



# Security Council

Eightieth year

**9835**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 15 January 2025, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Bendjama . . . . .	(Algeria)
<i>Members:</i>	China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Denmark . . . . .	Ms. Lassen
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
	Greece . . . . .	Mr. Sekeris
	Guyana . . . . .	Ms. Parmanand
	Pakistan . . . . .	Mr. Akram
	Panama . . . . .	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone . . . . .	Ms. Karim
	Slovenia . . . . .	Mrs. Blokar Drobíč
	Somalia . . . . .	Mr. Osman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America . . . . .	Ms. Shea

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in the Middle East**

**The President:** 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; and Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

**Mr. Grundberg:** Let me begin by extending my best wishes to everyone for the new year and welcoming the newly elected members of the Security Council. Allow me as well to express my sincere gratitude to Major General Beary, Head of Mission of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement, who will be briefing the Council in the closed session for the last time of his tenure.

As we reflect on the past year and look ahead to the challenges and opportunities of the coming year, I look forward to continuing to work with the Council on a sustainable solution to the conflict in Yemen. I spent much of last year trying to protect Yemen from the regional escalation and trying to focus attention on the very real opportunity to resolve the Yemeni conflict. However, the context has become increasingly internationalized, with Ansar Allah intensifying its strikes in Israel and continuing attacks in the Red Sea, prompting retaliatory strikes by the United States of America and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as Israel on Yemen. Recent Israeli airstrikes have damaged critical civilian infrastructure, including the port of Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a International Airport. The damage to the port and tugboats affects the ability to unload humanitarian aid. The United Nations has been consistent and strong in its messaging: civilians and civilian infrastructure must never be targeted, whether in Yemen, Israel or Gaza. Ongoing discussions for a ceasefire in Gaza and release of hostages signal hope that an opportunity for regional de-escalation could materialize.

However, until today, the escalating cycle of strikes and counterstrikes has hindered the prospects of peace and diverted crucial attention and resources from Yemen. These actions threaten maritime security, destabilize Yemen's economy and strain regional stability. The need to address Yemen's crisis becomes ever more urgent as regional stability requires, in part, achieving peace in Yemen.

I have actively engaged with Yemeni, regional and international stakeholders across the region, holding sometimes difficult, often constructive and always frank discussions during my visits to Muscat, Sana'a, Tehran and Riyadh to intensify engagements for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. My message to all interlocutors is the same: we need immediate de-escalation and genuine engagement for peace. Almost 40 million Yemenis have waited far too long.

During my meetings with senior political and military officials in Sana'a, I reiterated calls already issued by World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus during his recent visit to Sana'a, strongly urging Ansar Allah to immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained personnel from

the United Nations, national and international organizations, diplomatic missions and the private sector. I further urged them to release the *MV Galaxy Leader* vessel and its 25-member crew, which have been unlawfully detained for more than a year now. During my visit, I met with the family of my colleague who has been detained for more than six months. I met children who miss their father, a wife who misses her husband, a mother who misses her son. Their anguish and their enduring hope for his release mirror the experience of countless families affected by these unjust detentions. I am also concerned by reports of a new wave of arbitrary detentions, which further exacerbates the suffering of families and undermines trust. I trust the Council will remain steadfast in supporting all efforts to secure the unconditional release of those arbitrarily detained.

While regional tensions dominate the headlines, we have witnessed some escalation along several front lines, reminding us that the relative stability and improved security conditions for civilians that have existed since the 2022 truce could be lost. In one tragic incident in Taiz governorate, two children were killed, and two others were injured, in an attack west of Taiz city, near the site of a previous drone strike I highlighted in my last briefing (see S/PV.9806). I am also concerned about the reports of military operations by Ansar Allah in Hankah Al-Masoud village in Al-Bayda governorate. Those attacks must cease, and the parties must take urgent, concrete steps towards achieving a nationwide ceasefire agreement. My Office has continued to hold discussions with the parties on the action needed to create the conditions for a ceasefire.

At this critical juncture, any further escalation risks undermining existing commitments and would have devastating humanitarian consequences for the people of Yemen, who have already endured nearly a decade of unimaginable hardship. A return to widespread violence would trigger further displacement, collapse essential services and exacerbate an already dire humanitarian crisis, pushing Yemen further away from the peace it so desperately needs. It could erase the hard-earned progress in de-escalation and erode the fragile trust necessary to advance a sustainable peace process. For the sake of the Yemeni people, and to preserve the possibilities for peace, I urge all the parties to refrain from action that deepens suffering or could undo the progress made so far.

My Office has engaged in extensive dialogues on economic issues with both parties at the technical level, and I welcome their candid engagement, acknowledgement of the pressing economic challenges and shared aspirations for a better future for all Yemenis. In addition, we are working closely with key actors from the banking and private sectors to identify measures needed for Yemen's economic recovery and to prepare for a broader dialogue on the economy. The ongoing economic deterioration across Yemen is affecting everyone, particularly the most vulnerable people. While the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah have both taken steps to address the crisis, the broader structural challenges at hand must be addressed through collaboration. In our discussions, we explored how collaboration between the parties could unlock critical peace dividends, including the unification of the Central Bank, a resumption of fossil fuel exports and the full payment of public-sector salaries. The parties must act decisively and should not delay their efforts to make progress on tangible opportunities based on imagined future scenarios. Time is not on our side and delays will only worsen the suffering of those who have already endured so much. The cost of inaction will be profound, with the heaviest burden falling on Yemen's most vulnerable populations.

Our efforts remain focused on creating pathways to sustainable peace. My Office continues to facilitate a series of political dialogues involving Yemeni political parties, civil society actors, key stakeholders and prominent experts. Those initiatives prioritize the meaningful participation of women and youth, ensuring

that their voices are central to shaping an inclusive vision for Yemen's future, and are critical to laying a foundation for a broader political process. To complement those dialogues, we are conducting consultations to amplify the perspectives of marginalized groups.

In parallel, my Office has engaged with representatives of the Military Coordination Committee to advance steps towards achieving a nationwide ceasefire. We have also continued our efforts to convene the parties' prisoner committees and urge all sides to keep working to achieve the release of conflict-related detainees on an all-for-all basis. Prioritizing that humanitarian file is not only essential to alleviating immediate suffering, but it also represents a critical step in creating a foundation for broader agreements. Such actions demonstrate a genuine commitment to advancing the peace process and signal a willingness to prioritize the welfare of those affected by the conflict.

While the oncoming year will not be without challenges, my determination to safeguard the progress made so far on the road map and keep the focus on the prospects for peace in Yemen remains intact. De-escalation is needed in the wider region, and the active work of the United Nations towards that goal must be supported. A stable, peaceful Yemen benefits all, and efforts must align with the aspirations of its people for peace, dignity and a future free from the shadow of war.

Against the backdrop of escalation and future uncertainty in the region, I am concerned about the possibility that parties may reassess their options for peace and make miscalculations on a basis of flawed assumptions. The unity of the Security Council and its consistent messaging to the parties on the importance of a negotiated settlement will be pivotal in the months ahead. Its commitment has been instrumental in reinforcing international expectations of progress and in demonstrating a shared resolve to support Yemen on its path to peace. As we navigate the challenges ahead, that steadfastness will remain vital — not only in safeguarding the progress made to date on the elements of the road map, but also in advancing a comprehensive political settlement and upholding the hope of a brighter, more stable future for the Yemeni people.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Msuya.

**Ms. Msuya:** At the outset, I would like to wish Council members a happy new year and to thank General Beary for his service. I also thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his briefing and his unfaltering efforts to bring about peace for the people of Yemen.

Hostilities in and around Yemen and the wider region have persisted, with increasingly alarming humanitarian repercussions for civilians. The Houthis have continued to target Israel with drones and missiles, causing several civilian injuries and damaging a school near Tel Aviv and homes in Jaffa. Israeli air strikes on Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a have killed and injured dozens of civilians and have caused significant damage to civilian infrastructure. Overall, the past month has seen a concerning increase in attacks on vital civilian infrastructure, on which millions of people depend for electricity, safe movement and imports of essential food and medical supplies.

Following a series of air strikes — most recently that of 10 January on Al-Hudaydah and Ras Isa ports — Yemen's Red Sea ports have sustained substantial damage, leading to a significant reduction in their capacities. In particular, Al-Hudaydah port, a critical gateway for fuel and commercial goods as well as humanitarian supplies, is operating at approximately 30 per cent of its capacity on the basis of the best current estimates. Yemen relies on imports for more than two

thirds of the food supplies and some 90 per cent of all medicine and medical supplies for the population. Humanitarians depend on those seaports to bring in life-saving humanitarian supplies, including food and medicine. Impairing their operations causes direct and immense civilian hardship and suffering. Infrastructure that plays such an indispensable role must be spared.

As was widely reported, the Israeli attack on Sana'a International Airport on 26 December took place while a commercial passenger flight was landing — though the flight fortunately avoided harm — and resulted in the deaths of at least three civilians and injuries to 30 others, including a crew member of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Mr. Julien Harneis, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, and other United Nations colleagues were also present in the airport at the time. The airport sustained substantial damage, notably the destruction of the air traffic control tower, creating concerns about flight safety and the safe movement of passengers going forward. Like Yemen's Red Sea ports, the airport in Sana'a is vital to humanitarian operations. It is a lifeline for the movement of civilians, humanitarian workers and life-saving supplies. Disruptions to its operations will directly impact our ability to deliver and adversely affect civilians, including those who need to travel abroad to seek medical care.

I reiterate the Secretary-General's demand that all parties respect international humanitarian law to protect civilians and do everything they can to spare infrastructure on which civilians rely.

Dr. Ghebreyesus was in Yemen to negotiate the release of United Nations and other personnel detained by the Houthis and to discuss the humanitarian situation with partners and officials. His engagements resulted in commitment from the Houthi de facto authorities, first, to explore a pathway leading to the release of all detained staff and, secondly, improve the conditions under which they are detained until their release. I take this opportunity to urge the Houthi de facto authorities to uphold that commitment and to heed the Secretary-General's call for the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations and non-governmental organization (NGO) personnel.

People in Yemen continue to face a severe humanitarian and protection crisis. According to the consolidated humanitarian appeal for 2025, which will be released shortly, the crisis is getting worse. At least 19.5 million people in Yemen need humanitarian assistance and protection this year, which is 1.3 million more than in 2024. Almost half of Yemen's population — over 17 million people — is unable to meet their basic food needs. The most marginalized — including women and girls, those who are displaced and communities such as the Muhamasheen — are the worst affected. Almost half of all children under the age of 5 suffer from moderate to severe stunting caused by malnutrition.

Cholera is at appalling levels. The World Health Organization reports that Yemen bore the highest global burden of cholera in 2024, accounting for 35 per cent of cholera cases and 18 per cent of related deaths worldwide. That alone has added enormous burdens to a health system that is already severely stressed. On top of that, an estimated 4.8 million people remain internally displaced, the majority of whom are women and children.

We remain committed to assisting those in need across Yemen. For that, we need support from the Council and from our donors to deliver life-saving humanitarian activities at the required scale. We also need the facilitation of principled humanitarian access. I am encouraged to report that modest but sustained progress is being achieved on that front. Last month, a United Nations mission led by the

Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator crossed the front line in Taiz city for the first time since 2016, building on the community's local initiatives.

Over recent months, we have also seen the expedited approval of visas for international staff and agreements with NGO partners in Houthi-controlled areas — an encouraging development in addressing the bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian operations.

Last month, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher asked for the Security Council's support on three concrete points (see S/PV.9806). As we enter a new constellation of the Council, I would reiterate those points consistent with my remarks today.

First, with regard to the Council's collective influence to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law, that entails ensuring that critical civilian infrastructure is spared, including the ports, airports and water and electricity networks. Damaging that infrastructure can harm, first and foremost those civilians already suffering and those most in need.

The second point support is for full humanitarian funding to ensure that the people of Yemen caught in the decade-long crisis can have some hope.

And the third is ongoing and unwavering support for Special Envoy Grundberg's efforts to enable the resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led political transition process. Ultimately, the shortest and surest way out of a decade of suffering and humanitarian crisis in Yemen is through a lasting political resolution.

In addition, and in support for Dr. Ghebreyesus' efforts on the ground in late December, I would ask the Council to support all efforts to secure the safe release of all detained United Nations and other humanitarian personnel.

I hope that we can find a better path forward to find a resolution to this crisis and stand ready to work with the Council in that endeavour.

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

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

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their important briefings today.

I will make three points today.

First, we welcome the visits and continuing efforts of both Director-General Ghebreyesus of the World Health Organization and Special Envoy Grundberg to secure the release of detainees. We are deeply concerned about Houthi claims of further arbitrary and unlawful detentions of Yemeni citizens. We call on the Council to unite in condemning Houthi detentions in the strongest terms and demand that the Houthis immediately and unconditionally release all those detained, enabling a safe operating environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those most in need. That is more important than ever, with nearly 20 million Yemenis now in need of assistance, as Ms. Msuya spelled out so starkly for us.

Secondly, the United Kingdom will continue to support the freedom of navigation, including in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and we look forward to the extension later today of the mandate of resolution 2722 (2024).

The United Kingdom condemns the ongoing and reckless Houthi attacks against Israeli population centres. We are clear on Israel's right to self-defence against those attacks. But that must be done in compliance with Israel's international humanitarian law obligations, including the need to avoid damage to critical civilian infrastructure



such as Al-Hudaydah port — the main entry point for food and humanitarian supplies into Yemen.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom is resolute in our support to the Government of Yemen. That is why we are co-hosting an event this month to galvanize international support for the Government as the legitimate representatives of the Yemeni people and in order to promote stability and stable governance. Yemen can truly prosper only when all Yemenis are able to play their role in building a better future for their country.

Finally, on the occasion of Major General Beary's final briefing to the Council, I would like to commend and appreciate his efforts in support of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement and the Yemeni people in Al-Hudaydah governorate. I thank him for his service.

**Mr. Alfaro de Alba** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama thanks the Security Council presidency for convening this meeting, as well as Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their valuable briefings.

The Republic of Panama is deeply concerned about the increasing tensions in Yemen, the grave humanitarian crises affecting the region and the ongoing deterioration of the situation in the Red Sea. We are following the actions and endeavours of the Special Envoy for Yemen very closely and appreciate his efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. We also support the efforts to create sufficient political space and rekindle a constructive dialogue that can lead to a sustainable political solution to the conflict and thereby guarantee a stable future for the Yemeni people.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate. According to the *Global Humanitarian Overview 2025* of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 19.5 million people will need humanitarian assistance, reflecting the devastating impact of the conflict, the economic collapse and the lack of access to basic services. Panama underscores the urgent need to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid and would like to remind all parties of their obligation to ensure that the aid goes straight to the civilians in need, as provided for in the relevant Council resolutions.

As a maritime nation, we firmly condemn the Houthis' attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea. Such acts of violence jeopardize international maritime security and the transit of vessels, directly affecting global supply chains and the humanitarian aid that the region needs. The right of navigation is a fundamental principle of international law that must be observed by all States and all international actors. Panama's commitment to the right of navigation is reflected in its efficient and neutral stewardship of the Panama Canal, which further reflects its respect for sovereignty and international rights. Since the attacks began in November 2023 with the seizure of the cargo ship *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew, who are still being held hostage by the Houthi rebels and whose full, unconditional and immediate release we demand, there have been 136 attacks on commercial vessels, more than a dozen of them on ships sailing under the Panama flag, including oil tankers. The attacks on those ships further represent a grave danger to the environment.

Panama also firmly condemns the attacks on humanitarian aid workers and non-governmental organization and United Nations personnel, and their arbitrary and unjustified detention. The humanitarian workers risk their lives and operate in extreme conditions to bring aid to those who need it most. Such acts are wholly unacceptable and must stop immediately. All who are arbitrarily detained must be

released, and all actions that directly or indirectly impede humanitarian assistance must stop.

We want to reiterate our deep concern about the critical situation in Yemen and to make an urgent appeal to all the parties involved to make the welfare of the beleaguered Yemeni people a priority. It will be vital to move towards a comprehensive and sustainable solution that fully respects human rights and the rules of international law, including humanitarian law. Stability in the region can be ensured only through a genuine commitment to dialogue, a cessation of hostilities and international cooperation.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): Pakistan thanks the Algerian presidency for convening today's important briefing.

We also thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their valuable updates on Yemen.

Pakistan remains deeply concerned about the protracted conflict in Yemen, which has triggered a multidimensional crisis, including economic collapse, climate impacts and one of the worst humanitarian emergencies in modern history. We strongly believe that the conflict in Yemen must be resolved through diplomatic and political means. We urge all the parties to prioritize dialogue, engage in a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process and resolve differences through peaceful means. We fully support United Nations and regional efforts, in particular those of Saudi Arabia and Oman, to reach a political settlement of the Yemeni conflict on the basis of agreed frameworks. Pakistan appreciates the significant progress made in the December 2023 peace negotiations, which led to vital agreements between the parties to stop hostilities through a nationwide ceasefire, initiate an economic revival, resume oil exports and ensure the payment of public-sector salaries. It will be crucial to preserve those gains, establish a road map and fully implement commitments to fostering sustainable peace.

Pakistan is deeply concerned about the air strikes on Yemen. Israel's air strikes on Yemen's civilian infrastructure, including Sana'a International Airport, Red Sea ports and power stations, have resulted in civilian casualties, further exacerbating the dire humanitarian and political crisis in Yemen. We are also deeply concerned about the Houthis' attacks on commercial and maritime vessels in the Red Sea, which are threatening global trade, regional stability and the environment.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen remains one of the gravest in the world. Nearly half the population — 17 million people — are facing severe food insecurity, with 3.5 million suffering from acute malnutrition. The effects of climate change, including floods and droughts, are further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis and have displaced 4.5 million people. Addressing that requires a robust and coordinated international response. We urge donor countries to increase their contributions to the 2025 humanitarian response plan for Yemen. Pakistan is also deeply concerned about the Houthis' detention of United Nations and humanitarian personnel, in violation of international humanitarian law. We echo the Secretary-General's call for their immediate and unconditional release.

The situation in Yemen cannot be viewed in isolation from broader regional dynamics, including the ongoing Israeli military onslaught in Gaza. The Security Council must remain united and take measures to promote a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and ensure de-escalation in the region. Pakistan reaffirms its commitment to supporting the Special Envoy's efforts to facilitate a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under United Nations auspices. Diplomacy and dialogue remain the only viable path to achieving lasting peace in Yemen.



**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their informative updates. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in the Security Council today.

As we gather for the first briefing on Yemen of 2025, the tensions surrounding the country have unfortunately been intensifying, while we are simultaneously witnessing a glimpse of hope in the broader region. In that light, I would like to highlight the following points today.

First, regarding the ongoing hostilities, it is crucial for the Security Council to send a strong, unified and unequivocal message clearly condemning such inflammatory actions. The Houthis persist with their logic of attacking vessels in the Red Sea and escalating attacks on Israel unless the situation in Gaza is resolved. That rationale is misguided and unacceptable and undermines stability, not only in Yemen but also in the wider region, jeopardizing diplomatic efforts in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. Houthi hostilities reflect a deliberate exploitation of regional volatility by the Houthis for the sake of their parochial interests. At the same time, Israel's response to Houthi attacks must align with international law, including international humanitarian law, ensuring the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure under all circumstances.

Secondly, with regard to the arms embargo, the Security Council must ensure the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions. The Houthis are deploying advanced weapons systems, including ballistic missiles, uncrewed aerial vehicles and so-called hypersonic missiles. However, it is clear that they do not possess the capacity to develop and produce such armaments without key external assistance. Therefore, if any country facilitates the provision of arms or related material, such action constitutes a blatant violation of the targeted arms embargo. Furthermore, any active military assistance or cooperation with the Houthis pours more fuel on the fire and deepens regional destabilization. In that connection, we expect that the Council will adopt a resolution later this afternoon emphasizing the importance of implementing the arms embargo, reflecting the findings of the Panel of Experts on Yemen.

Thirdly, concerning the humanitarian situation, the worsening humanitarian crisis in Yemen is deeply concerning, as civilian infrastructure and humanitarian workers continue to face severe threats. Al-Hudaydah port, a vital lifeline for the Yemeni people, has reportedly dropped to just 30 per cent of its original operational capacity following recent strikes. Ensuring the full operation of Al-Hudaydah port and other key infrastructure is essential for the delivery of international humanitarian assistance. The Council should be sending a clear message prioritizing the protection of civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian workers. The Council must also remain united in strongly condemning the arbitrary detention of United Nations, non-governmental organization, civil society and diplomatic personnel by the Houthis and consistently calling for their immediate and unconditional release. We highly commend the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy and United Nations agencies in leveraging all possible channels to secure the release of all detainees.

Fourthly, on the political process, we hope that the rapidly changing dynamics in the Middle East will present a new, timely opportunity for revitalizing dialogue and advancing the political road map in Yemen. We note with appreciation the Special Envoy's recent visit to Sana'a to lay the groundwork for tangible progress in the political process. The Security Council must continue to fully support the Special Envoy's tireless efforts with a unified voice. We urge all parties, particularly the Houthis, to respond constructively.

In conclusion, bearing in mind that peace and security in the Middle East is an interconnected puzzle composed of separate yet inherently linked pieces, and seizing the current opportunity, the international community should redouble its efforts to encourage the Houthis to reverse their current stance and demonstrate greater flexibility. We believe that all key regional stakeholders must engage more actively to that end in order to foster a more secure and peaceful region in 2025.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their briefings, and I welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

Recently, tensions in Yemen and the Red Sea have increased, with the risk of further escalation. While the Houthis and Israel continue to attack each other, the United States and Israel frequently strike Yemen from the air. China reiterates that military means are not the way out. Violence for violence will only drive the conflict into a vicious cycle of spiralling escalation. On the one hand, the Houthis should stop harassing commercial vessels and safeguard the safety of shipping lanes in the Red Sea. On the other, the relevant countries should stop air strikes in Yemen and effectively respect Yemen's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. All parties concerned should remain calm, exercise restraint and avoid actions that may escalate tensions.

The political settlement of the Yemeni issue is the common expectation of the international community and a long-term goal of the Security Council. All Yemeni parties should actively respond to the international community's call, shoulder their responsibility, resume dialogue and communication, find a way out of the political impasse and jointly advance a comprehensive political process that is Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned. Recently, Special Envoy Grundberg went to Yemen and other countries in the region for another round of mediation. China welcomes that and supports the Special Envoy in making great efforts to promote mutual trust and forge consensus among all parties.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is alarmingly dire. The international community should step up assistance to Yemen. The United Nations should prioritize implementing projects in such key areas as food security, public health and clean water to meet the most urgent needs of the people. Recently, the United Nations has strengthened communication and coordination with the relevant parties in an effort to improve humanitarian operations throughout Yemen and release all detainees. China commends the relevant efforts and progress made.

There is a strong consensus among Council members that a ceasefire in Gaza would help to ease tensions in the Red Sea. Recently, there have been positive developments regarding the ceasefire in Gaza. The next few days will be critical to the trajectory of the developments in Gaza. We hope that all parties will truly demonstrate political will and take concrete actions to turn the vision of a ceasefire in Gaza into a reality, so as to bring hope to the suffering people in Gaza and create the conditions for cooling down the precarious chaos in the Middle East.

This is the first time this year that the Council has considered Yemen. We hope that, with the concerted efforts of the international community, the situation in Yemen will improve in the new year, make new progress and take on a new look. We are ready to work with the international community to continue to make unremitting efforts to achieve a political settlement of the Yemeni issue and peace and stability in the Middle East.

**Mrs. Blokar Drobić** (Slovenia): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya very much for their briefings. I welcome the Yemeni delegation to this meeting.

Sadly, we see that for the Yemeni people, the year starts with another spiral of violence and another serious escalation, which Slovenia condemned at the emergency meeting of the Council on 30 December (see S/PV.9829) and which we condemn once again today. Reckless Houthi attacks in the Red Sea and against Israel have continued, and severe Israeli retaliations, including as recently as last week, have led to significant damage to Yemen's critical civilian infrastructure. Reports that Al-Hudaydah port is functioning at only approximately 30 per cent capacity are extremely concerning. The ports are a crucial lifeline for Yemen, from both a humanitarian and an economic perspective.

The situation is unsustainable and unacceptable. The people of Yemen should not be used as a pawn in a geopolitical game. They simply cannot endure another assault, following 10 long years of war, nor do the people of Palestine benefit from that tit-for-tat. We therefore renew our call on all parties to cease attacks and to adhere to international law, including international humanitarian law. We stress in particular that attacks on civilian populations, infrastructure and objects are prohibited. We look forward to the adoption of a draft resolution that renews the Secretary-General's reporting mandate on the Red Sea attacks and thank the United States and Greece for their efforts as co-penholders. We once again express our serious concern about the potential environmental impact of such attacks, made evident by the recent situation with the *MV Sounion* tanker. We regret that that aspect could not be reflected in the current draft resolution and hope to see it incorporated in future texts. Slovenia also recalls the desperate need for a ceasefire in Gaza, which we believe would bring much-needed calm to the entire region.

It is clear that a policy of diplomacy rather than firepower must be pursued. We therefore welcome the Special Envoy's intensified engagement with national and regional actors in recent weeks and note his recent visit to Sana'a and his discussions with a diverse range of Yemeni stakeholders. We urge those regional actors with influence to press for tangible action from all sides towards de-escalation and confidence-building. We call on all parties to seize the moment and show a genuine commitment to peace and governance by engaging on the United Nations road map and progressing an inclusive, intra-Yemeni political process. The gains made in 2023 should not be lost or reversed.

We are facing a time of soaring humanitarian needs in Yemen and across the region and unprecedented pressures for the humanitarian community. In a world where too often we cannot make the necessary political and diplomatic breakthroughs, humanitarians, time and time again, are the ones picking up the pieces. The detention of humanitarian workers by the Houthis last year is not only in contravention of international law, but it is an affront to those life-saving efforts.

We conclude our statement today with a clear and simple call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained United Nations staff and humanitarian and civil society personnel in Yemen and for respect for, and protection of, humanitarians the world over.

**Mr. Osman** (Somalia): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Algeria, Guyana, Sierra Leone and my own country, Somalia (A3+).

We express our gratitude to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Joyce Msuya, for their invaluable updates on the situation in Yemen. I would also like to welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting.

The A3+ reiterates its steadfast support for United Nations-led initiatives and regional efforts, including those spearheaded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

and the Sultanate of Oman, to achieve a Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-led political settlement. A balanced and inclusive process, with the robust engagement of women and youth, remains essential for resolving the conflict and addressing the aspirations of the Yemeni people. We emphasize the importance of maintaining the progress achieved in the peace negotiations and encourage the continued leadership of the United Nations in those mediation efforts.

In the light of recent developments, the A3+ underscores the following concerns and priorities.

The first point is the protection of humanitarian and United Nations personnel. The A3+ reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained humanitarian and United Nations personnel by the Houthis. The arbitrary detention of those personnel and civil society members constitutes severe violations under international humanitarian law. In that regard, we once again urge the Houthis to cease the practice of arbitrarily detaining humanitarian workers, who provide life-saving services to the people in Yemen. We also strongly condemn the continued targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as the recent drone attack on a market in Taiz province, resulting in multiple fatalities and injuries, and recent attacks in Hanaka Al-Masoud in Al-Bayda governorate.

The second is escalating food insecurity. Food insecurity in Yemen has worsened significantly, with the World Food Programme reporting a dramatic rise in households unable to meet basic needs. Projections indicate that 17 million people, or 49 per cent of the population, will face a severe food shortage in 2025, with 5 million facing emergency-level conditions and 3.5 million experiencing acute malnutrition. The A3+ calls for swift international action to adequately fund the Yemen humanitarian response plan.

The third is threats to maritime safety and the environment. The Houthi attacks in the Red Sea pose serious risks to global shipping and the maritime ecosystem, with long-lasting consequences for the Red Sea's delicate marine environment. The A3+ expresses its continued concerns about those attacks and calls on the Houthis to immediately halt those activities.

The fourth is external military action. Escalating external attacks, including Israeli air strikes on Yemeni territories and the broader implications of the Gaza conflict, undermine peacebuilding efforts. We urge all parties, including regional and international actors, to prioritize diplomatic channels and cease military actions in Yemeni territory. Any further escalations carry significant risks of exacerbating regional tensions and worsening the situation facing the Yemeni population. We also emphasize the importance of maintaining stability and fostering dialogue. In that regard, we call on the Houthis to cease actions that exacerbate tensions in the region, as such behaviour undermines efforts towards peace and reconciliation. It is imperative that all parties demonstrate restraint and commit to constructive engagement to achieve lasting solutions. In that regard, we stress once again that only diplomatic efforts and political dialogue can solve the Yemeni crisis, not military intervention.

In the light of those challenges, the A3+ firmly maintains that securing an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza is a critical first step towards lasting peace throughout the region. That ceasefire is essential for halting further escalation and creating the environment for a genuine and comprehensive peace process.

In conclusion, we emphasize the critical importance of maintaining focused international engagement with Yemen. The A3+ reaffirms its support for a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned peace process under United Nations auspices and calls for collaborative international engagement to achieve lasting peace and stability in Yemen.

**Mr. Sekeris (Greece):** Allow me to begin by expressing my gratitude to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Msuya, for their valuable briefings. I also warmly welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

Greece remains deeply concerned about the escalating use of force, inflammatory rhetoric and persistent volatility in the region, with the situation in Yemen being of increasingly growing concern. We are particularly alarmed by the Houthis' continued aggression, including unjustified attacks with the use of advanced weaponry, such as ballistic missiles and drones. Those attacks have targeted civilian infrastructure, including oil terminals under the control of the Government of Yemen, further exacerbating tensions.

In that context, we call on all parties to exercise restraint, prioritize dialogue and diplomacy and avoid actions that lead to further escalation, particularly those resulting in civilian casualties. Greece unequivocally supports all efforts by the Special Envoy towards the political process in Yemen, aiming for a sustainable and permanent ceasefire that can pave the way for a lasting peace settlement. At this critical juncture, we emphasize the importance of unity within the Presidential Leadership Council and the need to increase support for the Yemeni Government. In addition, it is imperative to prevent any actors from exploiting regional or internal circumstances to expand their influence and jeopardize the prospects for stability in Yemen. We also stress the importance of unity within the Security Council in addressing the Yemen file. I would like to highlight four key points of particular importance for my country regarding Yemen.

First, respect for and full adherence to international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, are paramount and must be upheld by all parties. On that note, we urge the Houthis to release the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew, who have been unjustifiably detained since November 2023.

Secondly, where commitment to a political solution is concerned, we urge all Yemeni actors to actively work towards a sustainable and permanent ceasefire as a pathway to preventing escalation. That will enable a renewed, inclusive, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under United Nations auspices, ensuring the meaningful participation of all segments of Yemeni society, including women and young people.

Thirdly, when it comes to humanitarian support and protection, the international community must urgently scale up financial support for Yemen's humanitarian response plan and enhance the activities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We also strongly condemn the arbitrary detention of United Nations personnel, diplomatic staff and humanitarian workers and echo the call for their immediate and unconditional release.

Fourthly, Greece places particular emphasis on maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. Together with the United States, we have therefore co-authored the renewal of the resolution on the Red Sea. We join others in calling on the Houthis to immediately cease all attacks on commercial shipping in the region in accordance with resolutions 2722 (2024) and 2739 (2024). Greece leads the European Union's maritime security Naval Force Operation ASPIDES and hosts its headquarters, established to safeguard freedom of navigation in response to the Red Sea crisis, pursuant to resolution 2722 (2024). We emphasize the Operation's defensive nature and reaffirm our resolve to counter threats to maritime security and freedom of navigation in the area.

In conclusion, we support the draft resolution on the Red Sea, proposed jointly by the United States and Greece as co-penholders, and stand ready to further support a relaunch of the political process in Yemen.



**Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Hans Grundberg, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Joyce Msuya, for their briefings. I would also like to welcome the presence at today's meeting of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

France firmly condemns the Houthis' attacks on Israel over the past few weeks, including that of 13 January, which targeted southern Israel. They must cease immediately, as must their attacks in the Red Sea on commercial shipping, which have continued despite the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2722 (2024). The destabilizing actions of the Iranian-backed Houthis in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and against Israel, using missiles and drones, are violations of international law, including the relevant Council resolutions. The Houthis bear the major responsibility for the ongoing regional crisis, and their actions once again demonstrate their total indifference to the suffering of the Yemeni people. France reiterates the Security Council's call for the immediate and unconditional release of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew, who have been held for over a year.

France reaffirms its commitment to the stability of Yemen and to security in the region. We emphasize the importance of preventing any further escalation in the region and call on Iran to cease its support for destabilizing action in the Middle East. We will maintain our commitment to the European Union's defensive security and defence policy, through Operation ASPIDES, to protect maritime safety and freedom of navigation, in accordance with international law and in liaison with our partners.

France continues to call for the immediate and unconditional release of the dozens of United Nations and humanitarian personnel, local and international, who are being held by the Houthis in a shameful manner that is contrary to international law. We also urge the Houthis to guarantee safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and to cease disinformation campaigns against humanitarian actors. At a time when Yemenis are already exhausted by years of conflict and rising food insecurity, Yemen is now more badly affected by cholera than any other country in the world. The Houthis must do everything in their power to allow humanitarian personnel to vaccinate the most vulnerable populations.

The regional context should not make us lose sight of the goal of building a lasting peace in Yemen. We reiterate our full support for Special Envoy Grundberg in his efforts to prepare the necessary resumption of the peace process. Only a political solution can bring about a complete and lasting cessation of hostilities and guarantee the people a dignified life. It will be vital to avoid any resumption of the conflict on the ground.

The unity of the Presidential Leadership Council is essential, as is strengthening the Yemeni Government. For their part, the Houthis must return to the negotiating table under the leadership of the Special Envoy. France stresses the importance of inclusive negotiations that guarantee the participation of civil society as a whole and especially Yemeni women.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Joyce Msuya, for their briefings.

We believe that the Council's main objective where Yemen is concerned is to do everything possible to facilitate the progress of processes that can lead to the normalization of the situation in the country. It is essential to do everything we can to help the parties to the conflict, including the Ansar Allah movement, find common ground and reach compromises. For our part, we support the aims in that regard of Special Envoy Grundberg, and we stand ready to continue to provide



him with every kind of assistance. The ongoing developments have reaffirmed the urgency of arriving without delay at appropriate agreements between the political forces in the country, laying out an official road map for a settlement and launching a fully-fledged and inclusive political process in Yemen. At the same time, it will be important for the parties to work consistently to overcome their antagonism towards one another and restrain their belligerent rhetoric. Rather than adding preconditions for the launch of the Yemeni political process, the world Powers and regional players should help them. We call on the Special Envoy to build on the existing positive elements and try to establish a robust foundation for mediation efforts based on them.

However, we see that the instability in the Middle East generally is unfortunately having a direct impact on the prospects for a political solution in Yemen. Israel's inhumane military operation in the Gaza Strip, which has gone on for more than a year, and its actions in Lebanon and Syria have been categorically condemned by Arabs everywhere and can only have repercussions for Yemen. The turmoil in adjacent waters, including the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, is adding fuel to the fire. The Russian Federation has repeatedly warned of the risks of such developments and has consistently urged for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the impermissibility of any further regional escalation, which could drag more Middle Eastern States, even if indirectly, into the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. So far, unfortunately, we have little reason for optimism.

The daily deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen is another reason for the need for a rapid resolution of the military and political crisis there. Its ordinary citizens have been assaulted both by hunger and epidemics of infectious diseases. The work of humanitarian personnel in the country has become exceedingly difficult. We deplore the fact that Ansar Allah's detention of locally recruited United Nations staff remains unresolved. We recall the privileges and immunities of humanitarian workers, which should be respected by all parties.

We note the ongoing efforts of the United Nations, including of Special Envoy Grundberg, aimed at thoroughly clarifying the reasons behind what transpired, ensuring humanitarian access and establishing conditions for the eventual release of those detained. For our part, we are also working towards achieving those objectives.

It is clear that it is extremely important for the international community to unite and step up efforts to address the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. We note with profound regret, however, that the actions of certain parties are leading towards precisely the opposite. In particular, we are gravely concerned about the ongoing strikes on the infrastructure of the Yemeni ports of Al-Hudaydah, Salif and Ras Isa by the so-called coalition cobbled together by the United States of America and its satellites. That is despite the fact that those ports are critical facilities for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Yemen. Most of the humanitarian aid supplied — including food, medicine and other essentials — is delivered through them.

However, that has not stopped our Western colleagues. Therefore, as a result of the latest coordinated air attack by the United States, the United Kingdom and Israel on 10 January, most of the infrastructure has been rendered non-operational. As a result, the throughput capacity of the ports has been catastrophically reduced — a fact that has also been pointed out by humanitarian workers. If the Western aggressors wish to take credit for that result, then it is perhaps the only achievement of their military campaign against the Houthis, which has failed not only to reduce their military capabilities but also to influence their position on regional issues.

We are not justifying the Houthi strikes against Israeli territory. We understand that the actions of West Jerusalem are more often than not retaliatory in nature. However, at the same time, the military response must be proportionate. It is now in

Israel's interest to exercise restraint and refrain from escalatory steps. We trust that West Jerusalem is cognizant of the need to adjust its destructive policy in the region.

**Ms. Shea** (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their briefings, which underscored the precarious situation in Yemen.

The Council is well aware that recent threats from the Houthis to international peace and security have been the focus of recent meetings. In an emergency meeting on 30 December (see S/PV.9829), Assistant Secretary-General Khiari rightly condemned the Houthis' reckless decision to prioritize their aggressive regional ambitions by attacking international shipping in the Red Sea. He also highlighted the harmful repercussions of their unprovoked attacks.

Salvage experts just completed their work on the *MV Sounion* — months after a Houthi attack left that ship adrift and ablaze, filled with millions of barrels of oil. Just a few weeks prior, we heard a first-hand account from a briefer who described the harrowing details of his abduction and unjustified detention by the Houthis (see S/PV.9806). He spoke for all those who currently sit in Houthi detention, unable to see their loved ones and subject to terrible abuse.

The situation continues to deteriorate. In recent days, the Houthis have expanded their campaign of detaining innocent Yemenis and targeting more former embassy staff who are simply trying to do their jobs. They continue to hold United Nations, diplomatic and non-governmental organization staff rounded up over the summer — as well as the crew of the *MV Galaxy Leader*, now as de facto hostages for more than a year — while conducting armed raids in Sana'a.

That leaves the inevitable question: will the Council continue to stand idly by in the face such escalations? We cannot simply make more calls that are ignored.

The United States believes the time has come to respond to the growing Houthi threat by holding Iran to account for enabling the Houthis' long-range missile attacks on international shipping and on Israel — attacks that we strongly condemn. That is why we advocated for reauthorization language requiring that the Secretary-General's periodic reports to the Council include information about the provision of advanced weaponry being used in the increasingly sophisticated attacks. We also must take action to deprive the Houthis of illicit revenues that sustain their attacks and recognize the growing relationship between the Houthis and other terrorist groups, such as Al-Shabaab, including through the use of targeted sanctions.

The United States continues to take action in response to Houthi threats. On 8 January, the United States armed forces conducted multiple precision strikes against two Houthi underground advanced conventional weapons storage facilities used to conduct attacks against United States Navy warships and merchant vessels. Despite what Russia says about those and past actions, the fact is that the strikes were consistent with international law and taken in the exercise of the United States inherent right to self-defence.

Even as we grapple with Houthi threats, we must not lose sight of the continued suffering of Yemenis, particularly due to Houthi obstruction and restricted humanitarian access, and especially those who face food insecurity and other staggering challenges. More than half of Yemen's population remains in need of humanitarian assistance. Therefore, the United States continues to support the work of the United Nations and our humanitarian partners who are delivering critical health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene assistance to the people of Yemen.

We must collectively do more to support the humanitarian response in Yemen. As the world's leading donor of humanitarian assistance to Yemen, the United States calls upon the international community to provide more financial support to mitigate

Yemen's dire humanitarian crisis, while also pressing the Houthis to ensure that humanitarian organizations can operate unhindered, without Houthi interference or threats to detain their staff. We also call upon donors to support the promotion of effective governance during the visit of Yemen's Prime Minister and his delegation to New York next week.

Houthi attacks must stop for Yemen to avoid worst-case scenarios. The Houthis are the primary impediment to greater international support and are jeopardizing the possibility of peace in Yemen. We must all work together and remain committed to a United Nations-led intra-Yemeni political process aimed at bringing the Yemen conflict to an end. For that to happen, the Houthi attacks and detentions must first end.

**Ms. Lassen** (Denmark): I would like to thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their briefings and for their continuous efforts on this issue. I also welcome the presence of the representative of Yemen at our meeting today.

Our briefers this morning painted a worrisome picture — one of a precarious and fragile situation, edging ever closer to a dangerous brink. I would like to highlight three points.

First and foremost, de-escalation is absolutely critical. Denmark is deeply concerned by the heightened level of tensions across the Middle East, including the latest increase in attacks between Israel and the Houthis. We call on the Houthis to immediately stop their attacks on Israel, and we underscore Israel's right to self-defence in line with international law, including the principle of proportionality.

We further call on all parties to exercise restraint and to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law by protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure. We also stress the importance of keeping the port of Al-Hudaydah open as a lifeline for millions of Yemenis.

We condemn the Houthis' constant attacks on international merchant vessels in the Red Sea and their continued unjustifiable seizure of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its 25 crew members, and we demand their immediate release. Any attempt to disrupt freedom of navigation, which international commerce and development depend on, is unacceptable and may constitute a violation of international law. To that end, we underscore the need to reinforce the arms embargo and curb the flow of weapons to the Houthis, including by strengthening the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen.

My second point is that Denmark condemns any attempt to restrict, divert or interfere with the delivery of humanitarian aid. By interfering with humanitarian operations, the Houthis are depriving their own population of vital and life-saving assistance. Put simply, it is costing lives. In the same vein, we firmly condemn the Houthis' arbitrary detention of United Nations personnel, civil society and staff working for non-governmental organizations and diplomatic missions in Yemen. We call for their immediate and unconditional release. It is critical to ensure that humanitarian personnel are able to carry out their life-saving work in a safe operating environment. We therefore support United Nations humanitarian agencies and others on the ground in taking the necessary precautions to ensure their safety when those basic requirements cannot be met.

My third point is closely linked to the first two and concerns the need for a political solution to the conflict. While we are encouraged by Special Envoy Grundberg's latest visit to Sana'a — his first in nearly two years — the Houthis' actions on other fronts give little reason for optimism. What is needed is for the parties to demonstrate genuine goodwill, lay down their arms and engage constructively in the efforts to

establish a formal nationwide ceasefire and reinvigorate a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned inclusive political process that fully includes women and youth. The Special Envoy's efforts have also laid important groundwork, and he has Denmark's full support.

In conclusion, the conflict in Yemen has raged for far too long. As always, it is the civilian population that suffers the most. They must not become the victims of a forgotten conflict. They must remain at the forefront of our minds. Their suffering demands and deserves our attention and, importantly, our action in support of peace in Yemen.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

**Mr. Al-Saadi** (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your brotherly country, Algeria, on presiding over the Security Council this month. We wish you and your delegation luck and success. I also want to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the friendly United States, for her successful presidency last month, and to congratulate the new non-permanent members of the Council, Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama and Somalia. We look forward to working with them and the rest of the Council on achieving a comprehensive and sustainable peace in Yemen and alleviating the Yemeni people's suffering. I am also grateful to the outgoing members for their valuable contributions to the work of the Security Council, and to Mr. Hans Grundberg and Ms. Joyce Msuya for their briefings today. And we thank Major General Beary for all his efforts during his tenure.

Through their continued military escalation, the Houthi terrorist militias are evading their duty to work for peace. It is undermining all the regional and international efforts, and those of the United Nations, to end the protracted war, and it is exacerbating the impact of the humanitarian crisis on the Yemeni people. While the Yemeni Government condemns the Israeli entity's attacks on Yemen and its violations of our sovereignty, we hold the Houthi militias responsible for pulling Yemen into a regional conflict. We want to warn them against continuing to hold Yemen and its people hostage and drag them into their senseless battles, which serve only the interests of their sponsor, the Iranian regime, and its expansionist project in the region. We should remind the Council of the militias' destructive *modus operandi*, whereby their terrorist attacks have for years targeted the Yemeni people's resources and infrastructure, all of which took decades to build — ports, airports and vital oil facilities — with ballistic missiles and drones. They are also besieging and targeting cities and villages. Contrary to the Houthis' claim, their terrorist attacks are not aimed at defending the Palestinian people in Gaza. They are simply part of their strategy to destroy Yemen, to dash the dreams, hopes and aspirations of its people, to impose the agenda of their Iranian sponsors, turn Yemen into a platform for threatening security and stability in the region and worldwide and undermine any prospect of creating a better future for Yemenis.

We reiterate that achieving a comprehensive peace in Yemen demands that the militias demonstrate commitment and a serious readiness to achieve peace, engage positively and in good faith with regional and international efforts aimed at ending the Yemeni crisis, renounce war and escalation, put the interests of the Yemeni people above those of their leaders and their sponsor, and abandon their terrorist strategy of undermining security and stability in Yemen and the region. We call on the Security Council to assume its responsibility for implementing its relevant resolutions on the crisis and to take practical measures to advance a comprehensive political process that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people.

We once again reaffirm the Yemeni Government's readiness to engage positively with all regional and United Nations efforts to reach a comprehensive political

settlement that can guarantee an end to the coup and restore our State institutions, in accordance with the agreed terms of reference of the political solution represented by the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its executive mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, foremost among them resolution 2216 (2015).

The Houthi militias' continued escalation is a result of a lack of will on the part of the international community to tackle the conduct and practices of the militias, who have continued to commit violations and heinous crimes against the Yemeni people. They are undermining the Stockholm Agreement, which has enabled them to take the city of Al-Hudaydah and its ports, turning it into a base from which to launch ballistic missiles and drones in order to threaten regional and international security and stability and international shipping routes in the Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. We once again call on the Security Council and the international community to reconsider how they deal with the Houthi militias and to correct the false narratives that have compounded the crisis, prolonged the conflict and enabled the Houthis to defy the will of the Council and the international community and threaten other countries in the region.

While we are grateful for the efforts of the United Nations to secure the release of the staff members of United Nations agencies, international and local organizations and diplomatic missions operating in Yemen whom the militias have detained for more than six months, those endeavours have been confined to proposing repeated invitations and meetings to the Houthi militia leaders, some of whom are on terrorist lists. That has emboldened them to continue their violations and crimes and to disregard the calls from the Council and the international community for the release of the detainees, and it is a demonstration of the inability of the United Nations to exert any real pressure in order to protect its staff and save lives.

Since mounting their coup, the Houthi militias have continued to commit further crimes and violations against Yemenis, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The devastation and destruction has left no corner of Yemen untouched, and Yemenis are enduring an unbearable humanitarian and economic situation. The militias have robbed them of their lives, security and future, sparked wars and crises, stoked racism and division and targeted civilian objects and densely populated residential urban areas and markets with missiles and drones, killing dozens of innocent civilians, mostly women and children, in horrific scenes.

Following the criminal attack on a popular market in Taiz at the beginning of last month, the Houthi militias dropped artillery on civilian homes in the village of Al-Bumiyah, located in the Maqbanah district in Taiz governorate, killing two children and wounding two others, all of them from the same family. Recently, the Houthi militias besieged and attacked the villages of Hanaka Al-Masoud and Al-Khashaa in Qifa Radaa, located in Al-Bayda governorate, using drones, tanks and artillery, resulting in many casualties, including women and children.

I had hoped that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General would point out who is perpetrating those crimes and undermining pacification efforts and obstructing the achievement of peace. The militias are also blowing up many homes in those villages, sowing terror among women and children, preventing the rescue of the wounded and the delivery of food supplies, cutting off water, denying farmers access to their fields and depriving them of life-saving healthcare, in addition to deploying massive military reinforcements and dozens of heavily armed Houthi fighters. The militias also launched a large-scale campaign of arrests of village residents on the basis of trumped-up charges, as a pretext for their physical liquidation or enforced disappearance. Those crimes amount to war crimes.



In addition, the militia is also perpetrating abductions and enforced disappearances; arresting politicians, academics, activists and journalists for their political, human rights and media activities; and perpetrating the most heinous violations against Yemeni women, abducting them from their homes and workplaces, forcing them into secret prisons and committing acts of violence and extortion against them, in addition to harassment, sexual assault and psychological and physical torture. Those militias also continue to lure children to death camps, transforming schools into camps and classrooms into training camps, in which children are taught to use weapons and indoctrinated with extremist ideas, in the largest recruitment operation in modern history.

Those militias have also turned the gates of cities, villages, farms and roads into minefields that have permanently disabled and killed thousands of civilians. Those criminal practices have caused the largest wave of internal displacement ever witnessed in Yemen, with millions of Yemenis forced to flee to internally displaced persons camps under difficult humanitarian and living conditions. The fact that those militias continue to commit such brutal crimes against innocent civilians in the areas under their control and are met with international silence emboldens them to persist in their crimes and amounts to disregard for innocent lives and a flagrant and unprecedented violation of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and domestic law.

The Presidential Leadership Council is working hard to address the many challenges and support the Yemeni Government's efforts to provide services, alleviate human suffering, jump-start economic performance, support the comprehensive reform process, improve the performance of institutions at the central and local levels, urgently address the challenges posed by the economic and service situation, finalize measures to strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms, enhance public revenue and redouble efforts to facilitate the humanitarian community's interventions. In that context, we highly value the fact that our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have stood with the people of Yemen, alleviating the human suffering.

The Yemeni Government appeals to brotherly and friendly countries and international donor organizations to provide urgent support to respond to the priorities of the current situation. Those priorities include supporting the economic rescue plan and the strategy of the Presidential Leadership Council in dealing with the challenges resulting from this war, the Houthi militias' continued escalation and its catastrophic consequences on the economic and humanitarian situation.

We express our great thanks and appreciation to our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the economic support that they recently provided to the Yemeni Government in the amount of \$500 million, including a deposit of \$300 million to the Central Bank of Yemen. That support will contribute to meeting the State's needs and unavoidable obligations, foremost among which is the payment of employee salaries.

Lastly, we appreciate the United Kingdom's role in convening a high-level ministerial meeting, in partnership with the Yemeni Government, at United Nations Headquarters early next week, with the aim of mobilizing economic and political support for the Government's steps towards institutional reform and addressing the current economic challenges.

**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 11.35 a.m.*