. Sustained and coordinated support for humanitarian organizations is crucial to save the lives of millions of Yemenis.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Al Obahi for their briefings.

Over three months have passed since Houthi militants rounded up scores of United Nations staff, all of whom were working to bring life-saving assistance to the Yemeni people at the time of their detention. We reiterate the demands of Secretary-General Guterres and the Special Envoy for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees, including 11 United States diplomatic staff members held since 2021.

The Houthis continue to mistreat these detainees and seek to exploit them through the release of so-called confession videos. This shameless propaganda is appalling and should be universally condemned. Houthi intimidation tactics have also increasingly focused on the remaining Yemeni staff of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Humanitarian workers in the Houthi-controlled parts of Yemen are increasingly worried about their safety. There is absolutely no justification for threatening and intimidating United Nations workers and others carrying out their lawful humanitarian work. We believe the time is now for the United Nations to implement adjustments to its non-life-saving programming and operations in Yemen so as to ensure the safety and security of all personnel.

The Houthis' continued attacks against ships in the Red Sea and surrounding waterways also continue to threaten regional peace and security, as well as international navigational freedoms. These continued unjustified actions have already resulted in the tragic deaths of innocent mariners and continue to threaten the lives of Member States' citizens and interests of the international community. Every time the Houthis launch an attack, they not only threaten the lives of mariners from many nations, but also risk creating an environmental catastrophe from damage to oil tankers and other ships carrying hazardous materials.

The Houthis have made clear that they care only about themselves. They are willing to destroy the fishing industry and regional ecosystems that Yemen and other communities in the region rely on for their livelihoods, just as they have undermined the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to the region. The attack on the *MV Delta Sounion*, which holds over a million barrels of crude oil, is only the latest in a long line of examples. The Houthis not only struck the ship, but they set off secondary explosions and posted the videos online. They further threatened salvage crews, complicating an already challenging operation and risking the lives of more mariners.

That is unacceptable. The flouting of resolution 2722 (2024) cannot go unanswered. It is vital that every member of the Council condemn the Houthis' escalations and demand that they allow the *MV Delta Sounion* to be towed from the area without further delays. And Council members should make clear to the Houthis' backers in Tehran that they hold Iran responsible for arming and enabling the Houthis, in contravention of resolution 2216 (2015), to carry out reckless attacks such as this one. Again, it is troubling that some Council members remain silent in the face of such obvious threats to shared global interests.

Turning back to the situation inside Yemen, our thoughts remain with the families of those who lost their lives and with those now struggling to rebuild as they cope with unimaginable loss from the recent flooding in Yemen. Amid these latest humanitarian challenges, additional support and technical assistance from the United States and other international partners are crucial. The United States has already supported the efforts of the International Organization for Migration to help people in internally displaced persons camps in Ma'rib, and we stand ready to help more to ensure the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons.

This is not the time for political posturing and disunity. It is time for the Council to work together to address the political, security and humanitarian challenges that plague Yemenis.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I too thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Al Obahi for their briefings.

Malta remains deeply concerned about the well-being of United Nations personnel, members of civil society and staff of non-governmental organizations and diplomatic missions who continue to be arbitrarily detained by the Houthis for more than three months. We condemn those detentions and demand the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees. We reiterate that their human rights must be fully respected and they must be able to contact their families and legal representatives. We equally condemn the baseless accusations made by the Houthis against United Nations agencies in recent days that further threaten the safety of United Nations staff and humanitarian partners working to serve the people of Yemen.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen remains dire, and these arbitrary arrests will continue to have far-reaching ramifications on the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in desperate need. We stress that humanitarian workers must be allowed to operate in a safe environment and given unimpeded access to assist those in need throughout Yemen.

Let us not forget that 18 million Yemenis, more than half of which are children, require humanitarian assistance. The vast majority of them suffer acute food insecurity, and more than half are children. Malnutrition has worsened from the combined effect of the spread of diseases, a shortage of nutritious food, a lack of drinking water and broader economic decline. That has also led to a surge in the number of children under five suffering acute malnutrition or wasting, which has devastating long-term impacts on their development.

On top of that, flooding has taken the lives of nearly 100 people, damaging tens of thousands of homes and displacing thousands of families across the country. This disaster has compounded the suffering of millions, including the 4.5 million people internally displaced. Contaminated water has also led to a surge in cases of cholera, with a health-care infrastructure unable to tackle the spread of the disease. We appeal to the international community to urgently scale up financial support for Yemen's humanitarian response plan, which,

as we heard again today from Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya, remains drastically underfunded.

Malta remains deeply concerned about the increased tensions and insecurity in the region, which risk disrupting ongoing mediation efforts. We urge the parties to return to the negotiating table in order to engage on commitments made to the United Nations road map. Those include the implementation of a nation-wide ceasefire, improving living conditions and engaging in preparations for the resumption of an inclusive Yemeni-led and -owned political process under United Nations auspices.

An inclusive political process requires the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of diverse women in all peace and security decision-making processes and in the humanitarian response. As we heard from Ms. Al Obahi, the mahram requirement continues to impede women's ability to work, travel and access health care. Women-led civil society organizations, journalists and women human rights defenders face escalating restrictions, threats, arbitrary detentions and forced disappearance.

In parallel, we also hope to see greater progress on the economic front to strengthen Yemen's currency and economy.

In conclusion, we note with deep worry and regret that the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea continue to pose a significant threat. We condemn the attack on *MV Delta Sounion* oil tanker, which could lead to catastrophic environmental consequences for the region. We call for the Houthis to immediately cease actions against merchant and commercial shipping and call for full respect for resolutions 2722 (2024) and 2739 (2024).

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for their informative briefings. Our appreciation also goes to Ms. Al Obahi for her sobering testimony on urgent humanitarian and economic challenges.

As the briefers confirmed, Yemen is experiencing multidimensional instability, coupled with a severe humanitarian situation that has been worsened by flooding. With that in mind, I wish to highlight three points.

First, Japan unequivocally condemns the series of destabilizing actions by the Houthis, including their continued attacks against commercial shipping in and around the Red Sea. In particular, we are appalled

that the *MV Delta Sounion*, a tanker carrying more than a million barrels of crude oil, caught fire and was abandoned after the recent multiple strikes by the Houthis. Given the possible risk of an oil spill, the situation remains concerning and we must be vigilant. Japan strongly demands that the Houthis not interrupt the ongoing salvage operation. The Houthis must immediately stop their threats to maritime security, the cornerstone of international trade, and unconditionally release the 25 crew members of the *MV Galaxy Leader*, who have been held for nearly 10 months, in accordance with resolutions 2722 (2024) and 2739 (2024). International efforts are necessary to put a halt to the Houthis' reckless behaviour. In that regard, our Foreign Minister recently held a call with her Iranian counterpart and called on Iran to exercise its influence over the Houthis. Moreover, we have a collective responsibility to prevent any further illicit transfers of weapons to the Houthis, consistent with resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2624 (2022). Japan supports initiatives to strengthen the arms embargo mechanism.

Secondly, Japan is outraged by the Houthis' continued arbitrary detention for more than three months of United Nations personnel and members of civil society, national and international non-governmental organizations, diplomatic missions and private sector entities. We are seriously concerned about their well-being and reiterate our demand that the Houthis immediately and unconditionally release all those detained and never again conduct any such detentions. The humanitarian situation in Yemen is dire, with more than 18 million people suffering from food insecurity, epidemics, displacement, damaged infrastructure and economic collapse. The United Nations and its partners are working tirelessly to address those challenges. The safety and the freedom of movement of humanitarian workers must be assured.

Thirdly, but not least, Japan deeply regrets that the peace process has made little progress amid regional escalation, even as the situation in Yemen is getting more and more fragile. It is imperative to restore an environment conducive for the peace talks. Japan urges both parties to prioritize the interests of the Yemeni people, especially women and girls, and engage in a sustained dialogue as the foundation for achieving a lasting and inclusive peace in Yemen. We continue to support the critical mediation work of the Special Envoy to that end.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would also like to extend my gratitude to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya and Ms. Linda Al Obahi for their insightful briefings. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen at this meeting.

The Republic of Korea remains deeply concerned about the ongoing interconnected problems in Yemen, and my delegation would like to make the following points today.

First, we strongly condemn the ongoing Houthi attacks against commercial vessels, including oil tankers, in the Red Sea and beyond. Such attacks jeopardize peace and stability in Yemen, exploit and exacerbate regional insecurity and have significant ramifications on maritime shipping, environmental safety and supply chains. My delegation is especially unsettled about the potential environmental catastrophe stemming from the Houthi attack on the *MV Delta Sounion*, which is now damaged in the Red Sea and could potentially leak 1 million barrels of crude oil.

Secondly, such attacks exemplify the glaring implementation gaps vis-à-vis United Nations sanctions and the targeted arms embargo established by resolution 2216 (2015). Indeed, those ongoing missile and drone attacks against vessels in the Red Sea point to repeated, consequential arms embargo violations. As the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), I appeal to all Member States to faithfully implement the arms embargo. In that regard, we look forward to next week's Sanctions Committee meeting, where the Panel of Experts' final report will be reviewed.

In addition, my delegation is gravely alarmed by recent reports detailing a significant upsurge in the shameful recruitment of Yemeni children by the Houthis, which constitutes a sanctionable act under resolution 2511 (2020). We appeal to all parties in Yemen to cease the odious recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Thirdly, the Republic of Korea reiterates its demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees, including United Nations staff and non-governmental organization and diplomatic personnel. Forced disappearances and arbitrary detentions are simply unacceptable, but they are even more noxious when those working for a brighter Yemen are targeted.

Fourthly, we note with deep concern the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Yemen. We call on all parties, especially the Houthis, to ensure safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and to protect all humanitarian actors in accordance with international humanitarian law. We urge the international community to close critical funding gaps. The Republic of Korea remains dedicated to actively supporting Yemen's humanitarian needs. Following our \$18.5 million contribution last year, we have already announced a donation of 18,000 tons of rice and will provide an additional \$5 million in assistance this year.

Fifthly, we appreciate the important efforts by key regional stakeholders and the Special Envoy to defuse the dangerous economic stand-off between the Government and the Houthis. We hope the recent deal between the two sides can serve as a potential catalyst for them to directly negotiate on fundamental economic and political issues as well.

Sixthly, the prolonged, multifaceted crisis in Yemen serves to highlight the urgency of a durable political settlement. We reaffirm our support for an inclusive Yemeni-led political transition under United Nations auspices, including the bottom-up approach, with the prioritization of women's meaningful involvement in the peace process.

As Yemen's instability also has serious spillover impacts on the overall crisis in the region, neighbouring countries should continue to play an active role in working towards lasting peace in Yemen.

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

I want to thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Al Obahi for today's informative and sobering briefings. I welcome the Ambassador of Yemen to the Chamber.

We recently marked a grim milestone — three months since the detention by the Houthis of United Nations staff, as well as other humanitarians and members of civil society, in a brutal crackdown. Today those staff remain in captivity without access. Their unlawful detention is unacceptable. They are members of our United Nations family, and it is an affront to every Member of the Organization. I heard today a united call by all Council members for their immediate and unconditional release.

Those detentions, paired with the deteriorating operational environment in areas under Houthi control, come at a time of growing humanitarian needs and rapidly increasing acute malnutrition. We welcome the World Food Programme's ongoing emergency general food distribution. We are also following with concern the devastating impact of recent flooding, which has affected hundreds of thousands of Yemenis, aggravated the displacement crisis and exacerbated the outbreak of disease. We emphasize that peace and security are key preconditions necessary to begin strengthening Yemenis' climate resilience in a sustainable and meaningful way.

Last month, Houthi attacks in the Red Sea reached a new low, with the attack on the *MV Delta Sounion* oil tanker. The risk of a serious and unprecedented environmental disaster resulting from that attack is alarming and should be a cause for serious concern for us all. It is particularly alarming for countries in the region that rely on those crucial waterways, and it makes clear the significant risks of conflict-related environmental harm. The European Union's Operation Aspides has been assisting in a salvage operation, which is regrettably stalled owing to safety concerns. We hope for a safe and speedy resolution to the crisis and call on the Houthis to immediately cease their Red Sea attacks. The humanitarian and environmental imperative is clear.

All parties in Yemen must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. We call on all actors to engage with the Special Envoy in good faith and in the full knowledge of the compromises that will be necessary to bring Yemen towards a more peaceful future. We must avoid further engulfing Yemen and its people in a broader regional conflagration. There is an urgent need to get the peace process and discussions and the Special Envoy's road map back on track. Recent progress on the economic front is proof that it can be done. We acknowledge the role of the Special Envoy and countries in the region on that front.

One key point that we wish to make today, and which was already reinforced so eloquently by our briefer, Ms. Linda Al Obahi, is that any future peace in Yemen will be sustainable only if it is fully inclusive. Yemeni women have long shaped peacebuilding and conflict resolution in their country. Their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation should be ensured in all of Yemen's peace and security processes and in

humanitarian efforts. That is the joint responsibility of all actors in Yemen and the region, of the United Nations and of the Council and its members. We support the Envoy's bottom-up approach and the work of the Peace Track Initiative, and we stress the 30 per cent quota for women's participation agreed upon by Yemeni parties in the National Dialogue Conference. We heard Ms. Al Obahi loud and clear — all Yemenis should be part of designing a peace that delivers for all people.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council this month. I wish you every success. I also thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, for his successful presidency last month. And I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Ms. Joyce Msuya and Ms. Linda Al Obahi for their briefings.

This month coincides with the tenth anniversary of the coup by the Houthi terrorist militia and their war against the Yemeni State, the national consensus and aspirations of the Yemeni people for stability, security, construction and development. A whole decade has passed and those militia, supported by the Iranian regime, are still undermining all efforts and initiatives aimed at achieving peace, without caring for the humanitarian suffering of the steadfast Yemeni people. That is happening despite the regional and international momentum to revive the political process, in particular the efforts of our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to end the conflict and resolve the Yemeni crisis.

The Yemeni Government has put forward initiatives and concessions to support the peace process. Nonetheless, peace is still elusive, owing to the intransigence of the Houthi militia and their escalatory approach, as there is no true and credible partner to achieve peace. The Houthi militia are still beating the drums of war and evading the peace process.

First, they are escalating militarily in the Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, targeting international maritime navigation and threatening international and regional peace and security.

Secondly, they are escalating militarily in several governorates and committing crimes and violations against the Yemeni people and civilians, including killing, torturing and displacing people, along with

bombing homes in the different regions under the control of those militia, in an attempt to break the will of Yemenis and subjugate them to their coup and to their extremist ideas.

Thirdly, they are waging a systematic economic war against the Yemeni Government and people and prolonging the conflict, thereby increasing humanitarian suffering and undermining all efforts to end the war and to return to the peace process.

Regrettably, every time a door to peace is opened, the Houthi militia close it. However, we will not give up, and we remain committed to the choice of peace. The Yemeni people have suffered too long, and they deserve to enjoy security, stability, development and a comprehensive, just and sustained peace based on the agreed-upon political terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

The Yemeni Government is committed to supporting all regional and international efforts to end the conflict. However, at the same time, the Council and the international community must shoulder their responsibilities and bring real pressure to bear on the militia. They should not limit themselves to statements and appeals. We call on the Council to implement its resolutions concerning Yemen and to compel the militia to uphold peace and dialogue and to refrain from dragging Yemen and its people into proxy wars that serve the destructive projects of Iran in the region.

The militia should respond to the efforts led by the United Nations and the mediation of our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman, with a view to launching a political process that meets the aspirations of all Yemenis to restore the State institutions that guarantee rights, freedoms and equal citizenship. That is the path to security, stability and development, while providing support to the Yemeni Government to establish security and stability over all Yemeni territory and to achieve peace and maintain regional and international peace and security.

The Iranian regime recently appointed an Ambassador to the Houthi militia, in a blatant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations and on Consular Relations and resolution 2216 (2015).

By doing so, the Iranian regime is reiterating its support for the Houthi militia and affirming that it is fully responsible for the Houthi coup, proving that it is bluntly intervening in internal Yemeni affairs to prolong our suffering and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. The Iranian regime is using Yemen to launch its destructive policies and to spread chaos and terrorism, while destabilizing the security and stability of the region and threatening the State interests.

In the light of the current exceptional economic challenges facing the Yemeni Government, including those arising from the suspension of oil exports for more than two years, which constitute 70 per cent of the total public resources of the State owing to the Houthi militia targeting of oil ports, the Yemeni Government continues to adopt measures to restore trust in State institutions. It continues implementing economic, financial and administrative reforms and adopting strategic plans to promote transparency and accountability in order to fight corruption, with the aim of alleviating the economic, social and humanitarian effects of the current situation.

We express our full trust in the support of our development partners, including countries and international donor organizations. We are confident that they will support the Government's reform plans and programmes and that they will provide economic, development and humanitarian support for Yemen in these exceptional circumstances in order to address current challenges. In that regard, the Yemeni Government commends the support offered by our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and their positive efforts in the development and humanitarian fields to alleviate the catastrophic economic and humanitarian situation. That will enable the Government to shoulder its responsibilities and meet its obligations. The Government also emphasizes its willingness to build partnerships with regional and international communities to fund the development and reconstruction process.

The Houthi militia have targeted the *FSO SAFER* oil facility in Ma'rib governorate using three suicide drones, in an attempt to destroy that vital civil facility for oil and gas production. That constitutes a serious escalation, which comes as part of the systematic economic war waged by the militia against the people and the Government of Yemen. It is a continuation of their destruction approach of our infrastructure and the resources of the Yemeni people and their policy of

impoverishing and starving Yemenis. In that context, we warn against the imminent environmental disaster risks resulting from the Houthi militia's actions to obstruct international efforts to salvage the Greek *MV Delta Sounion* tanker, which carries 1 million barrels of crude oil and was targeted by those militia in the Red Sea on 21 August. Today that tanker is a time bomb forewarning of a wide-scale environmental disaster that, if it explodes, will affect Yemen and its bordering countries.

The Houthi militia are repeatedly targeting oil and chemical carriers while disregarding the catastrophic consequences of any oil spill in the Red Sea, the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden on the economic, agricultural and fisheries sectors, as well as the Yemeni coastline, riparian countries, the marine environment and the biodiversity in the region. The serious escalation reveals the militia's real nature, as they do not believe in peace or care about the economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen. It reflects the international community's failure to deal with those serious threats caused by the Houthi militia against the security and safety maritime navigation and the free flow of world trade. That requires us to reconsider how to address those militia's behaviour and how to confront their destructive terrorist activities.

The war has killed hundreds of thousands of people and has left tens of thousands injured. It has forced hunger on more than 20 million people and displaced millions throughout the country and the continent. It has pushed more than 4 million displaced people into internal camps in very harsh conditions. It has destroyed livelihoods and prevented the Government from providing basic services throughout Yemen. It has also brought about climate-related pandemics and floods, causing death and destruction. Meanwhile, we note that service provision is weak, as are Government protection and care. Lacking funds for the United Nations humanitarian response plan in Yemen has compounded the humanitarian and economic suffering, led to the collapse of several sectors and aggravated food insecurity.

Three months ago, the humanitarian community was exposed to an unprecedented yet expected shock in areas controlled by the Houthis. The Houthi militia kidnapped dozens of United Nations staff members and employees of local and international organizations operating in Yemen. That was followed by violations, obstacles, arbitrary measures and blackmail against

those agencies and their staff, despite the calls of the Government of Yemen at the highest levels. Regrettably, the measures and positions taken by the Council and the United Nations to protect their staff members and save their lives fell short of what was requested and expected.

My country's Government therefore calls on the Council and the international community to take a firm stance towards those practices, which represent a blatant violation of international law and international humanitarian law. We call for taking strong deterrent measures commensurate with the crimes committed by the Houthi militia and for exerting effective pressure on them to release all forcibly detained persons, including the United Nations staff and employees of international and local organizations and diplomatic missions.

There is a need to guarantee the safety and security of humanitarian workers and an enabling environment in which to carry out humanitarian tasks. There is a need to provide vital assistance to all those in need without discrimination and to end the Houthi militia's interference in humanitarian work and manipulation of humanitarian aid. We therefore reiterate our call to transfer all locations of international organizations and United Nations agencies operating in Yemen to the temporary capital, Aden.

Further to the suffering of Yemenis, which has not come to an end owing to the war, several governorates, including Al-Hudaydah, Al Mahwit, Raymah, Ma'rib and Hajjah, have witnessed torrential flooding and rain for days, which have caused extensive damage to infrastructure and public and private property. The

flooding left behind dozens of victims and displaced citizens, some of whom are internally displaced, and led to the suspension of public services. Most of the affected areas are under the control of the Houthi militia. However, the militia did not provide any support to the affected people. We remind the international community and the United Nations of the tragedy that our Yemeni people are forced to live in the areas under the control of the Houthi militia. The Houthis are preventing relief organizations from offering assistance to those affected, and they are violating the rights of humanitarian and relief workers.

In conclusion, the Government of Yemen calls on all United Nations agencies and regional and international partners, including financial institutions and humanitarian organizations, to support the Government's efforts in addressing those disasters, which go beyond our capabilities as a Government and those of local authorities in disaster areas. We urge them to provide urgent support to relieve the affected and rebuild the affected infrastructure. The frequency of climate-related catastrophes reminds us that Yemen is one of the countries most affected by climate change. We emphasize the need to address the long-term impacts of climate change and to limit the growing dangers of environmental calamities threatening our country.

The President: 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 11.45 a.m.