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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by The Next Century Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 May 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Promoting Peace in Yemen

Conflict in Yemen has reached a crossroads. There is renewed hope that a peaceful settlement can be found. But Yemen remains on the brink of famine. Interlocutors must therefore act cautiously to keep this glimmer of hope alive and alleviate human suffering.

The Next Century Foundation is troubled by the language and content of Security Council Resolution 2624. The resolution is hampering ongoing peace efforts by alienating key actors.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The conflict has now raged for over seven years with dire consequences for the population of Yemen. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there are currently 23.4 million people in Yemen in need of humanitarian assistance, 12.9 million of whom are in acute need. However, a lack of funding has forced the UN to scale back its support efforts to the country. On the 16th of March, UN humanitarian relief chief Martin Griffiths stated that \$4.3 billion is needed to ameliorate the dire suffering of Yemen's people. In spite of this, the UN Humanitarian Response Plan's appeal event raised only \$1.3 billion, under a third of what is needed. With the international community focused on other conflicts around the world, it is important that we do not forget the people of Yemen.

The de facto authorities in Sana'a — frequently referred to as the Houthis by the media and international community — are in control of over one-third of the land mass of Yemen, and around 70% of the population.

RESOLUTION 2624

On the 28th of February 2022, United Nations Security Council members agreed on the renewal of Resolution 2624. The resolution encompasses an arms embargo and sanctions against the de facto authorities in Sana'a. If some argue that it is meant to act as a stick for the international community to pressure Ansar Allah to come to the bargaining table, the reverse is the reality. Proponents of the move express frustrations at the group's non-engagement in dialogue. In their view, Ansar Allah would profit greatly from engaging with the outside world. The de facto authorities in Sana'a refused to participate in the recent Saudi Arabia-led talks in Riyadh. Many argue that Ansar Allah will only accept compromise in the event that it is imperative for their survival. In spite of such complaints, the Resolution highlights the limitations of the international community's inclination to negotiate with the group. It amounts to a series of coercive sticks that will have harsh consequences for the population of Yemen by hindering the dialogue process, and have little positive influence on Ansar Allah.

HAMPERING PEACE

Resolution 2624 is problematic in a number of areas and it is hampering peace negotiations for two main reasons.

Firstly, the terrorist group terminology is likely to exacerbate tensions. Undoubtedly, the resolution's use of the term "heinous terrorist" to refer to the Ansar Allah movement will encourage opposition forces to further entrench their anti-Ansar Allah rhetoric. Since 2001, terrorist designations have generally prolonged conflicts by polarising the stances of the conflict factions. In this case, the terrorist label also incentivises the non-designated parties like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to pursue maximalist demands against Ansar Allah. Furthermore, such wording will cause additional issues for United Nations Special Envoy Hans Grundberg.

Secondly, the resolution expands the quantity of proposed negotiation parties to: "the multiple and varied parties including but not limited to the Government of Yemen and the Houthis, Yemen's major political and regional parties, and women, youth and civil society". The largely rhetorical appeal for these underrepresented groups to be included in the process

is moot because, despite being an absolute necessity, it is untenable at the current stage of the conflict. This aspect of the resolution will complicate the dialogue process as it questions the role of actors like the Southern Transitional Council and may increase competition between the various parties in negotiations.

GO NO FURTHER

Intensifying sanctions measures against Ansar Allah is very unlikely to positively impact events on the ground or bring the group to the negotiating table. But while we cannot yet be sure how detrimental Resolution 2624 will be to the humanitarian situation in Yemen, there may indeed be unintended consequences to the already stricken population. Nevertheless, there is still ongoing debate about whether to re-designate Ansar Allah as a “Foreign Terrorist Organisation” in Washington. Such a decision by the United States of America would incapacitate Yemen by diminishing the flow of humanitarian aid and foreign investment, further surging the prices of basic commodities like medicine and food in a country that is already considered the world's worst humanitarian disaster. The Next Century Foundation urges the United States of America and the rest of the international community to resist placing any more stringent coercive measures on Yemen.
