



# Security Council

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## Letter dated 18 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of the briefings by Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Indonesia, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on the situation in the Middle East (Yemen) convened on Thursday, 14 May 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Yemen.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* **Sven Jürgenson**  
President of the Security Council



**Annex I****Statement by the Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths**

I want to start by extending my warmest wishes to the people of Yemen and to Muslims across the world for the holy month of Ramadan.

I come to the Council yet again to express hope instead of to report success. That is frustrating at a time when the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and a global economic downturn threaten to cause even more adversity in a country that has already experienced more than nearly any other. But I hope to illustrate to the Council today that an end to the fighting in Yemen is within close reach. The United Nations has provided a feasible road map. It is up to those with arms and power to make the decisions to achieve it.

Since the Secretary-General's March call for a ceasefire, people across Yemen have been speaking out forcefully to demand peace. In response, I shared with the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah at the end of March draft agreements on a nationwide ceasefire, humanitarian and economic measures and the urgent resumption of the political process. Since then, I have been engaged in intensive negotiations with the parties, identifying and building on points of convergence and proposing compromise texts where differences remain. The latest versions I shared with the parties represent a balanced and realistic package.

I am pleased to report that we have seen significant progress on those negotiations, in particular with respect to the ceasefire. That is the most important element. It responds directly to the calls of the Yemeni people, who desperately need a measure of calm to return to their lives. However, the ceasefire is part of the broader package that needs to be agreed in full, and differences remain on some of the humanitarian and economic measures in that package. I firmly believe all those measures are necessary and overdue. They are not new issues; the United Nations has been calling for them for a long time. They are there for the people of Yemen, not for the interests of one party or another. The parties should be able to agree on how to move forward with them quickly.

Those humanitarian and economic measures are also needed to help Yemen counter COVID-19, which is spreading at an unknown rate, given very low levels of testing. The measures include the creation of a joint operations cell between the parties to counter the virus, which would enable medical supplies and personnel to reach vulnerable populations. They also include a reaffirmation of the parties' prior commitments to release conflict-related detainees. In that regard, I hope and expect that the parties will immediately move forward with an implementation plan for the large-scale releases that they already committed to in February. I am extremely frustrated that so many Yemeni families have had to wait for additional months, entirely unnecessarily, to be reunited with their loved ones. The details of implementation should not become another matter of drawn-out negotiations.

The Government of Yemen has engaged very constructively with the United Nations proposals. That is extremely encouraging, and I am grateful to them. Ansar Allah has also engaged seriously and positively with the United Nations proposals. Those are important indications of the willingness of the parties to make many of the compromises needed to bring peace to Yemen. Furthermore, the negotiations have benefited from concerted international and regional diplomatic support, including from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman, members of the Security Council and others. I am also grateful to the coalition for extending its ceasefire for the month of Ramadan. However, the people of Yemen are right to be frustrated about the slow pace of the negotiations. We all hope to see the negotiations soon come to a successful close.

Women's rights activists have shed light on the terrible consequences of the conflict for women and girls. Yemeni women have repeatedly demonstrated their leadership and activism, leading calls for a ceasefire and the release of prisoners and assisting the civilian population. I regularly consult the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group, and my Office is in contact with a diverse array of women's organizations. Women must continue to be at the forefront of peace efforts. I am absolutely convinced of that and want to reiterate my call that the parties include women in their negotiation delegations and decision-making, in line with the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference.

Furthermore, 3 May marked World Press Freedom Day. It was a reminder of the extraordinary risks that journalists in Yemen take to do their jobs. Without their reporting, we would be in the dark about much of the real costs of the conflict. The conflict has created an increasingly repressive environment for the media. All parties have an obligation to protect journalists and to uphold the freedom of the press. I am particularly concerned about the convictions, including death sentences, of 10 journalists by a Sana'a-based court last month. I call for the immediate release of all detained journalists.

The military situation in Yemen remains extremely concerning. In my last two briefings (see S/PV.8745 and S/2020/313), I raised alarm about the battle in Ma'rib. To my dismay, hostilities there continue. We are also seeing heavy fighting in Al-Bayda and Al-Dhale'e governorates. In Al-Hudaydah, ceasefire violations continue all too often. I am particularly concerned by the regular shelling of residential areas in the city and southern districts. The United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement continues to sustain dialogue with both parties, but its work is under strain. I regret to report that Colonel Muhammed Al-Sulayhi, the Government of Yemen liaison officer who was shot in March, died of his injuries. The death of Colonel Al-Sulayhi was tragic, and I extend my sincerest condolences to his family. I hope that the parties will find a way to overcome their mistrust and reactivate the Redeployment Coordination Committee and the joint mechanisms to implement the Al-Hudaydah Agreement.

Furthermore, I am deeply concerned about the situation in the south, where I fear a perfect storm is brewing. The people of Aden in particular face outbreaks of COVID-19 and other diseases believed to include malaria, cholera and dengue. Deaths are rising daily, but nobody knows exactly why because the health system is ill-equipped to diagnose and treat people. Exceptionally heavy flooding in late April damaged infrastructure and homes, exposing ailing infrastructure and exacerbating power outages. Long-deteriorating public services are now at a breaking point.

Against that precarious backdrop, the Southern Transitional Council's (STC) declaration of 25 April is particularly troubling. I am alarmed by their subsequent steps to make local institutions in Aden answerable to them. Adding to that dreadful mix, military tensions are now rising in the south, particularly in Abyan and Socotra. I call for immediate restraint. The Government of Yemen and the STC must intensify efforts towards the urgent implementation of the Riyadh agreement. Implementation would help ensure responsive governance and improved service delivery in Aden. It would also provide for the STC's inclusion in the Government's negotiation delegation in a resumed United Nations-led political process aimed at ending the national conflict. That is important to make the political process more inclusive.

I want to raise another concerning development. On 16 April, Ansar Allah announced that it would withdraw funds from the special account at the Al-Hudaydah branch of the Central Bank of Yemen. My Office has repeatedly requested documentation from Ansar Allah that is needed to verify the special account activity.

I have written to the leadership of Ansar Allah to personally reiterate that request, and we are working with both parties to find a way forward.

I expect that by the next time I brief the Council, I will be able to report success on our negotiations. I expect the parties to adopt the agreements imminently, so that we can turn our attention to the next steps.

After the agreements are adopted, the parties would swiftly resume the political process, which would be aimed at concluding an agreement to comprehensively end the conflict and outline political and security arrangements for a transitional period. The transitional period would give Yemen an opportunity to escape the misery of conflict. It would allow for the focus to shift towards reconstruction, recovery and reconciliation. It would pave the way for a future in which, instead of hunger, sickness and loss, Yemenis' essential needs would be met, and their families would be safe. Journalists would freely report, and the freedom of movement would be upheld. Women would speak out and lead without risking repression. Instead of anxiety and bleakness, Yemeni youth would hold high hopes for their futures. Yemen's State institutions would serve citizens equitably, rather than serving the narrow interests of the political elite. And differences would be resolved through partnership and dialogue.

Such a future for Yemen is eminently realistic and possible. The draft agreements that my Office has put on the table would place Yemen at the beginning of that path. The outcome is in the hands of the parties. The Council has a vital role to play in supporting them and, more important, the Yemeni people, along the path towards peace.

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## Annex II

### **Statement by the Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ramesh Rajasingham**

In last month's briefing (see S/2020/313), we reported that Yemen had confirmed only one case of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). As of this morning, that figure had jumped to 72 confirmed cases, including 13 deaths. Sixty-two of the cases — more than 85 per cent — were reported in just the last 10 days. Humanitarian agencies have every reason to believe that community transmission is taking place across the country. Official reports are lagging behind actual infections, just as they have in many other places.

As in the rest of the world, millions of people in Yemen are deeply frightened at the prospect of an unknown disease ravaging their country. The Secretary-General acknowledged that fear last month, noting that people everywhere “want to know what to do and where to turn for advice”. He also urged that the global approach to COVID-19 be transparent, responsive and accountable. Authorities in Yemen are seeking support. We must all work together to confront the virus. That means reporting cases everywhere, keeping people informed, caring for the sick and following expert advice. This approach has flattened the curve in other countries, and it can do the same in Yemen.

This is the backdrop against which I will update the Council today on the five overall priorities for the wider humanitarian response: the protection of civilians, humanitarian access and delivery, funding, the economy and progress towards peace.

Let us start with protection of civilians. We welcome the coalition's decision to extend its unilateral ceasefire through the holy month of Ramadan. Like the Special Envoy, we hope this will soon translate into a mutual agreement to end all fighting on the ground. Recent clashes in Al-Hudaydah, Ma'rib, Al-Jawf, Al-Bayda, Abyan, Socotra and elsewhere show we are not there yet. Civilian casualties rose again in April, with 177 civilians killed or injured across the country. In the first quarter of 2020, six attacks on health facilities were reported — a threefold increase from the previous quarter. At least one such attack was reported in April, despite the pandemic. International humanitarian law requires all parties to take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects throughout military operations. COVID-19 makes it all the more critical to respect and protect medical facilities in line with international law.

COVID-19 appears to be directly exacerbating protection risks. On 6 April, armed men threw grenades at the guards of an isolation centre at a hospital in Al Dhale'e. Fear of stigma may also be leading fewer people to seek medical care when they need it. For refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, stigma is already a grave concern. Reports are growing of refugees and migrants forcibly deported or detained owing to COVID-19 fears. Incitement against these people — many of whom already endured horrific trauma on their journey to Yemen — is rising.

I want to echo recent calls by the Secretary-General, the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration and others in favour of knowledge and social cohesion over rumour and scapegoating. Truly, this is the time for what the Secretary-General has called “science and solidarity.” Over the years, Yemen has distinguished itself by its generous support for refugees and migrants. The United Nations remains eager to support the Yemeni authorities and communities in upholding that noble tradition as we work with them counter COVID-19 across the country.

The second issue is humanitarian access, which is also required under international humanitarian law. We are working with all stakeholders to take appropriate precautions against COVID-19 while maintaining life-saving assistance. But there are several causes for concern. Regular staff rotations are impossible, as aid workers lack predictable access to flights into or out of the country. Nor do we know whether medical evacuations, if required, would be quickly approved. These issues are essential to fulfilling our duty of care to staff.

We have also noted a disturbing increase, mainly in the north, in harassment and incitement against the United Nations. This needlessly makes our work more dangerous and sometimes forces partners to pause activities at the very time they are needed most. We are asking the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah authorities to work with us on these points as a matter of urgency, including with renewed commitments to aid workers' safety and security.

I want to acknowledge the constructive role of Member States in helping to facilitate passenger flights. The Government of Ethiopia has allowed the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service to use Addis Ababa airport for several flights. The Evacuation and Humanitarian Operations Cell in Riyadh has also been helpful.

Unfortunately, we also continue to face obstacles to our work that predate the pandemic. In the south, the greatest challenge remains volatility. Rising tensions and renewed clashes are weakening governance and public services, as well as complicating agencies' ability to plan and implement programmes reliably.

Government processes are too cumbersome and at times interfere with the independence of aid. Dozens of non-governmental organization (NGO) projects have waited months for approval in the south, effectively blocking \$100 million in donor funding. Visa delays for international staff also remain a concern.

In the north, access challenges are even more severe. As we noted last month, the authorities recently made several important improvements, and we appreciate this progress. But more is still needed. The most urgent priority is to approve 93 pending NGO projects, many of which have been waiting for months and together represent \$180 million in donor investments. We also need more effective procedures for future projects and an end to arbitrary movement delays, detentions, harassment and interference in aid operations.

Over the past several days, we had an opportunity to remind senior Ansar Allah officials of all the steps required to put in place the same minimum humanitarian conditions expected everywhere else in the world. We will continue to work with them to achieve the quick results we need to create a more enabling environment for humanitarian action.

On a separate note, we also continue to call for access to the decaying *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. Last week, a senior representative of the authorities in Sana'a wrote to the United Nations to highlight the "urgent necessity" of an assessment. We welcome this enthusiasm and are following up to confirm Ansar Allah authorities will indeed facilitate this work without again imposing unnecessary conditions.

Despite the enormous challenges our teams are facing, we are doing everything we can to stay, deliver and reach as many people as possible. There are many factors impacting our capacity to deliver aid, including restrictions, lack of funding and measures we are forced to take to mitigate the risks we face. Nonetheless, we are still reaching more than 10 million people every month. These large-scale programmes provide food, water, health care and other services. They offer some of the best chances for people to protect themselves against COVID-19.

COVID-19-specific activities are also expanding. Thirty-eight hospitals are being equipped to serve as COVID-19 facilities. Rapid response teams are working in every district. Health workers are being trained and essential supplies delivered — including ventilators, tests, reagents and personal-protective items for health workers. Massive quantities of COVID-19 supplies are needed across the country, which is why we are asking everyone to give Yemen the highest priority in COVID-19 global supply chains.

However, we desperately need money to pay for these programmes. This brings me to my third point: funding for the aid operation. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently wrote to the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah authorities in Sana'a to inform them that WHO must progressively reduce its activities due to lack of funding. The COVID-19 rapid response teams that I just mentioned will shut down next month. Therapeutic-feeding centres, which treat the most severely malnourished children, will close by August.

In this midst of a pandemic, this is shocking. Preventing disease and feeding sick children are the kinds of programmes that everyone agrees should be protected at all costs. Other essential activities are also at risk. Of 41 major United Nations programmes, 31 will start closing down in the next few weeks if we cannot secure additional funds. That means many more people are likely to die.

We are urgently appealing to donors to release funds now to sustain principled aid operations. Agencies estimate they will need up to \$2 billion to cover essential activities from June through December.

These requirements reflect a tightly prioritized response strategy that will be published later this month. The strategy is based on painstaking work that agencies have done over the last few months to ensure manageable levels of risk in a country where millions of people are acutely vulnerable and need help.

On 2 June, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Nations will host a virtual pledging conference. That event will offer an important opportunity to show civilians that the international community will not abandon them while they still urgently need help. Donors have started to signal support, including a large pledge by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and an announcement of lifeline funding from the United States.

However, pledges remain far below what is required, and most still have not been paid. By themselves, pledges cannot save lives. We are calling on all donors to pledge generously and pay quickly — ideally before the event on 2 June. We realize aid budgets are shrinking everywhere and greatly appreciate donors' support.

The fourth issue is the economy. Yemen imports almost everything. For the past several months, commercial food imports through Al-Hudaydah and Saleef have been falling. In April, they totalled just 195,000 metric tons — one of the lowest figures to date. Fuel imports rose considerably in the same period, likely due to lower oil prices.

Imports must be paid for in hard currency. A weak Yemeni rial — approximately 600 rial to the United States dollar in the north, and 690 in the south — means fewer people can afford the basic goods they need to survive. The current exchange rate, three times higher than before the crisis, is severely limiting the Government's ability to finance imports or pay for public services.

COVID-19 is poised to make these dynamics even worse. Remittances from abroad — the largest source of foreign exchange in Yemen — are falling, although by how much is difficult to quantify. Yemenis who still have jobs at home often depend

on day labour. These workers need daily wages to feed their families, and many will be ill-equipped to restrict movements or comply with similar COVID-19 regulations.

We need bold action to stabilize the economy and soften the blow of measures that may be necessary to protect public health. Such support should include regular foreign-exchange injections and steps to quickly increase quantities of affordable food and other goods in markets across the country. As much as possible, Yemeni migrants should be allowed to continue working abroad.

My last point is on progress towards peace. Peace is the best chance Yemen has to contain COVID-19, and we hope the parties will work with the Special Envoy to make it a reality. This is essential not just for public health, but for the sake of millions of Yemenis who, even before this pandemic, were exhausted after five years of a war they had never wanted.



## Annex III

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve**

Let me begin by addressing the announcement by the Southern Transitional Council: we are concerned and urge all parties to exercise restraint and engage in an inclusive dialogue that addresses the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis, including in the south. We emphasize the importance of implementing the Riyadh and Stockholm agreements and encourage continued political engagement under the auspices of the United Nations.

We fully support the efforts of the Special Envoy to secure a nationwide ceasefire, confidence-building measures and the resumption of an inclusive political process. In this regard, we welcome the extension of the coalition's unilateral ceasefire and urge the Houthis to join the Government of Yemen by immediately following suit.

The humanitarian situation described by Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, remains deeply disturbing. Half of the people in need — approximately 12.24 million people — are children. As more cases of coronavirus disease are confirmed, I commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the entire humanitarian community in Yemen for their efforts to save lives and preserve dignity. In response to the call last month for increased financing, Belgium will continue its contribution of €5 million to Yemen's Country-based Pooled Fund this year. Amid the pandemic, which have brought dire times to us all, our solidarity with the fate of the Yemeni people remains strong. Belgium's humanitarian assistance will reach a record amount of almost €200 million this year, with a strong focus on flexible disbursement mechanisms, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds.

I also reiterate the importance of humanitarian access. We remain concerned about the obstruction of humanitarian assistance and remind all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. There must be accountability for violations.

Women have been particularly impacted by the crisis in Yemen. We are extremely concerned about reports of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as well as of intimidation and arbitrary detention, including of women human-rights defenders. What women-led civil society organizations are achieving is impressive — such as negotiating prisoner releases — often with little means or official recognition. We urge parties to fulfil their commitments for women to fully and meaningfully participate in the peace process, including by implementing the national action plan for women and peace and security, and we are counting on the Special Envoy to promote and facilitate the realization of these goals.

In conclusion, I repeat the importance of economic recovery and of access for the United Nations to the *FSO SAFER* tanker.

**Annex IV****Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Yao Shaojun**

I thank Special Envoy Griffiths and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham for their briefings. China commends their efforts to promote a national ceasefire and improve the humanitarian situation in Yemen. These efforts are particularly significant in the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

China has been following the situation in Yemen closely. We support the ceasefire appeal made by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy. We welcome the extended unilateral ceasefire made by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the coalition. All parties should make further efforts in the same vein so as, together, to reach and sustain a complete ceasefire.

China shares the concern of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy about the instability in southern Yemen. The Council already issued a press statement in this regard (see SC/14094), calling for expeditious implementation of the Riyadh agreement. We reiterate the importance of the Riyadh agreement, which serves the interests of all parties. Confrontation and escalation are the last thing the Yemeni people need, especially at this difficult moment.

A political settlement is the only way forward to end the conflict in Yemen. Years of conflict have proved there will be no winners in this war. China supports the Special Envoy's efforts to secure a nationwide ceasefire, enhance confidence-building measures in humanitarian and economic areas and restart an inclusive political process.

It is imperative that all parties to the conflict strengthen their political will and engage in broad dialogue and consultations. We urge all parties to remain in close contact under the coordination of Mr. Griffiths, and encourage countries of the region to continue to play a positive role. For China, our message is clear and consistent: a political settlement is necessary. Our Embassy in Yemen has been actively engaged with the Government of Yemen and other parties in the country.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is alarming, and compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, floods, power shortages and other challenges. The fundamental interests of the Yemeni people are at stake. We urge all parties to demonstrate unity, jointly fight the pandemic and improve the livelihoods of the Yemeni people. Last week, China donated 10,000 N95 face masks to Yemen's Ministry of Health as well as other humanitarian assistance, such as rice. We call on the international community and donor countries to step up essential assistance to Yemen, especially in the forthcoming virtual high-level pledging event, to be held on 2 June. Meanwhile, the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen must be fully respected.

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**Annex V****Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic, José Singer Weisinger**

We would like to thank Martin Griffiths and Ramesh Rajasingham for their briefings.

Since our previous meeting (see S/2020/313), the situation in Yemen has deteriorated considerably. Let me turn first to the political context. The Southern Transitional Council declaration regarding a state of emergency and self-administration throughout the south is cause for concern that a new civil war will erupt in that part of the country. We know that it has been met with dismay from leaders of most southern governorates.

Apart from aggravating the already-volatile situation and complicating the country's response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the announcement raises serious concerns regarding the management of important institutions such as the Central Bank and port of Aden. Yemen does not need further political fragmentation. Therefore, we reiterate that all parties need to scale up efforts to fully implement the Riyadh agreement.

Fighting continues in north and central Yemen, and the Ma'rib region continues to be threatened. We urge all parties to the conflict to cease hostilities and get back to the negotiating table without further delay.

Secondly, let me turn to the pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports full-blown transmission of the virus in Yemen, with the disease spreading undetected among a population with some of the lowest levels of immunity to disease as compared with populations in other countries. Testing capabilities are inadequate, and we would like to echo WHO's call to local authorities to transparently report confirmed cases. We are also aware that the ability to care for patients has been hampered by credible threats and perceived risks targeting certain international health-care workers. This is unacceptable and a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

Yemen urgently needs a unified response to the potential ramifications of the pandemic. This includes both an increase in health-sector spending and short-term fiscal policies that will mitigate the impact of a lockdown.

Furthermore, given the spread of COVID-19, authorities on both sides of the front lines should work to release political detainees, including all journalists held by the Houthis.

Another effect of the pandemic relates to the stigmatization of, and xenophobia towards, migrants in Yemen as "transmitters of disease". Xenophobia and scapegoating campaigns are leading to retaliation against those vulnerable communities, including physical and verbal harassment, forced quarantine, denial of access to health services, movement restrictions and forced movements to front-line and desert areas, leaving them stranded without food, water or essential services.

The Special Envoy has said that Yemen cannot fight on two fronts — the war and the pandemic. I would venture to say that there are not two but four fronts, if we include climate extremes and the locust plague.

Significant gains have been made against desert-locust encroachment in Yemen, which is proof of what can happen when the authorities and the international community join efforts and work together. Still, the battle is a long one and is not yet over. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

more people are at risk of losing their livelihoods and of worsening food security in the coming months.

We would like to express our full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy and his goal of fully including women and young people at all stages of the peace process. Voices such as that of Olla Al-Sakkaf, the young Yemeni peacebuilder, must be heard. In her briefing to the Council last month, she made the point that in her short life she has attended more funerals than weddings. Discussions on the future of Yemen must include the presence and input of younger generations.

Finally, we urge all parties to cease hostilities immediately and work together to rebuild their country. The Dominican Republic stands ready to support all efforts towards that goal, which is the only possible way to achieve the peace and progress that Yemenis want and deserve.

## Annex VI

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I would like to thank Special Envoy Griffiths and Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ramesh Rajasingham for their briefings.

It is most worrisome that we are still witnessing fighting in Yemen despite the pressing need to cease military activity and focus on containing the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We reiterate the call made by the Secretary-General to cease hostilities in Yemen, focus on reaching a negotiated political settlement and do everything possible to counter the outbreak of COVID-19. With reportedly nearly half of the health facilities not functioning in Yemen, the spread of the virus would have devastating consequences for the people of Yemen, who are already suffering in the largest humanitarian crisis.

We welcome the coalition forces' announcement of a one-month extension of the ceasefire, and we urge the Houthis to uphold it as well. It is time for all sides to stop military activity and to resume talks, as that is the only way to effectively confront the pandemic, which poses a common threat to for everyone. We urge the parties to engage with the Special Envoy constructively and without delay and to make efforts to reach an agreement on starting a formal political process for ending the crisis.

In addition to the ongoing fighting in the north, the latest developments in southern Yemen are also of great concern. The declaration of self-rule by the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and the subsequent clashes between the STC and Government forces undermine the efforts of the Special Envoy to resume talks and to end the war. We call on the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council to cease military activity and to continue to implement the Riyadh agreement, which would allow both parties to participate in the political talks on resolving the conflict in Yemen.

A solution to the conflict can be achieved only through a political compromise that addresses the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis. This calls for an inclusive and comprehensive political process mediated by the United Nations, with full and meaningful participation by women and young people.

We welcome the announcement by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding the hosting of a donor conference on 2 June to support Yemen. Regrettably, the restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid in Yemen are still in place and prevent aid organizations from helping those in need. Respecting humanitarian principles and securing unhindered and safe humanitarian access is an obligation for all parties to conflict. Securing the delivery of humanitarian supplies, including medical equipment, is especially important for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

We also stress the necessity for all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law and to ensure accountability for all violations and abuses. Special attention needs to be given to the protection of vulnerable populations, in particular women and children. We also call for the release of arbitrarily detained persons, including journalists and human rights defenders, who are facing the threat of contracting COVID-19 in crowded prisons.

Finally, I would like to once more reiterate our call on the Houthis to allow United Nations officials access to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker without delay in order to prevent an environmental disaster.

**Annex VII****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Anne Gueguen**

I would like to thank our briefers for their comprehensive updates.

In addition to continued warfare, Yemen is now facing the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It is high time that the Yemeni parties seize the opportunity to make peace by agreeing an immediate and lasting ceasefire and by engaging and agreeing a comprehensive political solution. A global and immediate ceasefire, as called for by the Secretary-General, is indeed required to fight the pandemic. France welcomes in that regard the announcement by Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the coalition, of the unilateral cessation of their attacks for another month.

Nevertheless, my country remains preoccupied by the fact that fighting is still ongoing in various areas in Yemen. We reiterate our call on those fighting in Yemen to immediately cease hostilities. It is now more essential than ever that they fully engage with the Special Envoy to reach a lasting nationwide ceasefire.

It is also all the more necessary to pursue efforts leading the parties to accept the crisis meeting that the Special Envoy has called for, at least to coordinate efforts to fight the pandemic. France therefore calls on the parties to continue in a more constructive manner and without delay their discussions on Martin Griffiths's proposals for a ceasefire, confidence-building measures and the resumption of a political settlement of the crisis. We would like to reiterate our full support to Martin Griffiths to that end. The participation of women must also be ensured.

France also urges the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council to fully implement the Riyadh agreement in the south of Yemen, where calm and a cessation of hostilities should prevail. That Council must respect the territorial integrity and unity of Yemen.

All parties must respect international humanitarian law, in particular in terms of the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, and ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access, including the protection of humanitarian and health personnel and facilities. This is more necessary than ever in order to facilitate the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

We are, of course, deeply worried by the spread of the pandemic in Yemen. The Yemeni population is extremely vulnerable, as it includes a very high proportion of children, as the Permanent Representative of Belgium recalled. Only half of the medical infrastructure is fully operational, while humanitarian needs have continued to increase in a country where 80 per cent of the population depends on humanitarian assistance for its survival. The financial and economic consequences of the pandemic are also already being felt, further weakening and hurting one of the most deprived peoples in the world.

Efforts to prevent and respond to the spread of the pandemic must be scaled up. It is crucial to overcome the shortage of essential supplies and equipment, including tests, protective equipment and ventilators. Coordination between all relevant actors, including the Yemeni parties, is key in this regard, as our briefers have highlighted. Humanitarian and health personnel and facilities must be protected and supported and obtain the access and freedom of movement that they need.

Lastly, it is crucial and urgent to ensure United Nations access to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which constitutes a serious threat to the environment, as an oil

leak could have a dramatic impact on the region. As stressed by previous speakers, continued inaction is dangerous.

In conclusion, France remains fully engaged and committed to finding a solution aimed at ending the war in Yemen and, more broadly, to ensure de-escalation in the region.

## Annex VIII

### **Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations, Muhsin Syihab**

I wish to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham for their updates.

It is unfortunate that, despite the robust efforts of these gentlemen and their teams, things are still worrisome on the ground. Nevertheless, we are pleased to hear from the Special Envoy that the Government of Yemen has engaged constructively with the Special Envoy's proposals and that the Houthis also responded. We hope that these efforts will soon bear fruit.

Almost every day we read about incidents involving an escalation of the violence, armed groups taking control in the south, open conflict in the north, an increasing number of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infections, a deterioration of the economy and the plummeting value of the Yemeni rial. Such news is in addition to reports that 80 per cent of the population — about 24 million people — are still relying on humanitarian aid, with 10 million at risk of starvation.

If nothing changes in the coming months, there could be complete collapse in Yemen, with no one gaining anything from the struggle for control. We therefore fully support the efforts made by the Special Envoy to end the conflict and the suffering of the people of Yemen.

My delegation would like to highlight three points.

First, I would recall all of the agreed commitments. Considering how difficult it has been for the parties to even sit at the same table, the commitments laid out in the Stockholm and Riyadh agreements are monumental. We must therefore avoid the temptation to toss aside already implemented commitments just because others cannot yet be implemented.

In our view, where there are contentious issues, the parties should focus on what can be implemented and work hard to make progress incrementally, as every step towards peace counts.

In that connection, we reiterate our strong concern at the declaration made by the Southern Transitional Council and reaffirm our commitment to Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. It is critical to expedite the implementation of the Riyadh agreement.

Secondly, I would touch on the issue of permitting humanitarian assistance and supporting the authorities in addressing COVID-19. COVID-19 is a potent threat in Yemen, with the pandemic spreading fast and capable of being as deadly as the war itself. As the Assistant Secretary-General mentioned, as of this morning there were 72 confirmed cases, including 13 deaths; previous reports indicated that Yemen had only one confirmed case. Sadly, with the health care system worn down by war, there is no capability in the country to respond.

Indonesia therefore calls on the authorities to be transparent so as to enable the international community to respond accordingly and to allow the delivery of appropriate humanitarian assistance.

Thirdly, I would make a plea for the parties to work with the Special Envoy. We are in the holy month of Ramadan and will soon celebrate Eid al-Fitr, a wonderful time for the Ummah. There is no better time than this for the parties to lay down their weapons and focus on crafting a political settlement. At least we can have a humanitarian pause at least until Eid al-Fitr, allowing room for dialogue and for the



Special Envoy to work on the proposals and humanitarian workers to assist in the COVID-19 response.

In that connection, we welcome the coalition's extension of the unilateral ceasefire and urge the Houthi to reciprocate immediately so as to stop the hostilities as well as counter COVID-19.

We all hope for a miracle in Yemen, but that can happen only if all parties commit to implementing previous agreements and engage constructively with the Special Envoy to resume the political process.

**Annex IX****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their briefings on recent developments in the security situation in Yemen.

Last month we welcomed not only the unilateral ceasefire announced by the coalition but also the prospects for a comprehensive cessation of hostilities in Yemen through the very encouraging peace initiative proposed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

The current situation on the ground, marked in particular by the declaration of the Southern Transitional Council proclaiming the autonomy of southern Yemen, is deeply worrisome and reminds us that our hopes were short-lived and that our mobilization must be even stronger. My delegation calls on all parties to respect the various agreements previously reached and calls on them to resume dialogue. Today more than ever, the parties in conflict in Yemen must convince themselves that military force will not resolve their differences.

In the light of the events happening in the south and with a view to future peace negotiations, a more inclusive approach is needed to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict that involves, in addition to the Government and the Houthi, the other major representative groups in the country. We also call on regional actors and Council members with influence on the parties to spare no effort to help move the ceasefire talks forward.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, my delegation remains concerned about the consequences of the recent floods in several parts of the country, which have caused loss of life and injuries and made thousands of families homeless. The beginning of the rainy season in Yemen could make the situation of a number of families that have already been displaced and exposed to various diseases, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), even more difficult.

The continued fighting in the country, particularly in Aden, Ma'rib and Al-Bayda, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, could slow down the flow of basic products and medicines throughout the country and worsen the already difficult living conditions of thousands of families. Yemen will not be able to cope with war, epidemics and floods at the same time. That is why we urge the warring parties to take greater responsibility to put an end to the military offensives. We call on them to lift the restrictions on the movement of humanitarian agencies so as to provide aid and assistance to a population that has been suffering for years from war and whose level of general immunity is decreasing day by day.

We appeal to the international community and to the Security Council in particular to spare no effort to prevent the worsening of one of the most catastrophic humanitarian situations the world has ever experienced.

In conclusion, the Niger reaffirms its full support for Martin Griffiths's continued efforts to silence the guns in Yemen and to bring the parties to make peace in the country.

**Annex X****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

We welcome both of our briefers and thank them for their continued commitment to the Yemeni people.

It is with regret that we must now accept that Yemen is fighting on two fronts. Years of war have destroyed many of the country's institutions, and now the Yemeni people are contending with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the transmission of which continues to increase. As a result of the long-standing conflict, Yemen's health-care system has been shattered and is under strain, with only half of its hospitals operational.

Most of the population still desperately needs humanitarian aid, as they lack food, drinking water, fuel and access to health care. In that regard, the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian relief in accordance with international law is key for the survival of many people. The scaling down of some operations and the possible closure of others represent the difference between life and death, and we take this opportunity to thank those countries and agencies that continue to sustain aid operations through their donations.

The impact of COVID-19 will be felt acutely across the country, where many are grappling with lost livelihoods. The situation in Yemen remains the world's largest humanitarian crisis, and it is unthinkable that the humanitarian needs of people will be worsened with the impact of COVID-19. It is critical, therefore, that the international community assist in strengthening the capacity of the Yemeni Government to protect people's lives and livelihoods in future, and we welcome the humanitarian pledging conference elaborated by Ramesh.

Amid the COVID-19 response, there remains a need for a political solution to the protracted crisis. We welcome the extension of the ceasefire and emphasize the need for Yemeni responsibility and collective ownership over the political process in Yemen. That is the only path to a dignified advancement of Yemen, its institutions and political expressions. In order to strengthen the sociocultural rubric necessary for sustainable peace, it is critical that all groups in society be included throughout the political process.

In conclusion, we once again underscore the need for progress in addressing concerns over the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which threatens the marine environment, as well as the lives of many people in the region.

Like Mr. Griffiths, I remain hopeful, on behalf of the Yemeni people, that sustainable peace can be achieved and their dignity restored.

**Annex XI****Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

We thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Ramesh Rajasingham for their briefings. South Africa supports the Special Envoy's efforts to find a peaceful solution to the situation in Yemen amid the calamitous circumstances of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Mr. Rajasingham gave a worrisome briefing, in particular about the imminent closure of much-needed health services, especially those provided by the World Health Organization and numerous non-governmental organizations. We hope that donor countries will respond generously to the 2 June meeting Ramesh reported on.

We welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to our deliberations this morning.

My delegation would like to reiterate that Yemen's ongoing dire humanitarian situation is linked to the political impasse. As such our intervention will focus on two elements.

On the humanitarian situation, South Africa notes that there is a growing number of confirmed cases of COVID-19. With only half of the health facilities across the country fully functional due to the previous heavy bombing and attacks, Yemen is simply not equipped to handle a full-scale COVID-19 outbreak. The virus is now reaching the north of Yemen, home to some of the most vulnerable children and families in this humanitarian catastrophe. If the crisis is not addressed, an entire generation will suffer long-term physical and psychological consequences.

In line with and in support of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in the context of this deadly pandemic and in order to allow unhindered humanitarian access, South Africa welcomes the ongoing measures taken by both the National Government of Accord and the Houthis to curb the spread of COVID-19 — closing airports, schools, cafes and wedding halls to varying degrees, as well as conducting temperature tests at several entry points to the country. Those actions highlight the ability of both sides to work together towards a common goal. However, the violence must stop so that the Yemeni people, health workers and aid organizations can focus on slowing the spread of the virus and mitigating its social and economic impact.

In view of that, South Africa urges the parties to the conflict to allow expert staff to travel to all affected parts of Yemen to provide much needed support and other humanitarian relief. We furthermore impress upon all parties the need to refrain from actions that would deprive civilians of their right to food and health care. We remind the parties to the conflict that all necessary measures should be taken to respect their obligations under the Geneva Conventions.

On the political impasse, it is important that all parties avoid compounding the current humanitarian disaster and commit to resuming the political negotiation process. The key to a peaceful resolution lies in the political willingness of all parties to the conflict to meaningfully engage in discussions and be amenable to conceding some of their demands. Only then can there be lasting peace in Yemen and social and economic rebuilding of the country.

The implementation of the Riyadh agreement has stalled. South Africa wishes to reiterate its call for the implementation of this vital agreement between the Yemeni Government and the Southern Transitional Council, as well as the full implementation of the December 2018 Stockholm Agreement. The Stockholm

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Agreement and process are key to the lasting peace, stability and ultimate prosperity of Yemen.

South Africa encourages the parties to the conflict to pursue new confidence-building measures, such as the release of detainees and prisoners, an agreement on a set of nationwide measures to combat COVID-19, the release of all vessels held by either party in the seas off the coast of Yemen and any other measures that the parties believe could foster trust. South Africa reiterates its call that all parties to the conflict adhere to their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

South Africa remains concerned about the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker and the lack of progress in allowing technical experts to undertake an assessment and initial repair in order to avoid an environmental and economic catastrophe for Yemen and its neighbours. The threat must be dealt with on a purely technical basis, without politicization.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate that the only sustainable solution to this conflict is a fair and inclusive Yemeni-led and -owned negotiated political settlement that puts the interests and well-being of all the citizens of Yemen first. In that context, we also call for the full and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of an inclusive political process, and thank the women of Yemen for being in the forefront in calling for a ceasefire and the release of prisoners.

Let the Yemeni parties return to the inclusive Stockholm Agreement and national dialogue. The parties must be bold, courageous and decisive. These uncertain times have demonstrated that they cannot delay any further once an agreement is reached. They must act immediately for the sake of all.

**Annex XII****Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations,  
Jonathan Allen**

I thank Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Rajasingham for their briefings. I feel like we have been here, in this situation, before. We thank both briefers for their ongoing painstaking efforts in extremely difficult circumstances — Martin, for his resilience in trying constantly and consistently to shepherd the parties into talks, and Ramesh, for his long-term efforts and those of his team in what is one of the worst humanitarian situations in the world. So, it is with a very genuine sense that I thank them and their teams on behalf of the United Kingdom for what they are doing.

As Yemenis reflect and offer each other Ramadan blessings, they are being hit by the plight of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Officially, there are 50 reported cases, whereas United Kingdom-funded modelling suggests the number of Yemenis suffering from COVID-19 is already in the thousands. The United Kingdom has provided over \$940 million since the beginning of the pandemic to support the global response to COVID-19, and has also pledged \$2 billion to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, in order to vaccinate 75 million children against deadly infectious diseases around the world.

But I also want to encourage the Government and the Houthi authorities to continue engaging with the United Nations to ensure an effective national response. We call on the Houthi authorities to be transparent in reporting cases so that the World Health Organization can identify requirements, procure equipment and ensure that supplies reach those in need.

Martin Griffiths's proposals for a political framework and a nationwide ceasefire are truly the only game in town. There is no military option. We have proven that over several years. Those delaying agreements and talks are simply prolonging the misery of the people of Yemen for no obvious strategic or tactical advantage. The United Kingdom therefore resolutely supports Martin Griffiths's efforts, and I welcome the close coordination of the Ambassadors to Yemen of the five permanent members of the Security Council to that end.

I welcome Mr. Griffiths update that the Yemeni Government has responded to his most recent proposals. I urge also the Houthis to do the same. Martin says that they were engaged, but I think we need more than engagement. Yemenis cannot wait any longer and constructive engagement in a United Nations-led process is the only way to achieve the peace they deserve. I also want to echo the Special Envoy's comments on the importance of the inclusion of women in both the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group and in talks.

In the light of the COVID-19 outbreak, I again welcome the unilateral ceasefire and its subsequent extension, as announced by the Saudi-led coalition. It is important that fighting does not hamper efforts to tackle the outbreak. That move, which has not been reciprocated, demonstrates the serious intent of the coalition to bring an end to this dreadful conflict.

During this particularly crucial time in the peace process, I note with concern the evidence documented in the 21 April letter submitted by the United States to the Security Council Committees established pursuant to resolutions 2231 (2015) and 2140 (2014). That letter outlines evidence collected during two interdictions of vessels containing significant amounts of weapons and arms of apparent Iranian origin. I welcome the sharing of such information and encourage others to do the

same. Such arms shipments pose a grave impediment to the cause of peace in Yemen and they must stop.

The tragic situation in Yemen has been complicated further, to say the least, following the poorly timed declaration of the Southern Transitional Council. I welcome the swiftly agreed Security Council press statement on 29 April (SC/14176) regarding that declaration, and highlight the ongoing risk of violent clashes in the south. All parties have confirmed their support for the Riyadh agreement, so I call on them to engage with the Saudi-led efforts by de-escalating and implementing their obligations under the agreement.

We welcome Mr. Rajasingham's announcement and details on the holding of a virtual humanitarian pledging conference on 2 June. We strongly urge all donors to step up and provide significant and timely humanitarian funding. The United Kingdom has provided over \$1 billion in funding since the conflict began, and this year we will also be making a substantial pledge.

However, I note with concern that unprecedented access restrictions remain throughout Yemen. In the north, the Houthis must deliver on the minimum operating requirements that the international community has laid out clearly. Those include swiftly approving all sub-agreements, fully implementing the World Food Programme's retargeting and biometric pilot, and allowing humanitarian agencies to operate independently and freely. Donors will be able to give funding only if such restrictions are lifted and humanitarian organizations are able to deliver assistance effectively. We are also supportive of United Nations agency efforts to do everything they can to reduce risk and ensure aid is reaching those in need.

We remain extremely concerned that the Central Bank of Yemen will soon run out of foreign currency reserves, thus triggering an economic collapse with humanitarian and political consequences. Significant external financial assistance to the Central Bank is urgently needed to keep imports coming in, as the risk is now even greater due to the unpredictable secondary effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Government of Yemen must urgently put forth a credible plan to reassure potential donors of the implementation of the Riyadh agreement, with the Central Bank of Yemen remaining operationally neutral as negotiations proceed.

We have talked previously in the Council about the devastating impact that an oil leak from the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker would have on Yemen and the region. I once again urge the Houthis to either allow the removal of the oil or to allow a repair mission to proceed. Continued inaction on this issue is reckless, dangerous and threatens an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe.

I also note that prior to Ramadan, the Houthis promised to release members of the persecuted Baha'i faith. I call on the Houthis to release them and all who have been wrongly detained, including journalists — as indicated today by the Special Envoy. That is especially important in the context of COVID-19.

Finally, let me finish where I began. I want to thank Mr. Griffiths again for his continued efforts. He was right to talk at the beginning of his remarks of bringing us hope over progress, just as he was right to say that the hope is realistic. I also call on all in Yemen to bring real hope to the Yemeni people.

**Annex XIII****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I would like to thank the President of the Security Council. I would also like to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, in particular. Through the Secretary-General, I have been following all of Martin's meticulous work and I find his cautious optimism quite contagious. We have people rooting for him back here, especially in Kentucky. I know that this is a critical time for Yemen and that this issue is extremely delicate. The Special Envoy has our support. We know first-hand the many countless hours that he is investing in peace and security in Yemen. I also thank Mr. Rajasingham for his briefing, as well as both briefers' teams for all their work to achieve peace and security in Yemen.

The United States stands with the Yemeni people, who have suffered every imaginable hardship and are simply trying to survive in the midst of conflict, food insecurity, devastating floods and now the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

In the light of those hardships, we welcome the Saudi-led coalition's extension of its unilateral ceasefire in support of the United Nations peace process and efforts to fight COVID-19. The United States strongly urges the Houthis to join the Government of Yemen in support of this ceasefire by halting offensive operations so that all parties can focus their efforts on countering COVID-19 and working towards a lasting political resolution of the conflict.

The Houthis must recommit to de-escalation, followed by a resumption of talks aimed at reaching a political solution. We urge the parties to the conflict to continue to review and provide meaningful feedback on the Special Envoy's draft proposals, which represent the spirit of consensus required to move towards a lasting political settlement.

We note with concern the recent declaration by the Southern Transitional Council of its so-called self-administration of Yemen's southern governorates. Such actions by the Southern Transitional Council will only distract from United Nations-led efforts to secure a nationwide ceasefire and a political solution. We are also concerned by reports of increasing interference by the Southern Transitional Council in the operations of the Central Bank of Yemen. All parties must continue to respect the Government institutions underpinning Yemen's political and economic stability. We call on the Southern Transitional Council and the Government of the Republic of Yemen to re-engage in the political process provided for under the Riyadh agreement.

In addition, we remain concerned about the limitations on humanitarian access in Houthi-controlled areas. The Houthis' deliberate interference in assistance operations, which is in flagrant defiance of humanitarian principles, continues to limit the ability of the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations to provide for the needs of the most vulnerable Yemenis.

We acknowledge some steps taken by the Houthis in certain areas. These include the decision to lift the 2 per cent levy on aid projects, sign agreements with non-governmental organizations and approve key independent needs assessments. But further progress is critical, especially on biometric registration and ensuring that humanitarian staff can implement and monitor their programmes. The United States also strongly encourages the Houthis to be fully transparent and report COVID-19 cases in order to facilitate an effective response for the Yemeni people.

As we have said on previous occasions, the United States again calls on the Houthis to allow United Nations inspection and maintenance of the *FSO SAFER*



oil tanker. United Nations officials must have immediate access to the *FSO Safer* in order to prevent an environmental catastrophe, which would have far-reaching effects in Yemen and around the Red Sea. We are grateful to Martin Griffiths for continuing to raise this issue in Sana'a. The Houthis must stop blocking a solution to this problem and permit required assessments and repairs.

Finally, we urge all Member States to fully comply with the targeted arms embargo established by resolution 2216 (2015), and we note our continued concern at ongoing reports of Iranian interference in the conflict, including through the provision of lethal aid to the Houthis.

**Annex XIV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I would like to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham for their briefings and updates. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to our meeting today.

Once again, we welcome the unilateral ceasefire of the coalition and efforts to protect civilians and to save lives, especially amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We reaffirm our support for the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen. We remain concerned about the recent situation in Yemen.

With regard to humanitarian issues, Viet Nam welcomes the timely delivery of medical equipment and other supplies to the United Nations humanitarian team and stresses that it is high time to assist doctors and humanitarian workers to do their work to the best of their ability so as to help the Yemeni people to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, Viet Nam regrets to learn that the World Health Organization ordered staff to cease work in the Houthi-controlled areas. We are concerned that hundreds of humanitarian projects of non-governmental organizations have not been conducted. The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be fully implemented if humanitarian access continues to be hindered.

Viet Nam shares the concern raised by other members about the continued decrease in funding from donors. Yemen has received only \$455 million of the \$2 billion needed for humanitarian operations from June 2020 to December 2020. Against that backdrop, my delegation wishes to make the following observations.

First, we urge all parties to come to an immediate nationwide ceasefire in order to facilitate humanitarian work and the fight against COVID-19. The World Health Organization has warned that there will be full-blown transmission of the virus in Yemen. Therefore, it is essential for the parties concerned to cease hostilities and cooperate with United Nations teams to fight against the pandemic.

Secondly, we support the efforts of the United Nations and other partners in organizing the donor conference for Yemen expected to take place on 2 June. We call on international donors and other partners to fulfil their pledge to fund humanitarian operations in Yemen.

Thirdly, we join other members in calling on all relevant parties to fully implement the Stockholm and Riyadh Agreements with United Nations mediation. We also stress the importance of ensuring the meaningful participation of women in the political process and the protection of women and children.

Fourthly, we call on all parties to strengthen their cooperation with and support for Mr. Griffiths's three-pillar approach, including a nationwide ceasefire agreement, confidence-building measures and restarting a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned inclusive political process. We also urge the Government of Yemen and the Houthis to reinforce their engagement with a view to reaching an agreement on the Special Envoy's proposals as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we commend the tireless work and support the peace proposals of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and the United Nations team.

We call for closer cooperation and further efforts among the United Nations, international partners and all parties in Yemen to stop the ongoing hostilities, ensure unimpeded access to humanitarian aid and join hands to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Annex XV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations, Abdullah Ali Fadhel Al-Saadi**

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you and your friendly delegation every success. I also wish to extend my sincerest wishes of good health and well-being to all Council members in these challenging times.

This war waged by the Houthis has never been a choice for the Yemeni people, who long for peace and stability. The Yemeni Government has tried to avoid war and achieve peace in various ways, including by making successive concessions and responding in good faith to the calls of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his Special Envoy, as well as to the initiative by the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen. In addition, the Government of Yemen has welcomed the press statement of the Security Council (SC/14159) calling for a ceasefire on all fronts, uniting efforts and mobilizing resources to combat the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has overwhelmed the world and intensified the suffering of humankind.

The Government of Yemen reiterates its willingness to constructively and effectively engage with all genuine calls for comprehensive and sustainable peace in Yemen in accordance with the three agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, primarily resolution 2216 (2015), in order to build a better future free of armed militias, regionalism and the divine right to rule and establish a fair, democratic and civil federal State that lives up to the aspirations of all Yemeni people.

The Government of Yemen has responded to and engaged positively and flexibly with the recent proposals of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths for a comprehensive ceasefire, the implementation of economic and humanitarian measures and the resumption of the political process. However, as the Special Envoy's efforts have been undermined by Houthi intransigence reflected in their rejection of these proposals, we appeal to the international community and the Security Council to exert pressure on the Houthi militias to comply with the calls for a ceasefire, de-escalation and an end to their absurd war on the Yemeni people.

Unfortunately, and as is their custom, the Houthi militias have escalated their military operations at multiple frontlines, launched ballistic missiles on civilian neighbourhoods and residential areas in the city of Ma'rib, abused the Yemeni Government's adherence to de-escalation, killed a female Yemeni citizen after storming her house in Al-Bayda governorate, and committed the most heinous violations, including torture, sexual violence and rape against Yemeni female detainees in Houthi prisons. The latter acts have been perpetrated in flagrant violation of Yemeni norms, values and traditions, as well as the rules of the international humanitarian law and human rights law. It is high time that the international community realize how these militias are engaging with the current and all earlier truces and understand that the Houthi militias are merely an instrument in service of the agenda of Tehran, at the expense of Yemeni lives.

The Government of Yemen has made every effort to implement the Riyadh agreement and remains willing to do so today despite the intransigence of the Southern Transitional Council and its so-called declaration of self-administration, which is a reckless step that constitutes a clear rejection of the provisions of the Riyadh agreement and a continuation of the armed rebellion of August last year. Besides the Southern Transitional Council's refusal to comply with the calls by and statements of the Saudi-led coalition, numerous brotherly and friendly States, the

international community and the Security Council demanding that the Southern Transitional Council cease the reckless actions that impede the implementation of the Riyadh agreement and affect all efforts to achieve sustainable peace in Yemen, it continued to undermine the security and stability in Socotra governorate and more recently carried out provocative military mobilizations in Abyan.

The Government of Yemen stresses the need for the Southern Transitional Council to comply with all calls to withdraw its unconstitutional declaration, return to implementing the Riyadh agreement and its provisions in accordance with the agreed implementation matrix, immediately cease all measures and practices that could disrupt and undermine the work of State institutions or otherwise interfere in the State's performance of its functions, relinquish control of State assets and resources in the interim capital Aden, and stop disrupting the work of Ministry of Health teams tasked with combating the COVID-19 pandemic, especially as the situation in Aden governorate worsens owing to the recent natural disaster and the surge in the number of confirmed coronavirus disease cases.

In coordination with the local authorities of the liberated governorates, the Supreme National Emergency Committee for COVID-19 is intensifying its preventive and treatment efforts and is continuously coordinating with Yemen's partner States and international organizations to ensure increased support in this area. Further, the Supreme National Emergency Committee has warned that the continuous manipulation of and tampering with the coronavirus pandemic issue by the Houthi militias, their adoption of a policy of obfuscation and the lack of transparency as to the actual number of cases hinder the efforts to combat the pandemic and put the lives of millions of Yemenis at risk. We call on the World Health Organization to urgently intervene and pressure the militias to share health information and transparently declare the actual number of cases in order to prevent an approaching disaster and preserve millions of civilian lives.

Moreover, we invite brotherly and friendly countries and international organizations to provide urgent medical assistance and support in order to save civilian lives so that those who are infected may receive adequate health care, early testing on a large scale is undertaken, and health workers are properly equipped with standard personal protective equipment and the necessary medical devices and ventilators for combating and containing the spread of the pandemic, especially in the light of the fragility of the health sector in Yemen.

I must not fail to mention and thank the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for organizing and hosting the 2020 donors conference for Yemen on 2 June, with the participation of the United Nations. The Government of Yemen calls on the international community and donor countries to take the initiative to effectively contribute to the financing of relief, humanitarian and development response programmes in the country and support the efforts aimed at making this donors conference a success.

In conclusion, the Houthi militias continue to deny the United Nations technical team access to the floating oil tanker *FSO SAFER* in Ras Issa. The Government holds these militias fully responsible for the repercussions of an oil spill, including the potential environmental and economic impacts if the tanker situation remains unresolved. We call on the international community and the Security Council to shoulder their responsibility and pressure the Houthi militias into responding to United Nations efforts and taking the measures necessary to avoid an environmental disaster in the Red Sea.