



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

Provisional

8878th

meeting

Thursday, 14 October 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Kimani/Mrs. Toroitich	(Kenya)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	India	Mr. Tirumurti
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Niger	Mr. Aougi
	Norway	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Gonsalves
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Lagha
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
	Viet Nam	Mrs. Tra Phuong Nguyen

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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21-28839 (E)



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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; Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Maysaa Abdulrahman Shujaa Al-Deen, Fellow at the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: Since I briefed the Council last month (see S/PV.8854), I have conducted numerous consultations with Yemeni, regional and international actors. In all those discussions, I focused on the question of how to move towards a sustainable political solution to end the conflict. I asked my interlocutors to assess what has and has not worked in the past and for their views on the way forward. Member States reiterated their support for the efforts of the United Nations, for which I am grateful.

In my conversations, Yemenis without exception stressed the need to end the war. They also highlighted the urgency of addressing economic and humanitarian concerns, including stabilizing the economy, improving the delivery of basic services and facilitating freedom of movement within as well as in and out of the country. Yemenis of all perspectives also acknowledged that their country cannot be effectively ruled by one group alone and that a durable peace will require pluralism.

The Yemeni men and women whom I met shared with me their concerns about the long-term consequences of the conflict. They see a systematic erosion of their fundamental rights as well as of State institutions. They are worried about a whole generation

of children traumatized by war and lacking in basic education. Since the onset of the conflict, civilian infrastructure has been damaged, and repair is likely to take decades. Ending the war is therefore only a first but an essential step in a long recovery that includes healing the societal wounds that are deepening with each day the conflict continues.

There is nevertheless hope, which must continue to build on. Youth representatives from across Yemen emphasized to me the role of the new generation as a driver of positive political change. In my meetings with Yemeni women, their determination to have a say in shaping the future of their country is unwavering and must have our full support. From inclusion in political talks to the lifting of roadblocks that impede their full participation in civic, political and economic life, the rightful demands of Yemeni women and youth should be met by all parties to the conflict.

It is no secret that there are differences among the Yemenis I have been engaging with. The gap in trust between warring parties is wide and growing. I met with the Government of Yemen in Riyadh and Aden, and with Ansar Allah in Muscat. The issue of the sequencing of possible interim steps remains a preoccupation that overshadows the need to start discussing the parameters for an overall political settlement of the conflict.

My view, which I have shared with them, is that while interim progress should be made on urgent humanitarian and economic matters, a durable solution can be achieved only through a comprehensive negotiated political settlement. I have been clear in all my engagements that there should be no preconditions for those urgent political talks and that humanitarian measures should not be used as political leverage. Dialogue and compromise represent the only sustainable way forward. On my end, I remain at the disposal of those who wish to engage in it.

I have also been clear in my conversations that measures to mitigate the immediate impact of the conflict on civilians are of paramount importance. Salaries need to be paid, roads in Taiz, Ma'rib and elsewhere need to be opened. Restrictions on the import of fuel and goods through Al-Hudaydah port must end, and fuel needs to be available for civilian use without restrictions. Sana'a airport needs to open for civilian traffic. Those steps can tangibly improve the lives of Yemenis in the immediate term. The responsibility for addressing those urgent matters lies

with the parties. I hope that they will receive firm encouragement from the international community, particularly Member States of the region, in that regard. The United Nations is ready to do its part.

Since my previous briefing, the military escalation on the ground has taken an alarming turn. Ma'rib and its surroundings, including Shabwa and Al-Bayda, remain the epicentre of the war. As we will hear from my colleague Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham, the situation is getting worse for civilians every day, with thousands forced to flee in search of safety in recent weeks. I remind all parties to the conflict of their obligations to abide by international humanitarian law and to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The encirclement of Abdiyah district, in southern Ma'rib, has persisted for almost a month, leaving thousands of people in a desperate situation. As repeatedly stated in the Security Council, Ansar Allah's military escalation in Ma'rib must stop. The Secretary-General himself is closely following the developments in Abdiyah. I reiterate the United Nations call on all parties to facilitate safe, timely and sustained humanitarian access to the affected areas. I am also deeply concerned about the military developments and incidents elsewhere in Yemen. Continued fighting increases the likelihood of civilian injury and death from indirect fire, missiles and air strikes. I call on all parties to de-escalate.

The conflict continues to leave a tragic and widespread legacy of human rights violations. In recent weeks, we have seen public executions, enforced disappearances, killings and the use of live ammunition against protesters in several areas of the country. The lack of accountability and impunity has diminished Yemenis' faith in the possibility of peaceful co-existence and a future in which the rights of all Yemenis will be respected. In that context, it is unfortunate that the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen was not renewed. Nevertheless, the United Nations will continue to press for accountability in Yemen.

Last week I visited Aden, where I met with Prime Minister Maen Abdulmalek Saeed, local officials and representatives of various political components, as well as civil society members and women's rights advocates. I welcomed the Prime Minister's return to Aden as an important step towards enhancing the functioning of State institutions and their ability to address the urgent

need for economic recovery and the delivery of basic services. However, sustainable improvements will not be possible unless political actors work together across political divides. In Aden, I also took the time to listen to the many views that Yemenis in the south presented to me. As I stated in my first briefing, those cannot be ignored, and such discussions will have to continue.

Similarly, I therefore stressed to the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council the importance of implementing the Riyadh agreement to regain stability in the southern governorates. Recent serious security incidents across the south, including an assassination attempt on Government officials, are illustrations of an untenable situation.

In Al-Hudaydah, the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) continues its tireless efforts to engage the parties in order to reactivate the work of the Redeployment Coordination Committee. The United Nations urges the parties to recommit to the Committee without delay, as it remains the only viable framework to ensure sustained de-escalation, mitigate the impact of violence on civilians and alleviate the humanitarian situation. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of Lieutenant General Guha, who completed his tenure as Head of UNMHA at the beginning of this month. He worked to support the parties in their implementation of the Hodeidah Agreement under challenging political and logistical circumstances, and he deserves our gratitude and appreciation.

Looking forward, a comprehensive negotiated political settlement is needed to end the violence once and for all. Critical political, security and economic priorities will need to be addressed. A comprehensive political settlement should aim to restore and reunite State institutions and pave the way for economic recovery and development. In order to sustain peace in the long term, the need for accountable governance, justice, accountability and the rule of law cannot be ignored, and neither can the promotion and protection of Yemenis' full range of human rights.

I will continue my consultations with Yemenis and others on the way forward towards an inclusive political settlement. Let us not fool ourselves — this will be a labourious and complicated task that will take time, but it must take place. The past weeks have illustrated the tension between the pace of the war and the economic

collapse, on the one hand, and the time needed to devise and consult on a feasible way forward, on the other.

My aim is to forge agreement on a way forward. Such an agreement will require support from members of the Security Council, States of the region and the broader international community. I also count on the Council's support in reinforcing to the warring parties that it is their responsibility to meet, and seriously engage, with each other under the auspices of the United Nations.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Rajasingham.

Mr. Rajasingham: As we sit here today, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen continues to deepen. More than 20 million people — two thirds of the population — need assistance from aid agencies. The most immediate cause of that suffering is the war. In recent weeks, conflict has intensified. Yet a ceasefire and all the benefits that it would bring remain elusive.

In parallel, Yemen's economy is collapsing, leaving millions destitute. That collapse is a direct result of the war and, more indirectly, a result of the perverse incentives the war has created. Hemmed in by violence and with fewer chances to take care of themselves, millions of Yemenis are looking to humanitarian organizations for help. But aid work is about to become much harder in Yemen, mostly because agencies are once again starting to run out of money.

I will focus my remarks today on these three issues: growing conflict and instability, economic collapse and the aid operation, and what they mean for civilians.

Yemen is growing more violent, not less. Over the past few weeks, Houthi forces have intensified their brutal offensive in Ma'rib, taking more territory there and in neighbouring parts of Shabwa governorate.

In Aden, clashes between rival armed groups also erupted earlier this month, leading to several days of violence, which shut down parts of the city and raise grave concerns for the future.

Fighting, shelling and air strikes have also continued in Sa'ada, Hajjah and Al-Hudaydah and along nearly 50 other front lines.

The impact on civilians is grim. Hostilities in September killed or injured 235 civilians across the

country. That is almost eight people every day — the second-highest figure in two years.

The fighting in Ma'rib is taking a particularly heavy civilian toll. Last month, almost 10,000 people were displaced in Ma'rib — the single-highest figure so far this year. Since late September, Houthi forces have encircled Al-Abdiyah district, in south-west Ma'rib, which is home to nearly 35,000 civilians, many of whom previously fled there to escape fighting in other areas.

Several recent mass-casualty incidents have also shocked the world, including a missile attack in Ma'rib on 3 October, attributed to Houthi forces, which killed three children and injured 21 other civilians.

All parties to the conflict must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, including taking constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects throughout military operations.

Likewise, the parties are required to facilitate humanitarian access. Aid agencies need safe, timely and sustained access to all affected communities in Ma'rib and elsewhere.

We also urge all parties to ensure the freedom of movement of civilians, including safe passage for those fleeing conflict areas.

Like the Special Envoy, we are also gravely concerned by the pervasive human rights violations that the conflict is fuelling — including the shocking execution of nine individuals by Houthi authorities in Sana'a last month following proceedings that do not appear to have met the standards of a fair trial or due process under international law.

International law requires effective accountability for serious violations. In that context, it is unfortunate that the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts, the only independent international entity investigating and issuing public reports on human rights in Yemen, was not renewed last week.

While conflict and instability are endangering civilians' lives, livelihoods are also under attack. As Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths said in August (see S/PV.8840), it is Yemen's economic collapse that is driving most needs in the country, including the risk of famine. Because nearly everything must be imported, people and businesses are extremely vulnerable to changes in global prices, and to especially exchange rates and import taxes. The Yemeni rial

is now trading around 1,270 rial to the United States dollar in Aden; that is nearly six times higher than before the war.

At the same time, fewer essential goods are reaching key ports in the first place. In Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, commercial food imports in September were 8 per cent below last year's average. Fuel imports were an alarming 64 per cent lower.

There are several immediate steps that could curb Yemen's economic collapse and so help reduce the pressure on the people of Yemen and the aid agencies trying to help them. Foreign exchange injections through the Central Bank would quickly bring down prices, just as they did in the past. The Government is ready to work with everyone to devise an effective programme for that.

It is also time to loosen constraints on economic life. That means ensuring all Yemen's ports are fully open, including by lifting import restrictions on Al-Hudaydah and Saleef. It also means paying civil servants' salaries. A quarter of the population depends on those salaries. They are also essential to keeping afloat basic services, such as water, sanitation, health care and education. And it means taking steps to remove other barriers to business. Those include measures such as issuing bonds to lower insurance premiums, which drive up the prices of imports, as well as expanding programmes to clean up mines and other explosives that have been strewn across the country.

There are workable proposals on the table to achieve all of that. The impact would be both quick and transformative. The United Nations is eager to help.

In the meantime, we remain focused on the humanitarian operation. Aid agencies are now helping nearly 13 million people across the country. That is about 3 million more people than just a few months before. Our best assessment is that this expansion has considerably pushed back the immediate risk of large-scale famine. That is a major success and a direct result of more donor funds coming in over the past few months. That generosity is making an enormous difference.

But that success may prove short-lived, as aid agencies do not have enough money to keep going at the scale required. In the coming weeks and months, up to 4 million people could see their food aid reduced.

By the end of the year, that number could rise to 5 million people.

Funding for water delivery and hospitals will also run out by the end of November. Water, sanitation and hygiene programmes have received only 12 per cent of the funds they need this year; health programmes have received just 15 per cent. Similar gaps persist in shelter and other sectors.

We are calling on everyone to do everything possible to sustain the momentum we have built over the past several months and keep famine at bay. That means increasing support for all humanitarian sectors in Yemen right away and — crucially — working hard to ensure the level of support does not drop next year.

Agencies are committed to doing their part to help donors maintain their support. In the coming months, we will publish an impartial, nationwide needs assessment and evidence-based response plan for 2022. Council members' continued support will be crucial for that work, and we will certainly keep them updated as we progress.

Perhaps more than everything else I have just described, Yemen needs a political solution to end the war. We can support everything that the Special Envoy has just briefed the Council on. A nationwide ceasefire — with no pre-conditions — would be an excellent place to start.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Al-Deen.

Ms. Al-Deen (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to speak to the Security Council about the political and economic developments in my country, Yemen, which has been torn by a multilateral internal and regional war, sparked by a coup, carried out by the armed Houthis in September 2014, and exacerbated by an external military intervention, led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in March 2015.

At the outset, I would like to draw the Council's attention to the unprecedented escalation of military operations, due to the attack launched by armed Houthis on Ma'rib governorate in the east of Yemen, where almost 2 million people live, most of whom are displaced. A large part of those displaced persons have been displaced several times since the beginning of the

war. Today armed clashes are moving closer, and some displaced persons have no other place to seek refuge.

In addition, the city of Ma'rib supplies the entire Republic of Yemen with energy and cooking gas. As the battles move closer to the oil and gas fields, they threaten the humanitarian situation throughout the county, not only within the city. Those continued battles have disastrous humanitarian consequences as well as military and political consequences. They may cause the war to expand to other areas in Yemen and undermine the already limited opportunities for peace. That calls for urgent attention and pressure from the international community to stop the fighting.

Since the beginning of the war in Yemen seven years ago, it has become common to describe the situation there as the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. As the war continues, the human suffering is being fuelled by the collapse of the monetary system and the deterioration of economic conditions.

Let me focus on those two points — the humanitarian and the economic situations — because there is still much to do to alleviate the suffering in Yemen.

Yemen is not only one of the worst humanitarian crisis in the world; it is also one of the worst international response to a humanitarian crisis. Our research at the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies points to a set of massive imbalances in the relief process, as a large part of Yemen's population are under the control of armed Houthis who systematically seize assistance and use it to their advantage.

As for the areas under the control of the internationally recognized Government, other problems arise including the weakness of Government institutions, bureaucratic obstruction and field impediments imposed by the various militias, which hinder the travel and movement of relief personnel. That is in addition to the failure of international relief organizations to make adequate and transparent efforts to ensure that the minimum assistance reaches Yemenis in need. There are also impediments caused by United Nations rules and mechanisms. Therefore, the relief operation in Yemen needs urgent reassessment and accountability to reduce the chances of wasting and misusing humanitarian aid funds.

Months ago authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued a decision to dismiss Yemeni workers in the south of the country without a clear or convincing

explanation for that collective targeting. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia partially rescinded that decision, but it is, unfortunately, part of successive Saudi policies adopted over the past years against Yemeni workers. It is worth noting that, in the light of the current war, expatriates have become the first, and almost the only, source of hard currency after the almost total cessation of oil and gas exports. Most of those expatriates are in the Gulf, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where more than 1 million Yemenis work. The decline in the number of Yemenis residing in the Saudi Arabia and the harassment of those remaining negatively affected the conditions of millions of Yemenis at home, and thereby exacerbated the current humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Allow me to note that all Gulf States have directly or indirectly been involved in the war in Yemen. They therefore have a double ethical and political responsibility towards their neighbour, Yemen, in mitigating the effects of the war. Those countries should at least open their doors to Yemeni workers, especially since they still rely heavily on millions of foreign workers.

An economic war erupted during the conflict. There is a vast network of people benefiting from the continuation of this war. Not focusing on this aspect of the Yemeni war led to further deterioration of the economic and living conditions. It is important to note that the most recent round of economic negotiations held by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen took place in May 2019, in Amman. There is still much that can be done to find sustainable economic solutions that meet the needs of a segment of the population and enable them to live in dignity. The Council can push forward effective economic steps to significantly alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. These are urgent issues that cannot wait for the war to end.

I would therefore like to present some practical recommendations to the Security Council that could stop the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation.

First, the Council should adopt an international resolution calling for economic de-escalation and calling upon the Special Envoy to resume economic negotiations immediately in order to ensure the reunification of the Central Bank of Yemen. The resolution must also impose smart sanctions on any

party obstructing such action or taking measures that reinforce the financial divisions in the country.

Secondly, the Council should evaluate and establish coordination and oversight mechanisms for relief operations and ensure their funding. So far, only 55 per cent of related pledges have been honoured. The international community must compel international organizations to implement the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit that relate to humanitarian assistance.

Thirdly, the Council should alleviate the financial isolation of Yemeni banks so that they can connect to the global financial system and facilitate the import of basic materials. That would help in stopping informal financial transfers.

Fourthly, the Council should adopt a comprehensive approach in order to support the fragile health-care system in Yemen and ensure the delivery of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines to all parts of the country. It is worth noting that only 1 per cent of the Yemeni people have received the COVID-19 vaccine, which reflects the weak commitment of the international community to Yemen.

Fifthly, supplying the parties involved in the war with weapons should be ceased, and the Council should relaunch the international framework for accountability and oversight, especially in the wake of the recent and unfortunate decision by the Human Rights Council not to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen. The Council, through its resolutions and other tools, must bring pressure to bear on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its allies to take certain actions.

The first action is to immediately stop expelling and tightening their grip on Yemeni workers in the Gulf labour market, generally, and in the Saudi labour market, in particular, and to stop excluding them from the policies of Saudization and dual-residency fines. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia must rectify the conditions of Yemeni irregular workers, taking into account the historical agreement between the two countries. All that should take place within a comprehensive framework of preferential policies for Yemeni workers in the Saudi Arabia and all other Gulf countries.

The second action is to immediately open all Yemeni land, sea and air ports, including Sana'a

airport, and to lift restrictions on the entry and exit of basic commodities.

The third action is to design and implement a strategy, in partnership with the United Arab Emirates, in order to rebuild the areas under the control of the allied Yemeni forces and to build vital projects in various sectors, particularly the energy sector. In addition, a deposit must be made to the Yemeni Central Bank in order to help stabilize the Yemeni currency.

Concurrently, the Council, through international efforts, must also compel the Yemeni Government to take certain actions.

The first is to fully pay the salaries of all civil servants in Yemen, including those of residents under Houthi control. Ever since the transfer of the Central Bank to Aden in 2016, the Government has not fulfilled its promise to continue paying the salaries of Government employees.

The second is to implement real reforms in the structure and leadership of the Central Bank, as well as in revenue-generating institutions, and to take measures to promote transparency and accountability in order to curb the massive corruption in the Government.

The Council must also compel the necessary measures on the Houthis, especially through their allies in Tehran and their friends in Muscat — first, to ensure the immediate cessation of their military operations in Ma'rib and lift the siege on cities and residential areas in Taiz, Ma'rib and Al-Bayda; secondly, to lift restrictions against humanitarian and relief works, particularly those related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and accept the vaccine doses provided by the COVID-19 Global Access Facility and distribute them fairly to all Yemenis; and, thirdly, to immediately dissolve economic war institutions such as the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Zakat Authority and others established by Houthi leaders.

I thank the Council once again for inviting me and for the opportunity to brief it today. I would be happy to discuss with the representatives in the upcoming days the political and military developments, in general, and the prospects for establishing a presidential council, in particular, as an entry point for a political solution in Yemen. At the end of the day, we must not forget that the best relief for the Yemeni people would be an end to

this war and not to get involved in it. The Council must not forget this at all.

The President: I thank Ms. Al-Deen 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): At the outset, I would like to commend Special Envoy Hans Grundberg for his efforts during his first month. His engagement with a broad range of actors has laid an important foundation for a revived peace process. We are committed to helping him and to mobilizing international support behind the United Nations-led approach.

I would also like to welcome the return of the Prime Minister and wider Cabinet to Yemen. The parties must now work together to secure the sustained presence of the Government of Yemen in the country. As the Special Envoy has previously stressed, we need to see implementation of the Riyadh agreement in order to support stability, services and functional State institutions.

The sobering words of Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham today remind us that, after six years of war, the people of Yemen are still suffering from the world's worst human-made humanitarian crisis. The humanitarian relief can only do so much for so long. As Mr. Rajasingham emphasized, we need a political solution to end the war, and we need initiatives to support the economy in order to reduce humanitarian need.

The picture painted by Ms. Al-Deen today of the situation in Ma'rib is bleak, and her recommendations are far-reaching. It is galling to see the Houthi offensive on Ma'rib continue, including their siege of Ma'rib's Al-Abdiyah district. Ma'rib's citizens witnessed an atrocity on 3 October when a Houthi missile attack on the densely populated Al-Rawdah neighbourhood in Ma'rib killed two children and injured 33 civilians. As the Security Council, we must now place greater pressure on the Houthis to end such appalling, indiscriminate attacks. Respect for international humanitarian law, including protecting civilians and assisting them to move out of conflict zones, is imperative.

We also condemn in the strongest possible terms the incessant and unjustifiable Houthi cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia, including the drone attack on 8 October, which left 10 people wounded at a civilian airport in Jizan.

Finally, we wish to express our deep disappointment that the Human Rights Council failed to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen. Monitoring and accountability are essential in all conflict situations. We call on all parties to the conflict to respect human rights and to investigate allegations of violations where they arise.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham for their overview of the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen. We also listened closely to Ms. Maysaa Abdulrahman Shujaa Al-Deen.

We are continuing to monitor the acute military and political crisis in Yemen. Of particular concern is the situation on the borders of Ma'rib and Shabwa governorates, where recently there has been an uptick in violent clashes between the Houthis and groups that are loyal to the country's President.

We listened closely to Hans Grundberg's assessment following his initial plunge into his work as Special Envoy. It was particularly important to hear his opinion of the contacts that he had with the Yemeni parties. We also welcomed the Special Envoy's perspective on Yemeni cooperation with the representatives of the permanent five members of the Security Council. We trust that after these range-finding contacts, he will actively get down to work on establishing a dialogue between the parties to the conflict.

For our part, we will continue to support the efforts by the United Nations. We intend to continue to actively encourage the official Yemeni authorities and the leadership of the Ansar Allah Houthi movement to take a constructive approach and show a readiness to compromise.

We are in favour of launching into Yemeni negotiations under United Nations auspices on the subject of the future political makeup of the country, the result of which would be a comprehensive and long-term settlement to the conflict, which would take into account the interests of all leading Yemeni political forces. We see our shared end goal as a comprehensive and long-term solution to the many problems that Yemen is facing and which are, in large part, being felt by neighbouring States as well.

We remain particularly alarmed by the dire socioeconomic situation in the country. The

dispiriting data from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs speak for themselves. We confirm the need to lift restrictions on the delivery of food, medicines and other vital goods to all parts of the country.

We are seriously concerned by the ongoing attacks on civilian objects, including on the territory of Saudi Arabia. We urge the parties to the conflict to comply in a straight-forward manner with the provisions of international humanitarian law and to immediately and in full refrain from hostilities that lead to the destruction of non-military infrastructure and victimize the civilian population.

We hope that the problem of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker will soon be settled by resolving the remaining technical disagreements. We call on the parties involved in this matter to follow a constructive approach.

In conclusion, I would also like to note the efforts of States in the region that are ready to provide mediation in the Yemeni peace process. We also recall resolution 598 (1987) and other initiatives aimed at stabilizing the subregion, including the updated Russian concept for collective security in the region.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I attentively listened to the briefings.

Recently, hostilities have escalated between the parties to the conflict in Yemen. China is deeply concerned about this and urges all parties to immediately commit to a ceasefire, stop the violence, and especially bring an early end to the fighting in Ma'rib.

Lately, the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia contacted the President of the Council on two occasions to inform him of the attacks, first, on Abha airport, on 6 October, and, secondly, on King Abdul Aziz airport, on 8 October. China condemns all attacks on civilians and civilian installations and urges all parties to abide by international humanitarian law and protect vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

On 28 September, the Yemeni Prime Minister and other senior officials returned to Aden, which China welcomes. China supports the Yemeni Government's active administration in Aden. All parties concerned should fully implement the Riyadh Agreement, uphold security and stability in Aden and create favourable conditions for the Government to take measures to improve the economy and people's livelihoods. I hope

that the Government of Yemen will make full use of the special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund and the humanitarian assistance from the international community to stabilize the value of Yemen rial, reduce the cost of living for the population and ensure basic services.

Mitigating the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a shared task facing the international community. China welcomes the holding of the humanitarian pledging conference for Yemen that took place during the high-level week of the General Assembly last month and hopes that the donor countries will disburse their pledging as soon as possible to keep alive the United Nations humanitarian relief projects in Yemen. The international community has provided massive amounts of humanitarian supplies to Yemen, and all parties in Yemen should ensure humanitarian access and the delivery of humanitarian supplies to the people in need. All parties should also maintain the operation of ports to ensure that the import channels for food, oil and other commodities are open to meet the basic needs of the people.

Since taking office, Special Envoy Grundberg has been actively engaging all parties in Yemen, visiting various countries of the region and exemplifying an approach of positive pragmatism that China appreciates. We encourage the Special Envoy to continue his in-depth discussions with the parties, promote dialogue between the Government of Yemen and the Houthis and draft a road map for the peace process in due course, so as to give impetus to the settlement of the Yemeni issue.

We call on all parties to receive the Special Envoy's visit unconditionally, exchange views with him in a frank and constructive manner and work together to find a political solution that takes into account the concerns of all parties. The Special Envoy may wish to start with the solution to such specific issues as humanitarian flights at Sana'a Airport and the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker and promote the gradual restoration of mutual trust between the parties.

The solution to the Yemeni issue cannot be reached without the coordination and cooperation of the countries of the region. It is in the common interests of those countries to restore peace and order in Yemen. China calls on all parties with influence in Yemen to scale up their efforts to promote talks for peace and play a more active role.

Mr. Ben Lagha (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Grundberg, Mr. Rajasingham and Ms. Al-Deen for their briefings.

The long Yemeni conflict has taken lives and caused injuries. It has also caused destruction and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country. The international community is looking for a new phase in which there is greater commitment to peace and calm from all parties to the conflict, leading to end of clashes, ensuring a ceasefire and paving the way towards relaunching talks for a peaceful political settlement that brings an end to the Yemeni crisis.

In this regard, we once again underscore that there is no alternative to the inclusive consensus solution that fulfils the aspirations of the Yemeni people and prevents any further suffering or tragedy for them. The past years have demonstrated that the military option aiming to impose a status quo can only further complicate the situation, cause more victims, jeopardize the lives of millions of people and exacerbate the dangerous deterioration of the humanitarian situation. We therefore call upon the Houthis to make the choice of peace, stop the fighting and participate positively in negotiations without any preconditions.

Tunisia expresses its support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and encourages him to continue his efforts with all of the parties aimed at working to resolve the conflict in Yemen. We urge all parties to the conflict to participate actively in the pursuit of a political settlement and the declaration of a comprehensive ceasefire, thereby reaching a solution that, with the return of security and stability, brings an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people and preserves the sovereignty, independence and unity of Yemen.

Given the current conditions on the ground, Tunisia condemns the continued Houthi offensives against Ma'rib and the siege on civilians that could bring about an imminent humanitarian disaster and undermine chances for peace. We therefore call on the parties to the conflict to respect the provisions of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and also to spare civilians and civilian installations.

Tunisia strongly condemns the continued Houthi offensives against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the targeting of its civilian installations, including recent attacks against Abha and Jazan airports as well as other civilian sites and targets. Such attacks are unacceptable as they jeopardize the security and stability of the

region and hinder efforts and initiatives aimed at easing tensions and halting the escalation.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is continuing to deteriorate and represents a source of grave concern, particularly since the crisis is accompanied by a degradation of economic conditions and livelihoods owing to the continued fighting and the disruption of relief and humanitarian operations. The latest indicators reflect increasing difficulties in obtaining basic foodstuffs, which increases the risk of food insecurity, a phenomenon that would threaten 16 million people.

In parallel, public-health conditions are deteriorating, and coronavirus disease pandemic infection rates are rising. Millions of people are thus being exposed to the risk of contracting other diseases as well. International efforts must be mobilized for rapid intervention and to meet medical needs. Vaccines must be provided, and humanitarian and medical assistance must reach recipients without any hindrance. Adequate financing must be ensured to continue the implementation of the humanitarian assistance programme and to support efforts to meet the pressing needs of the Yemeni people, particularly since relief agencies are reporting that nearly 11.6 million people are in urgent need of medical assistance.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need to address the issue of the *SAFER* oil tanker, which represents a serious threat that could cause an unprecedented environmental, economic and humanitarian crisis in the region. We call for the facilitation of special measures to allow United Nations experts to visit the site and conduct a technical inspection as soon as possible.

Mrs. Nguyen (Viet Nam): I would like to thank the briefers for their insightful statements, and I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in our meeting today.

On the peace and security process, we welcome the first visit to the region by Mr. Hans Grundberg as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. Just like the meetings with the Governments of Arab Saudi, Oman and Yemen, his recent conversations with Yemeni youth and women show his strong commitment to striving for an inclusive political process in the country. We encourage regional partners and the parties concerned to continue to support his efforts to achieve peace.

In the meantime, however, we remain worried about the deteriorating security situation in Yemen and

across its borders, as military fighting has intensified since the beginning of the year, claiming the lives of many people, including women and children from both sides.

We join other Member States in condemning the attacks on convoys of Yemeni Government officials, which left six people dead and seven wounded in Aden last Sunday. We also condemn the recent attacks against two civilian airports and other civilian objects in Saudi Arabia. We are concerned that such attacks, along with military escalation, continue to exacerbate the situation in Yemen and undermine stability in the region.

In that context, we urge all concerned parties to immediately cease the violence, heed the Secretary-General's call for a nationwide ceasefire, resume dialogue and engage with the Special Envoy and his team on a comprehensive political settlement to the conflict in Yemen in good faith. Meanwhile, the international community and regional partners should create favourable conditions and provide an environment conducive to United Nations-led mediation and negotiations among parties.

At the same time, all parties are required to implement fully the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh agreement.

On the humanitarian issue, thanks to the information provided by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, we have learned more about the realities on the ground regarding how dire the humanitarian situation in the country is.

Apart from prolonged fighting and the coronavirus disease pandemic, the collapse of the economy and infrastructure, including the failure to provide essential services and ensuring food insecurity, have exacerbated the crisis in Yemen.

Moreover, it is distressing to learn about the grave violence being committed against children, as set out in the recent report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2021/761).

Against that backdrop, we call for the sustainability of humanitarian aid and other adequate support for Yemen. Humanitarian aid and workers must have unimpeded access in Yemen. All parties must respect international humanitarian law; protect civilians, including women and children; and implement resolution 2573 (2021), including protecting civilian

infrastructure. We must stop the killing of and violence against children, who are the future of Yemen.

Lastly, on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker issue, the risk of an oil spill and its consequences for the region, especially the Red Sea, cannot be ignored. We need to act to avert an environmental and humanitarian disaster. We must act quickly and with urgency. In doing so, we would urge the Houthis to work in a committed manner with the United Nations and allow the United Nations team to carry out an immediate assessment of and repairs on the tanker without delay.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico welcomes the participation of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and extends our support to him. We also thank Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham and Ms. Maysaa Al-Deen for their comments.

For almost seven years now the people of Yemen have suffered from the consequences of this conflict. The current situation is disturbing: almost two thirds of the population require humanitarian assistance, and more than 400,000 children suffer from severe malnutrition. Violence is ongoing and increasing. Ansar Allah is continuing its offensive against Ma'rib, with frequent attacks against civilian infrastructure. For days there have been tactical sieges against the Al-Abdiyah district, where more than 35,000 people are cut off and have no access to basic goods and services.

Ongoing attacks against Saudi Arabia continue, such as the attack on Abha and Jazan airports at the beginning of this month. Similarly, on 10 October an attack was carried out against the Governor of Aden that took the lives of six people. Mexico strongly condemns those attacks and calls on Ansar Allah to end the violence. All parties to the conflict must exercise the greatest restraint, because without a national ceasefire it will be impossible to meet the rapidly increasing humanitarian needs.

There is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. The armed conflict undermines any possibility of progress towards political understanding and a much-needed economic recovery. That is why we urge the parties to observe a national ceasefire, and we call on all States to respect the arms embargo, in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the Council. Moreover, my delegation deplores the numerous human rights violations that have occurred throughout Yemeni territory. Indeed, on 18 September Ansar Allah executed nine people. Mexico rejects the use of the

death penalty under any circumstances, as it is one of the most serious human rights violations.

Similarly, Mexico supports initiatives to establish impartial and independent procedures to thoroughly investigate violations of international humanitarian law, as well as human rights, in order to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. In that regard, it is regrettable that the mandate of the Human Rights Council's Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen was not renewed. After seven years of conflict, it is imperative to combat impunity and establish accountability mechanisms. Only in that way will it be possible to promote genuine social reconciliation.

We welcome the return of the Prime Minister of Yemen to Aden and hope that the rest of the Cabinet will soon do the same. In that regard, we urge the parties to continue to implement the Riyadh agreement.

We also welcome the Special Envoy's recent meetings with key actors in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Yemen, which we trust will be fruitful.

We reiterate the call for constructive and committed engagement by the parties in the United Nations-facilitated peace process and encourage broad participation in the political process and in civil-society initiatives, such as the Jeel Albeni Association for Humanitarian Development, an organization that was recently awarded the 2021 Nansen Refugee Award.

I conclude by reiterating our urgent call for the inspection of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. That is a looming threat that could have serious environmental, humanitarian and commercial consequences for the region.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): My thanks go to our briefers — Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham and Ms. Al-Deen, whom I especially thank for her briefing.

Today I want to begin by strongly condemning the heinous attack carried out in Aden last Sunday, allegedly targeting a Government Minister and the Governor of Aden. I express my deepest condolences to all those affected by that cowardly act.

The political and security situation in the south of Yemen remains a cause for growing concern. A full resumption of dialogue between the internationally recognized Government and the Southern Transitional Council, within the framework of the Riyadh agreement,

is urgently needed to avoid further deterioration of what is already a fragile and clearly volatile situation. We welcome the return of several members of the Government, including the Prime Minister, to Aden.

We deplore the continuation of hostilities and call once again for a nationwide ceasefire and, in particular, for an end to the Houthi offensive on Ma'rib, including its civilian neighbourhoods.

The ongoing violence across the country continues to cause deaths and threaten lives all across Yemen. It is driving the displacement of thousands of people, especially women and children. The violence is also curtailing the crucial work of local and international peacebuilders, who must be supported in their continued efforts to pursue peace.

We are deeply disturbed by countless accounts of grave violations against children in the country in the most recent report on children in armed conflict in Yemen (S/2021/761). As Henrietta Fore recently told the Security Council (see S/PV.8840), being a child in Yemen is the stuff of nightmares.

The recent Houthi execution of nine Yemenis, reportedly including one who was a minor at the time of his detention, is deplorable. It is in stark violation of Yemeni legislation and human rights norms. Ireland unequivocally opposes the use of the death penalty in all cases and in all circumstances. We once again stress the need for all parties to fulfil their obligations under international law.

We also unreservedly condemn the most recent attacks by the Houthis on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Such attacks must cease.

Humanitarian assistance remains a desperately needed lifeline for millions of Yemenis. Ireland calls for full, unfettered and safe access for humanitarian workers to all parts of Yemen.

The dire humanitarian situation has also been greatly exacerbated by the economic realities, which we heard about earlier from Ms. Al-Deen. We know that unblocking restrictions on fuel and food imports and the payment of civil-servant salaries would greatly increase the purchasing power and well-being of many in Yemen. We fully support action on such measures.

We all know that the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker continues to pose an immediate humanitarian and environmental threat to the people of Yemen and the

region. Ireland renews its calls for all parties to engage constructively in discussions so that the United Nations teams can access the tanker as soon as possible to carry out the necessary repairs.

Finally, I want to express our profound disappointment at the outcome at the Human Rights Council last week, whereby the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen was not renewed. That Group was the only independent, international and impartial mechanism monitoring the dire human rights situation in Yemen. In our view, in failing to renew its mandate, we have collectively failed the Yemeni people. Ireland has always emphatically supported the Group, and we thank it for its exemplary work in challenging circumstances.

To the people of Yemen, who have suffered immensely, I assure them that Ireland will not cease in its efforts to ensure accountability and justice for victims. They deserve nothing less.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Acting Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham and Ms. Al-Deen, of the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, for their briefings. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in our midst.

We are deeply concerned by the mounting death toll due to the prolonged fighting between the Government forces and Ansar Allah in Ma'rib and other parts of Yemen. The ongoing hostilities and the cycle of violence further jeopardize the chances of a ceasefire.

Putting an end to the current hostilities in Ma'rib, as well as other places in Yemen, through a comprehensive ceasefire should be the immediate priority of the international community. In that regard, we appreciate the efforts of Special Envoy Grundberg in engaging with all the parties to the conflict towards a nationwide ceasefire and in order to resume negotiations to achieve an inclusive political solution that meets the aspirations of all Yemenis.

Millions of Yemenis are bearing the brunt of the protracted conflict. The unprecedented humanitarian crisis has been compounded by the precarious economic situation. The declining currency exchange rate has further exacerbated the situation by inflating the prices of food, fuel and other commodities. I underscore the urgent need to address the economic consequences of

the conflict, since that could exacerbate the misery of the people.

We are also concerned by the restrictions on, and impediments to, the movement of humanitarian aid and other essential commodities into and within Yemen. I call on all parties to lift such restrictions to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches all Yemenis. Otherwise, the suffering of the people of Yemen, especially women and children, will worsen.

Financing for humanitarian operations is another area that needs the attention of the international community. We hope that the additional pledges made during the recent high-level humanitarian conference held on the sidelines of the General Assembly will help to bridge the funding gap in the 2021 Yemen humanitarian response plan.

I welcome the return of the Prime Minister of Yemen to Aden. We hope that will pave the way for the return of the full Cabinet to Aden and the implementation of the Riyadh agreement. We encourage the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council to continue the dialogue on resolving the issues related to the implementation of the Riyadh agreement.

I also reiterate India's call for the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. The continuing ceasefire violations in Al-Hudaydah are a matter of concern. Restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) hamper the monitoring of those ceasefire violations. We therefore urge the parties concerned to immediately remove those restrictions. We recognize the efforts of UNMHA to resume the Redeployment Coordination Committee and its joint mechanisms to implement the Hodeidah Agreement. It is important that a new head of UNMHA be appointed at the earliest possible time to ensure that those efforts continue unhindered.

The agreement on a prisoner exchange is also an integral part of the Stockholm Agreement. This month marks one year since the successful mass exchange of prisoners and detainees by the parties to the conflict. Apart from being a humanitarian imperative, such exchanges also constitute an important confidence-building measure. While we welcome the exchange of prisoners with local mediation, we also believe that there is a need for the establishment of a proper mechanism for such exchanges, as envisaged in the Stockholm Agreement.

India condemns the sustained cross-border missile and drone attacks into Saudi Arabia. There can be no justification for the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, which is a flagrant violation of international law. Indians were among the civilians who were injured in the recent attacks on Abha airport. The arms embargo envisaged in resolution 2216 (2015) should be strictly implemented to avert similar attacks in future.

We also condemn the recent car bombing in Aden targeting prominent political figures. Such targeted assassination attempts and other recent attacks in Aden risk further destabilizing the security situation in southern Yemen.

An urgent solution to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker issue is also required to avoid an imminent environmental catastrophe and to ensure uninterrupted international maritime passage through the Red Sea.

Continued violence, the threat of terrorism, the unstable security situation and growing civilian casualties will only deny peace to the people of Yemen. Such a situation will delay the resumption of a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned peace process. We strongly urge all parties to reverse those trends on the ground and come together for the peace, security and prosperity of the people of Yemen.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham and Ms. Shujaa Al-Deen for their remarks and continued efforts. And I welcome the presence of the Yemeni Government in the Chamber today.

Today I will focus on four aspects of the situation in Yemen: the Houthi offensive, the situation in Aden, the economic and humanitarian situation and the challenge of accountability in this conflict.

First, the United States remains deeply concerned by the Houthi offensive against Ma'rib, home to over 1 million internally displaced people. The dramatic escalation has led to hundreds of casualties. In particular, the United States strongly condemns the 3 October Houthi missile attack on Ma'rib, which killed two children and injured an estimated 33 more civilians. Furthermore, the Houthi siege of Al-Abdiyah is putting tens of thousands of civilians at grave risk. We also condemn recent Houthi cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia at King Abdullah and Abha airports, which

wounded more than a dozen innocent people. Those heinous acts, targeting civilian airport employees and travellers, undermine peace efforts. Those actions defy the international and regional consensus on ending the war, and they are the single-biggest obstacle to peace.

During this challenging time, the United States believes it is all the more important that the Security Council demonstrate unwavering support for Special Envoy Grundberg's work and does not shy away from calling out Houthi obstruction. The Houthis have consistently refused to commit to a ceasefire, discuss a political resolution to the conflict or engage constructively with the United Nations. It is up to us, as the Security Council, to individually and collectively press the Houthis to engage meaningfully.

Secondly, the situation in Aden and beyond remains precarious. The United States condemns the attack against the Government of Yemen officials over the past week. And we extend our condolences to the families of those who were killed. Yemenis deserve peace, and we support the Government of Yemen's efforts to restore stability and improve the lives of all Yemenis. In that vein, we welcome the Prime Minister's return to Aden. The United States asks members to consider providing targeted financial support to bolster the Prime Minister's efforts to improve the provision of services for the Yemeni people.

That me to my third point: the humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen is dire, and the Yemeni people need our help. Right now, Yemenis cannot obtain basic services, and they are trapped in a downward spiral. To that end, we must press the Houthis, the Yemeni Government and Saudi Arabia to ensure fuel is brought into and distributed throughout Yemen at prices Yemenis can afford.

The rest of the international community must do what it can. We are grateful to the European Union, Sweden and Switzerland for co-hosting last month's pledging event. For our part, as Secretary Blinken announced during high-level week, the United States is providing more than \$290 million in additional humanitarian assistance for the people of Yemen, bringing our total for fiscal year 2021 to over \$800 million. We must all urge donor nations to contribute to the humanitarian response plan.

Fourthly and finally, we need to hold all parties accountable for their actions. The reports of flagrant violations of basic human rights and the rule of law in

Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen are deeply worrisome, particularly the 18 September public execution of nine individuals, one of whom was a minor. The Houthis must respect basic human rights, and all Yemenis must have access to fair trials and due process under international law.

On the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, the Houthis must stop negotiating in bad faith with the international community and permit the United Nations to conduct an assessment and urgent repairs without conditions or further delays. The Houthis will bear full responsibility when a leak, spill or explosion occurs. But worse, the Yemeni people will bear the brunt of the suffering.

Given those kinds of acts, the United States, like many members of the Security Council, is deeply disappointed by what happened in the Human Rights Council last week. It is appalling that the mandate for the Group of Eminent Experts in Yemen was not renewed. The people of Yemen deserve accountability.

Before I conclude, I want to acknowledge the third report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Yemen (S/2021/761) released by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The report details the ravages that conflict has inflicted on Yemen's children. It is truly sobering. The conflict is killing Yemen's children — Yemen's own future. Those children deserve peace — the kind of peace only a political solution can grant them.

Mr. Aougi (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham and Ms. Shuja Al-Deen for their briefings.

The ongoing hostilities in Yemen — namely, the intensification of the fighting in Ma'rib and Shabwah, the attack against a convoy of Government officials in Aden and the drone attacks that targeted the Jazan airport in the south of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — remain a source of concern.

The Niger strongly condemns the repeated attacks against Saudi territory. That trend, pursued by the Houthis and aimed at expanding the spectre of violence beyond Yemen's borders, is unacceptable and must stop. As long as the clashes in Yemen continue, the gap between the parties will continue to widen, making reconciliation between them even more difficult.

In order to give the peace process a chance to resume, certain demands must be met. First, the

parties must commit to a nationwide ceasefire and put an end to their hostilities in the country. The parties must then prioritize the interests of Yemen and all of its people by making the necessary compromises to advance the discussions for the relaunching of an inclusive political process in the country. Finally, it is essential that regional actors, as well as Council members with influence on the parties, continue to work towards bringing the parties to the negotiating table. Only then can we hope for a return to peace in Yemen and an improvement in the serious humanitarian crisis that has been raging there for several years.

As we heard just this morning, the humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate. We therefore once again call on donor countries, and particularly those in the region, to be more generous and compassionate towards the suffering people of Yemen. Improving the humanitarian crisis in Yemen also requires the lifting of blockades on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the country.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham for their briefings, as well as Ms. Al-Deen for her testimony and proposals.

The security situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate. In Ma'rib and Shabwa, deadly clashes persist and are even intensifying in some areas, leading to further displacement.

The Houthis must renounce the military option, which only adds to the suffering of the Yemeni people. They must also stop their attacks on Saudi territory. Such attacks, such as the assault against the airports of Abha and Jizan, on 7 and 8 October, respectively, are unacceptable because they threaten the security of Saudi territory and undermine the stability of the region. We also condemn the attack on an official convoy in Aden, which resulted in several casualties. We call for the implementation of the Riyadh agreement in order to ease tensions in the south.

Every day, the people of Yemen continue to pay a high price for this conflict. The figures presented by Mr. Rajasingham speak for themselves. Sadly, September marked a new record for civilian casualties.

We cannot stress enough that the protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, as well as civilian infrastructure, must

remain an absolute imperative. Every effort must be made to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need. We call for the removal of all bureaucratic obstacles. It is also essential to accelerate the coronavirus disease vaccination campaign in order to provide equitable access to the vaccine and to intensify awareness campaigns.

We also regret the lack of agreement in the Human Rights Council with regard to renewing the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, even as extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, child recruitment and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law continue, as noted by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The perpetrators of such violations must not go unpunished. France condemns the execution of nine people by the Houthis on 18 September and reiterates its firm and consistent opposition to the death penalty, anywhere and under any circumstance.

Only a comprehensive and inclusive political solution will put an end to the war in Yemen. France commends the Special Envoy for his engagement, and in particular for his efforts to relaunch the political process and propose a new framework for negotiations, following his first round of consultations in Yemen and the region. I reiterate France's full support in that regard and our readiness to fully support the Special Envoy in his efforts.

The international parameters, including the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, to resolve the conflict in Yemen are well known. The political process must be inclusive and allow for the participation of women and the whole of Yemeni civil society.

We also call on the Houthis to give the United Nations immediate and unconditional access to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which represents a major environmental, economic and humanitarian risk for the country and the entire region. The blackmail by the Houthis in that regard is unacceptable.

The international community can count on France's full support, including for the humanitarian response. We will remain fully mobilized to put an end to this conflict.

Ms. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We begin by welcoming the comprehensive remarks delivered by Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Acting

Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham. We also welcome Ms. Maysaa Abdulrahman Shujaa Al-Deen, whose research and assessment contributes to our comprehensive knowledge of the situation in Yemen, thereby buttressing efforts to address the complexities on the ground.

As Saint Vincent and the Grenadines nears the end of its tenure on the Security Council, I must say that it is truly regrettable that hostilities in Yemen, as well as cross-border attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, continue unabated and that the humanitarian situation is still one of the world's worst. We deplore the continued fighting, the impact of which is felt deeply by Yemen's most vulnerable people, including women, children and internally displaced persons. The recent car bomb attack at Aden airport is one of the many examples of the destruction that the conflict continues to wreak on the civilian population.

In the face of these dire circumstances, however, there is opportunity for hope, due in part to the fact that we have a road map that facilitates an end to the war. We have repeated that there must be an immediate ceasefire that opens the doors to political dialogue and that, through various confidence-building measures, we can foster an environment conducive to that dialogue. We have recognized that the success of the dialogue necessitates a Yemeni-led, -owned and -focused process. The additional prerequisite is a genuine demonstration by the parties to the conflict of collective responsibility and political will to prioritize Yemen's future and end the war. Until then, the dire humanitarian and economic situation will persist.

A sustained humanitarian operation that can reach those most in need is critical to the everyday survival of people in Yemen. We welcome the high-level side event that was co-hosted by Sweden, Switzerland and the European Union last month, which gave the international community an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the people of Yemen by providing additional funding for aid operations. In that regard, we welcome the pledges made and urge the early disbursement of the funds.

The humanitarian situation is compounded by the state of the economy, which has been crippled by the conflict. Between unpaid salaries, the depreciation of the currency, significant inflation and the curtailment of important economic sectors, many Yemenis lack the resources to survive on a day-to-day basis. External

support is compulsory. The good-neighbourliness of countries in the region and the opening of ports for the entry of goods, including fuel, into Yemen are so critical to ease the humanitarian suffering. All parties in Yemen must act responsibly and fairly in the distribution of critical goods and fuel.

As we emphasize the need for the resumption of the political process, we also stress that there can be no sustainable peace without accountability. As the international community we must ensure that the parties' obligations are upheld under international law and also build the capacity of local institutions to guarantee accountability.

Before concluding, allow me to revisit the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which has been raised during every Security Council meeting on Yemen. It is imperative that the relevant parties prioritize a solution with a sense of urgency and that all stakeholders with influence encourage the parties to find a swift resolution to this issue. The catastrophic impact of an explosion or leak must be prevented while we still have time.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm our support for the Special Envoy and for all partners working to end the war.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham for their briefings. I also thank Ms. Shujaa Al-Deen for her insightful briefing.

Estonia remains deeply concerned about the ongoing hostilities in Yemen that have once again intensified in recent weeks, causing more and more suffering for the people of Yemen. As reported by the United Nations, another 10,000 people in Ma'rib have been displaced in the past month, the highest monthly number this year. Civilian casualties in September have also reportedly once more reached high levels.

We call on all parties to immediately put an end to hostilities, including the Houthi assault on Ma'rib. We strongly condemn the repeated cross-border attacks by Houthis against Saudi Arabia, including the recent attacks on Abha and Jizan airports, where several civilians were injured. All parties must refrain from indiscriminate attacks against civilian objects, as they are a violation of international humanitarian law.

The people of Yemen have suffered enough. It is time for the Government of Yemen and the Houthis to engage constructively with the Special Envoy and agree

to a sustainable ceasefire, accompanied by an inclusive political process, with the participation of women and youth. We highly appreciate all international and regional efforts in support of this achieving these objectives.

The situation in the southern governorates also remains distressingly fragile, as the recent clashes near Aden, which led to several civilian casualties, remind us. We urge the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council to resume the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement, which is in the interest of the Yemeni people and an essential element of the path towards wider peace.

Estonia was deeply disappointed at the vote at the United Nations Human Rights Council on 7 October, which failed to extend the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts. During the past four years, the Group has done extremely important work in monitoring the human rights situation in Yemen. It is in the interest of the people of Yemen that accountability for human rights violations and abuses is ensured.

Estonia remains deeply concerned about the continued reports of human rights violations and abuses by all parties to the conflict, including sexual violence and the recruitment and use of children. The most recent report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Yemen (S/2021/761) demonstrates the harsh reality that the armed conflict continues to cause atrocities and immense suffering to children in Yemen. More than 8,500 grave violations against children were recorded during the years 2019 and 2020.

Furthermore, the conflict continues to exacerbate the humanitarian situation. We call upon the parties to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and agree on the import of fuel and commercial goods through Al-Hudaydah port.

Finally, we repeat our call on the Houthis to allow urgent action to be taken on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker in order to avoid an environmental and economic disaster.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I thank Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and particularly Ms. Shujaa Al-Deen for their timely recommendations. The role of independent Yemeni researchers and journalists is essential.

We also thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg for sharing frank updates from his visit to Yemen

and discussions with actors in the region and other stakeholders. We are encouraged by his efforts in promoting a more inclusive process, and we were pleased to see his direct engagement with the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group. Norway fully supports him and his efforts as Special Envoy. We stress the need for the parties to engage constructively and responsibly going forward, without preconditions.

The return of Prime Minister Ma'een Abdulmalek Saeed to Aden last month was a welcome development. However, the security situation, as exemplified by the recent car bomb incident that followed clashes in Aden, remains concerning. Such attacks undermine security in Aden and impede the prospects for peace. All parties must create a conducive environment for the Government to fully function, and we urge the parties to fully implement the Riyadh Agreement.

The daily life of the Yemeni people continues to deteriorate. The humanitarian situation remains dire. The economic situation is not improving. There has been flooding in the south affecting many, and the pandemic remains ongoing, with very few people vaccinated. On top of all of this is the armed conflict. These conditions are truly unsustainable.

We are alarmed by the continued cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia and by the fact that the Houthi offensive in Ma'rib and Shabwa continues to intensify. We again stress the urgent need for de-escalation and a nationwide ceasefire. The humanitarian situation in Al-Abdia is a particular cause for alarm.

We are also deeply concerned by UNICEF's report of an increased number of children killed and injured in the Ma'rib area. The recent report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Yemen (S/2021/761) also details a significant increase in and the prevalence of incidents of denial of humanitarian access to children throughout Yemen. It is vital that all Yemeni children have immediate access to humanitarian assistance and protection. Norway calls on those fighting in Ma'rib and across Yemen to respect their international humanitarian law obligations, including the protection of children.

Norway regrets the recent inability of the Human Rights Council to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen. By ending this United Nations mechanism, we are failing to acknowledge the Yemeni victims or pursue accountability and justice.

Finally, with regard to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, we are concerned by the lack of progress as the risk of disaster is growing day by day. We welcome the appointment of David Gressly as the Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, and we hope this will give the impetus needed to move forward in the process of finding a solution.

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

I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham and Ms. Maysaa Abdulrahman Shujaa Al-Deen for their briefings.

I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

As has been the case throughout its time in the Council, Kenya is deeply concerned at the recent events in Yemen, including the renewed and sustained violence in Ma'rib and in Sirwah, Rahabah, Mahilyah and Al Abidia districts, which continues to claim the lives of hundreds of Yemenis each week; the attack on the convoy belonging to the Governorate of Aden and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, which claimed six lives on 10 October; the increasing reach of cross-border attacks by the Houthi on civilian facilities and the resulting civilian injuries in Saudi Arabia; the public execution on 18 September of nine men convicted of their alleged involvement in the killing of a senior Houthi official; and the escalations of hostilities and offensives in the southern region, particularly in Shabwa and Aden.

We condemn those acts of violence in the strongest terms, which have led to the loss of life and injury of innocent civilians and the destruction of civilian objects.

We maintain our position that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. The fact that some parties are capitalizing on the intensive diplomatic engagements to scale up their military interventions is quite disturbing, since they are seeking to shift the trajectory of negotiations through violence.

We support the Special Envoy's efforts to help the parties to break the existing stalemate and facilitate a political solution. However, his efforts will be futile unless the Yemenis who are involved in this destructive civil war make the necessary compromises, agree on a working nationwide ceasefire and recommit to a negotiated political solution.

The parties should remember that it is their own vulnerable population who bear the brunt of the effects of the war. We note that more than 10,000 people, 70 per cent being women, were displaced following the recent increase in fighting. Those numbers are adding to the growing population in dire humanitarian straits. That humanitarian crisis, as we heard, is being compounded by the spread of the coronavirus disease pandemic. We will continue to urge the international community to provide more humanitarian support.

But I was particularly struck by the briefing that we heard from our civil-society briefer today on proposing very concrete economic and financial measures. As much as the Security Council continues to discuss the humanitarian, political and security situations, I think that it is time to highlight that there are specific and very practical steps that can, and need, to be taken. I therefore want to add my voice to those of the briefers to urge all parties within the United Nations and the international community to start to take up some of those proposals and better consider them.

Closer to home, here at the United Nations, the humanitarian operation must function in this difficult environment in a more effective way. I also call for the consideration of how much better the United Nations can do in its coordination and delivery of humanitarian aid.

I want to conclude with the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. It has been almost a year since the Houthis agreed to allow the United Nations team to inspect that decaying tanker. From where we sit in Kenya, off the Indian Ocean coast, with so many of our goods flowing through the waters of the Red Sea, if that catastrophe were to happen, it would directly and negatively impact the people of Kenya and, with them, the people of the entire region. It is critical that the Houthis understand that any legitimacy that they may ever wish to enjoy would be destroyed by the *FSO SAFER* tanker sinking and the effects that that would have.

I also want to shed a light on the workers on the *FSO SAFER* tanker, who are working under extremely dangerous and difficult conditions, with much less support than they have ever had before. I want to applaud them for the courage and professionalism that they show every day to protect the entire region and the world from catastrophe. We need to thank them for what they are doing. We look forward to their being substantially supported.

I want to end by reaffirming Kenya's solidarity with the people of Yemen in their quest for peace and security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like 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 would like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ireland, for her successful presidency of the Council last month. I would also like to thank Mr. Grundberg and Mr. Rajasingham for their briefings.

Allow me to follow up on what my dear sister Ms. Maysaa Al-Deen said. I hope that I can be given a little more time. She mentioned that the Yemeni Government has to pay the salaries of employees in areas under the control of the Houthi militias. However, she forgot to mention that the Houthi militias must deposit all taxes and oil revenues in the Central Bank of Yemen so that the Government can fulfil its responsibilities, given that the Government of Yemen is paying salaries in areas controlled by the Houthis, whether in the health or the education sector, despite the very limited resources.

It is therefore the Houthis who loot resources to fund the futile war, perpetuate it and kill Yemenis. They stole nearly \$16 billion from the Al-Hudaydah branch of the Central Bank of Yemen. Those oil revenues had been deposited to pay the salaries of public sector employees, in agreement with the Office of the Special Envoy. The Houthis stole that money to fund their absurd war. In a report last year (see S/2021/79), it is indicated that the Houthis stole nearly \$1.8 billion to wage a futile war against the Yemeni people. The Houthis use starvation as a weapon.

In addition, Ms. Al-Deen made some claims regarding the situation of the Yemeni communities in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We in the Government of Yemen value the solidarity of the Saudi Arabia with the Yemeni people under these difficult circumstances. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has hosted millions of Yemeni refugees who fled Yemen as a result of the futile war being waged by the Houthi militias and has been providing support to the Yemeni

people at all stages. We highly value such support in the economic and humanitarian spheres. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the largest supporters and donors to the Yemen humanitarian response plan, which is known to all. Yemen values that support. We also value the support and care given to millions of Yemenis living in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom provides facilities to all those residing on its territories. What Ms. Al-Deen said is not true, and she should review the sources on which she relied.

Today's meeting coincides with the anniversary of Yemen's two glorious revolutions, on 26 September 1962 and 14 October 1963. We believe that the Yemeni people who led those two revolutions are even more resolved and determined today to secure a victory that restores the glory of the two revolutions, preserve their gains and resume their course to achieve the desired goals and aspirations.

The return of the clerical theocratic system, in its Houthi version, represents a threat to the present and future of Yemen and to international and regional peace and security. Those militias are a tool in the hands of the regime in Iran, holding our nation hostage to Iranian interventions. They export the Iranian experience to Yemen, and the people of Yemen reject that experience. They are an armed group that believes in the imposition of its divine right by armed force, not through freedom, democracy and the peaceful handover of power.

The Yemeni Government reiterates its commitment to peace and ending the war, which has brought about only suffering and destruction. We hope that the efforts by Mr. Grundberg will contribute towards reaching a just and sustainable peace based on the agreed terms of reference for a political solution in Yemen — that is, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

Throughout the past period, we have positively engaged with efforts towards peace. The Government has made many concessions to end the conflict. However, the Houthi militias have rejected all initiatives and proposals aimed at ending the war. The Government of Yemen was open and prepared to cooperate; in turn, the Houthis continued their futile war and launched ballistic missiles that destroyed civilian homes and camps for displaced persons, including killing of

women and children, in addition to their use of drones and prohibited mines.

Last month (see S/PV.8854) we spoke about the grave violations committed by the Houthi militias against civilians and displaced persons, with the members of the Security Council expressing their condemnation of those crimes, which are flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, in addition to being in defiance of the will of the Council and the international community.

However, that did not deter the Houthi militias from continuing, and even stepping up their crimes. What fault did they bear, the three children, the women and the civilians who fell victim to the Houthi ballistic missile attack on Al-Rawda district in Ma'rib? What fault did the pregnant woman bear who lost both her legs while tending her sheep, as a result of the explosion of a mine planted by the Houthis in Al-Hudaydah? Or the thousands of civilians and families, including children and cancer and kidney patients who are besieged in the Al-Abdiyah district of Ma'rib? What are they guilty of? Terrorist attacks and genocide are being committed against civilians and displaced persons in that district. There is no access to food, medicine, baby formula, potable water or oil products. Mines are being planted, and civilians are now facing death from starvation. All of that is taking place while the world shamefully stands by in silence.

The city of Taiz has lived under siege and indiscriminate daily sniping by the Houthi militias for seven years. From this rostrum, I call on the Security Council and the human conscience to assume their responsibilities and take urgent measures to lift the siege on Al-Abdiyah district, stop terrorist crimes and save thousands of civilian lives — women, children, sick and injured people.

The world was witness to the horrific crime involving the execution of nine innocent Yemeni citizens by the Houthis, including an adolescent, in a brutal and barbaric manner similar to the crimes of Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. Before that, the civilian airport in Al-Makha was targeted and destroyed. The Governor's house in Ma'rib, inhabited by innocent women and children, was also hit with missiles. Civilian infrastructure and objects in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been repeatedly attacked by drones, most recently the

Abha International Airport, the city of Khamis Mushait and King Abdullah Airport in Jazan.

All of that reveals the true intentions of the militias. They are bent on war and the destruction of Yemen and killing Yemenis in order to carry out Iran's expansionist agenda in the region, without realizing that arms and violence will not bring about peace but instead generate new cycles of conflict and war that will produce more victims and reprisals.

The international community must speak up and shoulder its responsibility to put an end to this Houthi arrogance, stop the bloodshed and destruction and allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid and an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people. It must bring pressure to bear on the Houthi coup militias and their sponsors, as well as ensure the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. If the Council does not exercise the necessary pressure on the Houthis and their sponsor Iran to choose peace, then the world and the Council will not be able to save millions of Yemenis from the repercussions of the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

All those continuing crimes and violations by the Houthi militias against Yemenis are messages to the international community and to the Council confirming that those militias do not believe in peace and that they can only survive in the quagmire of war, destruction and bloodshed.

We renew our call to the Council to protect civilians and save them from the scourge of war and direct targeting with ballistic missiles and heavy weapons, as well as to condemn the Houthi militias' violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and other humanitarian norms.

We have listened many times to Mr. Rajasingham in the Council about the extent of the suffering Yemenis are experiencing today and about the potential effects should the Houthis not stop their war and accept the ceasefire as the most important step towards alleviating human suffering. I take this opportunity to commend the role of the United Nations and the relief and humanitarian workers in Yemen. We call on them to further their partnership with the Government of Yemen to achieve our common goal of mitigating the human suffering. We also renew our call to the international community to increase funding for the humanitarian response plan and ensure direct support to the Yemeni

Government in order to provide services and address economic and development challenges. We also call on the international community and international donor institutions to support the efforts of the Government to achieve stability and economic recovery, including through the disbursement of humanitarian aid funds through the Central Bank of Yemen — a measure that does not require allocating more funding and will directly enhance the value of the Yemeni riyal and support the purchasing power of citizens, thereby alleviating the human suffering that is taking millions of Yemenis to the brink of starvation.

The return of the Prime Minister and several other members of the Government to the temporary capital in Aden is a clear expression of the Government's determination to work in even the most difficult circumstances to enhance security and stability and provide services to the Yemeni people, as well as an explicit expression of its sincere intention to implement the remaining provisions of the Riyadh agreement, which constitutes a road map and guarantee for uniting the ranks. Its implementation today, not tomorrow, should support restoring State authority and addressing the dangers facing everyone. We underscore that acts of terrorism and sabotage, the latest of which was the attempt to target the Governor of Aden and the Minister of Agriculture last Sunday, will not dissuade the Yemeni Government and its people from confronting the coup, restoring State authority and proceeding to address and confront economic challenges.

Finally, we have talked a great deal in the Council about the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker and warned about a potential oil spill or explosion. The Council held two special meetings on the matter, but unfortunately the Houthis did not change their using of the tanker to blackmail the international community. While reiterating the Government's readiness to contribute to all efforts that save Yemen, the region and the world from the danger posed by the tanker, we warn against falling into the Houthi's trap by proposing new solutions that will enable the militias to delay and blackmail for years to come. We therefore call on the Council to take decisive practical steps to put pressure on the Houthi militias to stop their procrastination and allow the United Nations technical team to access the tanker to carry out the necessary assessment and repairs without further delay.

The meeting rose at noon.