



Security Council

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Letter dated 21 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of the briefings provided by Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference convened on Thursday, 16 April 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Yemen.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen**

An opportunity has emerged to bring peace to Yemen. That opportunity has come as the country faces some of its toughest days. Military escalations have continued on several fronts for three months. The arrival of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to Yemen threatens to bring deeper and more widespread suffering to the people. There cannot be a more timely moment for the two parties to commit to silencing the guns and ending the conflict through a peaceful political solution.

The threat of COVID-19 has galvanized the effort towards peace among Yemenis and the international community. On 25 March, the Secretary-General made an urgent appeal for an immediate end to hostilities in Yemen and for the parties to focus on reaching a negotiated political settlement and to doing everything possible to counter COVID-19. The Government of Yemen immediately welcomed the call of the Secretary-General, as did the leadership of Ansar Allah. In addition, there was an outpouring of support from other Yemeni political leaders, as well as from civil society, including women and youth.

I have been struck by how consistent and clear the message has come through over the past several weeks from people across Yemen. They want this war to end and their leaders to agree to resolve their differences through dialogue. To take but one example, I recently met virtually with the Yemeni women's Technical Advisory Group. They were insistent that the war must stop now. They highlighted the importance of agreeing on humanitarian measures, particularly on improving freedom of movement and on releasing those detained in the war.

The international community has also been vocal in its support. On 8 April, the Saudi-led coalition announced a unilateral ceasefire for an initial period of two weeks. The explicit aim of the ceasefire is to create a conducive environment for the success of United Nations-led efforts for peace. I want to express my gratitude to the coalition and to the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed Bin Salman for this positive initiative. It is a clear sign of commitment to a peaceful political solution to the conflict and to supporting the efforts of the United Nations in Yemen. I am also grateful to the Security Council for its press statement of 10 April (see SC/14159), which endorsed the Secretary-General's call and welcomed the unilateral ceasefire announced by the coalition.

All eyes are now on the parties to the conflict. This is the time for hard decisions. None of us should underestimate the demands that are upon the leadership of both parties. The decisions needed to be taken by the two parties are of existential importance for the future of the country. Following the call of the Secretary-General, I presented proposals to the two parties. The first concerned a nation-wide ceasefire agreement. The second was on key humanitarian and economic measures, which may include releasing prisoners and detainees, opening Sana'a international airport, paying civil servant salaries, opening access roads and ensuring the entry of ships carrying essential commodities into Al-Hudaydah ports, all of which will help in the fight against COVID-19. The third proposal provides for the urgent resumption of the political process.

Over the past two weeks, we have been in constant negotiations with the parties on the texts of those agreements, which we expect them to agree on and formally adopt in the immediate future. The pace of the negotiations has not been impeded by the need to conduct them virtually. The conversations we have had with the two parties and our consultations with the Saudi-led coalition, among other international

actors, are continuous, detailed and constructive. I can report that we are making very good progress in terms of reaching consensus over the proposals, particularly on the principle of a nation-wide ceasefire. And we are redoubling our efforts to bridge the outstanding differences between the parties before we convene them at a meeting where agreements will be tabled, confirmed and published. I am grateful to both parties for the way in which they have conducted their negotiations with the United Nations. I have no doubt that both the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah want to end this conflict. There is no doubt that the diplomatic consensus, ably catalysed and guided by the interventions of the Secretary-General, is playing a crucial and indeed central role in pushing us towards a successful conclusion.

Lamentably, military activities continue on a number of fronts despite many calls from Yemenis and the international community for them to stop. I fear it will continue until we get an agreement on the United Nations' proposals, including on a nationwide ceasefire. Ma'rib remains the centre of gravity of this war but not the only theatre. The sooner we can stop the fighting, the better. The heavy fighting has continued to take the lives of more innocent Yemeni civilians. I would like to call the Council's attention to the senseless attack on the women's section of the central prison in Taiz city on 5 April, which killed and injured many women and children. I, along with many Yemenis and United Nations officials, condemned that horrific attack and underlined once again that all civilians and civilian objects, including prisons, must be protected under international humanitarian law.

In Al-Hudaydah, ceasefire violations continue on a daily basis at the same level as during my last briefing. Following the regrettable shooting and serious injury of a Government of Yemen liaison officer by a sniper, the Redeployment Coordination Committee and the joint mechanisms to implement the Al-Hudaydah Agreement have ceased to function. As we are all striving to maintain stability in Al-Hudaydah and achieve a nationwide ceasefire, it is important that the parties resume the work of the Redeployment Coordination Committee and the joint mechanisms. My colleague, the Head of the United Nations Mission to support the Al-Hudaydah agreement Mr. Abhijit Guha, is continuing his efforts to engage with the parties to prevent a deterioration of the situation or a spillover of the escalation from other areas.

The threat of COVID-19 in Yemen requires all our attention and resources. Yemen cannot face war and a pandemic. The new battle that it faces with the virus may be all-consuming. We can do no less than stop this war and turn all our attention to this new threat. We have heard the calls from Yemenis across the country, asking all of us to make the virus our priority. I know that the leaders of both parties, as well as those in the region, understand this as well as anyone.

I hope that next time we meet, I can report success. I will then be calling on the Council to support the parties on the implementation of their decisions. We hope this will happen sooner than later to allow the real focus in Yemen to be countering the threat of the virus.

Annex II**Statement by Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator**

On 10 April, the Government of Yemen confirmed the first case of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the country.

Council members have just heard from Martin Griffiths how the threat of COVID-19 must galvanize the political process, despite the challenges. We need a similar sense of urgency for the humanitarian crisis.

More than five years of war have severely degraded Yemen's health infrastructure, exhausted people's immune systems and increased acute vulnerabilities. As a result, epidemiologists warn that in Yemen COVID-19 could spread faster, more widely and with deadlier consequences than in many other countries. In other words, we are running out of time. The Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Lise Grande, described COVID-19 in Yemen as "one of the biggest threats in the past 100 years".

In that context, I would like to update the Council on five priorities for the humanitarian response: the protection of civilians, humanitarian access and delivery, funding for the relief effort, the Yemeni economy, and progress towards peace. COVID-19 affects all those issues.

First, on the protection of civilians, in the first quarter of this year civilian casualties rose every month, with more than 500 people killed or injured. One in every three civilian casualties was a child. In Al-Jawf, where hostilities escalated in mid-January, that rate is now one in two.

Despite calls for a ceasefire, hostilities have persisted in many areas, mainly in Ma'rib, Al-Jawf, Al-Bayda and Taiz, with deadly consequences for civilians. All parties must take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects throughout military operations.

As Martin said, on 5 April, a strike against a women's prison in Taiz killed seven women and a child living with his detained mother. Another 26 women were injured.

Since January, at least 60,000 people have fled the conflict in Al-Jawf and neighbouring areas. Most have of them arrived in Ma'rib, where more than 800,000 displaced people have sought refuge since 2016. If the conflict expands deeper into Ma'rib — and everything must be done to avoid that — more than 1 million people could suddenly be on the move.

I therefore welcome the recent moves towards a nationwide ceasefire, including the coalition's declaration last week. I urge all parties to join that effort, which is urgently needed not only to give Yemen a fighting chance against COVID-19 but also to relieve the disproportionate burden of the war on civilians.

The second issue is humanitarian access, which is both a requirement of international humanitarian law and essential if we are to continue to assist millions of people. We are working with all stakeholders to take precautions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 while maintaining life-saving assistance. These precautions are not slowing down aid operations in a major way, but it is regrettable that other restrictions imposed on staff and cargo movements, mostly in the north, continue to constrain our ability to maintain the high levels of aid that Yemenis need.

There are problems in Government-held areas as well, including bureaucratic impediments and insecurity. Humanitarian organizations are still waiting for Government officials to approve 43 projects that would assist 2.3 million people.

Many of those requests have been pending for months. Several organizations in the south have also experienced serious challenges in implementing approved projects in the past few weeks. We appreciate the Government's commitment to resolving these issues.

In the north, access challenges remain severe. The Ansar Allah authorities have taken several steps to improve the operating environment for aid agencies, but progress is not moving fast enough. Restrictions in northern Yemen are so onerous that humanitarian agencies are being forced to calibrate programmes and delivery to levels where they can manage the risks associated with such a non-permissive environment.

Although the Ansar Allah authorities have approved 13 aid projects since early March, agencies still have 92 pending requests, including 40 that have been waiting for months to get started. Local officials still arbitrarily refuse missions, and humanitarian staff continue to experience severe movement restrictions in the field, including in the past few days. Staff are subjected to long delays at checkpoints, even when paperwork is in order. In a particularly serious event, which has not yet been resolved, United Nations international staff in some locations have been prevented from moving from field hubs to Sana'a. That is unacceptable.

On a separate note, there has been no progress in accessing the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker.

Every day, we are working with the authorities to address these challenges. There are positive steps. The waiver of a levy on humanitarian projects remains in place, and a principal governing framework for the work of non-governmental organizations has also been agreed. After months of negotiations, there is finally confirmation from the authorities that the World Food Programme's long-planned biometric registration exercise can start.

Despite all the challenges to maintaining principled aid delivery, I want to remind everyone that the humanitarian operation remains a lifeline for millions of Yemenis. Every month, we are still helping more than 13 million people across the country. Last year, humanitarian agencies supported 3,100 health facilities and conducted 17 million medical consultations. We enabled access to clean water and sanitation for more than 11 million people and treated nearly a million acutely malnourished children. Nearly 12 million people received food assistance every month. These are the kinds of broad-based programmes that are essential to helping Yemenis keep healthy and defend themselves against COVID-19. But we need money to pay for those programmes. That brings me to my third point: funding for the aid operation.

Of the United Nations 41 major programmes, 31 will start closing down in the next few weeks if we cannot secure additional funds. That means that we will have to start eliminating many of the activities that may offer Yemenis the best chance to avoid COVID-19. UNICEF will have to stop immediate assistance for families displaced by conflict or natural disasters. That means up to 1 million displaced people would not receive critical supplies, including hygiene items that help to protect against diseases such as cholera and COVID-19. Nutrition programmes will also be cut, affecting 260,000 severely malnourished children and 2 million more children with moderate malnutrition. Those children's immune systems will be weakened, making them much more vulnerable to COVID-19, cholera and other diseases.

People who do fall sick are likely to find fewer clinics to help them. The World Health Organization estimates that 80 per cent of the health services provided through the response could stop at the end of April. That could mean disbanding local health teams that have been essential in detecting and containing past disease outbreaks.

We need these teams more than ever — not just to keep on top of COVID-19, but to contain a growing risk that cholera will rebound as the rainy season starts.

The humanitarian community — United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations and others — are unanimous in our position that the world's largest aid operation cannot afford extended cuts during this unprecedented emergency. United Nations agencies estimate that they need more than \$900 million to carry them through July. So I want to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its pledge last week of \$500 million for the United Nations-led response and \$25 million for COVID-19 activities. That pledge alone, of course, does not solve the problem. But we hope that these funds can be quickly disbursed on similar terms as in past years, which reflect global best practices in humanitarian donorship, so that the programmes I have described can continue.

I also want to acknowledge the concerns that donors have expressed over restrictions on humanitarian aid, particularly in the north. As I have said, we share these concerns and continue to work tirelessly to address them. There has been some progress, but more is needed. We understand that all humanitarian funding is provided on a voluntary basis, and many countries are facing economic downturns at home. I want again to thank all our donors for their support.

At the same time, we must all acknowledge the extraordinary threat that Yemen is facing. So far we have received about \$800 million in pledges and contributions for the response this year. At this time last year, the equivalent figure was more than three times higher — about \$2.6 billion. So I am urging all donors to pledge generously now and immediately release at least enough money to cover response operations through July. For operations beyond July, we understand that some donors may choose to disburse the remainder of their pledges only after having observed future developments.

Despite conditions on the ground and the real threat to our staff's safety and health, we are staying and delivering. Some international staff were rotated outside Yemen when the airports closed several weeks ago. The rest remain in country and are working with their Yemeni colleagues to deliver critical aid programmes during this difficult time. We have enough staff in the country to deliver critical programmes; what we do not have is the money.

The fourth issue is the economy. Yemen imports nearly everything. Commercial cargo is still entering the country despite increased scrutiny aimed at reducing the risk of COVID-19. In March, commercial food and fuel imports into Al-Hudaydah and Al-Salif fell by 9 per cent. That is a matter of concern, but they are normal fluctuations. Longer-term economic prospects are more alarming. Imports must be purchased in hard currency, which means that the Government needs foreign exchange to finance them. And to afford those imports, people need the Yemeni rial to maintain a reasonable exchange rate.

The impact of COVID-19 on the global economy will make this more difficult. Oil prices have fallen, and, because the Government depends on oil as a main source of revenue, officials may soon find it much harder to finance imports, pay civil-servant salaries or support the exchange rate. Rapid, uncontrolled currency depreciation was a key factor in bringing Yemen to the brink of widespread famine 18 months ago. The World Bank warns that a similar risk of currency collapse persists today.

In the past, remittances have served as a last defence for millions of vulnerable families. Economists estimate that Yemenis abroad send home more than \$3 billion a year, making remittances the largest source of hard currency in local markets. But COVID-19 is affecting the economies where expatriate Yemenis work. A group of Yemeni economists and private-sector leaders recently projected that remittances

could drop by as much as 70 per cent in the coming months. That places us in uncharted territory.

We need bold action to stabilize the economy before it is too late. This should include regular foreign-exchange injections that have proved effective in the past, as well as do whatever we can to increase quantities of affordable food and other consumer goods in markets across Yemen right now.

My final point is progress towards peace. Martin briefed the Council on that issue. Millions of Yemenis have suffered through years of war and deprivation. COVID-19 is presenting a unique opportunity to reinvigorate the political process and move towards peace. However, it is also promising severe repercussions if that does not happen.

Annex III**Statement by Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations**

We welcome the announcement of a ceasefire by the coalition as well as the positive reaction by the Yemeni Government. We call on the Houthi to make similar commitments without delay. All parties must immediately cease hostilities and engage in good faith in talks under the auspices of the United Nations. We are especially worried about the situation in Ma'rib.

The efforts of the Special Envoy to reach a nationwide ceasefire enjoy our full support. The de-escalation talks also provide an opportunity and should lead to political talks to identify a way out of the conflict. We encourage the parties to fully engage and refrain from any actions that may undermine these efforts. We emphasize the importance of an inclusive political process with the full and meaningful participation of women and youth.

Yemen is exceptionally vulnerable to the coronavirus disease, and recent reports of cases are cause for grave concern. That could overwhelm the country's already fragile health-care system. Humanitarian aid and medical supplies must continue to reach those in need. Authorities should facilitate the movement of essential humanitarian personnel and goods, and ensure that cargo flights and humanitarian and commercial supplies coming through the seaports continue to be granted entry and can be transported across the country. We are concerned about the obstruction of humanitarian assistance and remind all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. There must be accountability for violations.

Children are the most vulnerable group in Yemen and bear no responsibility for the crisis. We are pleased that the Security Council Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict adopted conclusions on Yemen by consensus, after more than seven months of negotiations. We call on all parties to implement the Council's recommendations and in particular to take measures to end and prevent all grave violations of children's rights through the adoption and implementation of an action plan with the United Nations and, in the case of the coalition, a memorandum of understanding and a programme of time-bound activities, as well as ensuring accountability for violations.

In conclusion, we urge the Houthi to allow access to the *FSO SAFER* tanker in order to evaluate the situation and avoid an ecological catastrophe.

Annex IV**Statement by Mr. Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations**

The Chinese delegation wishes to thank Special Envoy Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for their briefings. China commends their efforts to promote a ceasefire among all parties to the conflict in Yemen and to improve the humanitarian situation in the country.

China has been closely following the situation in Yemen. We support the call for a ceasefire made by Secretary-General Guterres and Special Envoy Griffiths. We welcome the announcement made by Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen, of a two-week unilateral ceasefire in Yemen. That is indeed progress. We also welcome the positive statement made by Yemeni Government in that regard. We hope that all parties will make further efforts to ensure a full and sustained ceasefire.

All efforts should be made to reach a political settlement in Yemen. We know there are many challenges ahead, but a political settlement represents the only solution to the Yemeni issue. For that purpose, we need a United Nations-led comprehensive and inclusive political process. We support the work done by the Mr. Griffiths to that end. It is imperative that all parties in Yemen strengthen their political will and engage in broad dialogue and consultations. We urge all parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh agreement. We call for greater efforts towards the cessation of violence and the building of mutual trust. It is apparent that the lack of mutual trust is hindering the political process. We sincerely hope that, with the coordination of Mr. Griffiths, all parties can maintain close contact with one another.

We are also concerned about the grim humanitarian situation in Yemen, especially in the light of the current circumstances of the global spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We do hope that the international community, including the Security Council and the humanitarian agencies on the ground, can pay close attention to the pandemic's potential impact on Yemen. We urge all parties to join hands in fighting the pandemic together as it is in the best interests of all Yemenis. We also hope that all parties concerned can ensure unhindered humanitarian access, which is extremely important at this moment. We echo the call of Under-Secretary-General Lowcock about the lack of funding. We hope that donors can maintain their financial support. The international community should continue to offer assistance to the Yemeni people for their economic recovery and social development. For our part, we will do our best to provide medical assistance to the Yemeni people to combat COVID-19. We are currently providing assistance through bilateral channels for Yemen's economic development and will continue to do so.

Annex V

Statement by Mr. José Singer Weisinger, Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic

We thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their briefings. We are pleased that the Secretary-General's recent call for a global ceasefire has not fallen on deaf ears. The Dominican Republic welcomes the announcement by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen, of a temporary cessation of hostilities.

We therefore urge all parties to the conflict to immediately halt fighting, to implement a ceasefire on the ground without delay, to release all detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, to activate the prisoner-exchange agreements and to work with the United Nations Special Envoy to urgently restart comprehensive and inclusive political negotiations. In that connection, we need to emphasize the importance of women's meaningful participation in all discussions regarding the current peace process.

We are well aware that the situation on the ground is far from stable. We know that the coronavirus disease is present in Yemen and that the country is critically under-equipped, with only half of its health facilities still fully functional. Millions lack access to clean water and sanitation, and outbreaks of other diseases like cholera have demonstrated the country's vulnerability to infectious diseases.

Due to the virus, we must also tackle the massive reduction in economic activity worldwide and its almost certain devastating effects on the Yemeni economy. As workforces worldwide are staying home, the same is likely to happen in Yemen, which would be economically disastrous. Moreover, we must consider the potential lack of future remittances from the Yemeni diaspora, which are vital to Yemen's economy.

Nevertheless, we believe that early action can still prevent a full outbreak. In order for that action to be effective, all parties must lay down their arms at once and take up the fight against the coronavirus. Authorities must allow full access into the country and to communities in need so that health-care workers and the humanitarian community can slow the rate of infection, especially considering the high number of internally displaced persons.

This extremely challenging time also demands that the parties abide by their obligations under international law, and we call on them to engage with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in agreeing and implementing a time-bound action plan to end and prevent grave violations of children's rights.

Finally, we urge the parties to take advantage of the observance of the holy month of Ramadan, which begins next week. There is still time; let us not waste this precious opportunity.

Annex VI

Statement by Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations

I would like to thank Special Envoy Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for their briefings.

Estonia would like to express its full support for the Secretary-General's efforts concerning the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in conflict-affected countries. We echo the Secretary-General's call to cease hostilities in Yemen and to focus on reaching a negotiated political settlement. Only an immediate ceasefire and a collective response, in full cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies, can help prevent the spread of the virus, which would have devastating consequences for the people of Yemen, who are already suffering from the world's largest humanitarian crisis.

We welcome the announcement of the unilateral ceasefire by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen. We also welcome the Yemeni Government's announcement that it will comply with the ceasefire, and we call on the Houthis to do the same.

We are concerned that despite all the efforts to end the violence, deadly clashes continue, with civilian casualties. We urge all parties to cease indiscriminate attacks on civilian infrastructure, which are in direct violation of international humanitarian law, and we stress the need to protect the vulnerable population, especially women and children. We also call on all parties to comply with international human rights law and to ensure accountability for all violations and abuses.

With the announcement of the first case of COVID-19 in Yemen, the need to stop fighting and to collectively focus on the common threat is evident. We fully support the Special Envoy in his efforts to end the hostilities and to convene the parties to start the formal political process for ending the crisis. We urge the parties to engage with the Special Envoy constructively and without delay.

A sustainable solution to the conflict can be achieved only through a political compromise. We reiterate the need for an inclusive and comprehensive political process mediated by the United Nations, with the full and meaningful participation of women.

We urge the parties to guarantee safe, full and unhindered access of humanitarian aid to all people in need. With the potential spread of the deadly pandemic, the need to comply with humanitarian principles and to refrain from obstructing the work of humanitarian agencies is even more important.

We also repeat our call on the Houthis to allow United Nations officials access to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker without delay in order to prevent an environmental disaster.

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

I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their informative and sobering briefings.

We have often reiterated that there is no military solution to the crisis in Yemen. As Martin Griffiths has rightly emphasized, there is now the opportunity for a political solution. As the Yemeni women's Technical Advisory Group urged Mr. Griffiths when he met with its members recently, there has never been a more timely moment for parties to silence the guns. Accordingly, we call on the Yemeni parties to fully engage in negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations Special Envoy.

We stress that Mr. Griffiths's role is crucial in coordinating all efforts. The parties must pursue the discussions with Mr. Griffiths on the basis of his three-part proposal, which we welcome, in particular by accepting his invitation to participate in a crisis meeting of all parties.

France welcomes the announcement made last Friday by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen to unilaterally cease their strikes. Unfortunately, the Yemeni parties have not yet answered the call of the Secretary-General for an immediate and global ceasefire to facilitate the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). They have not yet followed the coalition's announcement with any sort of commitment. On the contrary, the parties have intensified hostilities. France condemns in the strongest terms the increased levels of fighting.

We call on the Yemeni parties to commit to an effective and lasting cessation of hostilities. We also reiterate the obligation of all parties to respect international humanitarian law, in particular the protection of civilians, including humanitarian and health workers, as well as civilian infrastructure. We also call on all parties to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need, which is crucial to facilitating the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The warnings of epidemiologists mentioned by Martin Lowcock are clear. The spread of COVID-19 in Yemen would be catastrophic, as the Yemeni population is extremely vulnerable, and there is an obvious lack of medical capacity in the country. The socioeconomic impact of the crisis is already being felt.

Everyone must act with an increased sense of urgency. Early action can still prevent the spread of the virus. United Nations agencies and their partners are scaling up efforts to prevent the spread of the pandemic and strengthen the capacity to respond to the crisis and continue existing humanitarian programmes, which are the lifeline for everyone in Yemen. These efforts need to be supported and enhanced. All obstacles to humanitarian access and deliveries must be lifted.

To conclude where I started, I would like to reiterate that an immediate and sustainable ceasefire is needed more than ever before to facilitate the efforts aimed at responding to the COVID-19 crisis. The call of the Secretary-General must be heeded. The Security Council can count on France to remain fully mobilized, engaged and committed to finding a political solution to the crisis in Yemen and to responding to the COVID-19 emergency. The French authorities are also working more broadly to de-escalate the tensions being felt at the regional level.

Annex VIII

Statement by Mr. Christoph Heusgen, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

More than two weeks ago, the Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire in the light of the spreading coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The situation in Yemen is no doubt a prominent case in point for the dire need for a ceasefire. Once again, however, the promises that we have heard in response to the Secretary-General's appeal have been empty. If anything, the fighting in Yemen has intensified at the very moment when the COVID-19 crisis has reached the country.

Five years into the conflict, far too many innocent Yemenis, including thousands of children, have lost their lives. We could not agree more with the Secretary-General's position and the subsequent appeal by Martin Griffiths — the worldwide pandemic does not allow for greater suffering, increased fighting and more deaths. On the contrary, the crisis calls for cooperation, dialogue and a concerted effort to put the protection of human life at the centre of all our concerns. Against this backdrop, we fully support the de-escalation initiative that Martin Griffiths has already been pursuing for a couple of months now.

We were heartened by initial positive responses to the call for a ceasefire. The release of prisoners has been an equally necessary and important step, but the Saudi-led coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen's announcement that it would cease all hostilities for a period of two weeks has had no discernible effect on the ground. It has certainly not helped that we have not seen signs of a clear commitment on the part of the Houthis to also abide by a ceasefire. Instead, over the last few days, we have seen a resurgence of heavy fighting.

Against this background, I urge all parties to immediately stop hostilities, return to the negotiating table and finally translate their professed willingness to talk into concrete action by agreeing to a nationwide ceasefire as a first step towards a comprehensive and inclusive political solution to the conflict. We call on the parties to follow the Special Envoy's invitation to meet virtually, agree to his proposals and start meaningful peace talks on this basis.

The escalation in the last few days runs counter to the Special Envoy's tireless efforts. It brings even more hardship to the vulnerable and suffering populations, particularly in the light of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that the first cases of the coronavirus disease have been confirmed in Yemen, all actors must now focus on limiting the spread of the pandemic. The country is critically underequipped to face a highly contagious disease like COVID-19, while having to deal at the same time with recurrent outbreaks of cholera. Many health facilities have been destroyed as a direct consequence of the fighting. This is another stark reminder of the cruelty of this war. It also underlines the necessity that all parties fully adhere to international humanitarian law and human rights law and strive to protect vulnerable populations, in particular women and children, as well as the critical health infrastructure required to fight the virus.

We recognize the enormity of the efforts to be made to help prevent the spread of the virus. At the same time, full access of international aid workers, medicine and medical supplies into Yemen must be ensured, and these items and personnel must be allowed to reach those in need. In addition to COVID-19-related preparedness and response activities, humanitarian staff must be able to continue providing critical life-saving humanitarian assistance. Commercial and humanitarian imports must also be allowed to enter the country.

Respect for humanitarian principles and the safety of humanitarian staff remain crucial for life-saving assistance to get in. In this regard, we appreciate the tireless work of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

We are also concerned about the current situation of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA). The COVID-19 pandemic poses particular challenges to the operation and functioning of the Mission. The accommodations on board the United Nations ship docked off the coast of Al-Hudaydah makes the UNMHA personnel particularly vulnerable to a potential outbreak of the disease. We acknowledge the preventive measures and contingency plans put in place by the Mission, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations with regard to a potential infection. However, there remain concerns about the possible need for medical evacuation.

The situation is aggravated by the restrictions of movement put in place by the Houthis. Restrictions by both parties were already an issue before the current crisis. Using the pretext of COVID-19, their restrictions have become even more severe. These restrictions are unacceptable, as they cynically exploit COVID-19 to limit UNMHA's effectiveness. UNMHA must be granted the access and freedom of movement it needs to ensure its operations, including the well-being of its staff.

We also urge both parties to adhere to the Stockholm Agreement and cooperate to maintain stability in Al-Hudaydah. We hope the work of the Redeployment Coordination Committee can resume as soon as circumstances permit.

Annex IX**Statement by Mr. Dian Triansyah Djani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations**

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their important updates and their efforts in finding a solution towards a political settlement and way to ease the humanitarian crisis. Much appreciation should be expressed to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs team and others, and we hope that they are all well and staying safe and healthy. In response to the updates, Indonesia highlights the following three points.

First, Yemenis must seize the momentum for a political settlement. To quote the Special Envoy, an opportunity has emerged, and it is time to ensure that this opportunity is translated into concrete action. My delegation is very encouraged by the announcement of the coalition's unilateral ceasefire in Yemen in response to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. That is an important element for the peace process. We hope that the announcement will lead to a permanent ceasefire and strongly urge the Houthis to seize the moment and make a similar commitment. We regret, as Mr. Griffiths has mentioned, that violations of the Al-Hudaydah ceasefire agreement continue. This has to stop.

In addition, we express support for the joint appeal by the Secretary-General's Envoys to the Middle East, in which they observed that far too many people in the area have endured conflict and deprivation for too long. This is critical for all Yemenis, and there is no better side to be on than on the side of history. As the world battles coronavirus disease (COVID-19), we call on the parties to unite with us in our fight against this common enemy and not to wage war against each other. Mr. Griffiths alluded to the fact that Yemen cannot survive fighting two battles at the same time. We would like to underline, once again, that all parties must work together with the Special Envoy to seize the momentum for a second dialogue and to pursue a comprehensive, inclusive and Yemeni-led and -owned political settlement.

Secondly, my delegation reiterates its concern about the humanitarian situation, which is now considerably compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. We call on all parties to refrain from impeding humanitarian assistance and to cooperate with humanitarian workers to ensure that a bad situation is not made worse. We also plead for all the authorities in Yemen to work together to address the spread of the virus. We would like to underline what Under-Secretary-General Lowcock mentioned, namely, that the spread of the virus in Yemen could be much worse than in any other part of the world, noting that there are vast movements of refugees. COVID-19 could affect the five priorities that Under-Secretary-General Mark stated, and we are very much concerned that this will affect the humanitarian efforts currently being undertaken. We noted with concern that, out of 41 programmes, 31 will be closing down owing to a lack of funding. This will cause more suffering for Yemenis. In that regard, we would like to appeal to the international community to help alleviate the humanitarian problem in Yemen. We would also like to express our appreciation to the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their generous humanitarian contributions.

We also would like once again to reiterate our concern over the FSO SAFER oil tanker. The response will be limited should there be a spill from it, as the situation gives us limited room for manoeuvre. In that connection, we again call on the Houthis to give access to United Nations inspectors.

Thirdly, I wish to re-emphasize the importance of the implementation of all previous undertakings, notably the Stockholm, Al-Hudaydah and Riyadh agreements. Evidently, implementing the Al-Hudaydah agreement remains critical, and we urge the Houthis not to hinder access to the United Nations Mission to support the Al-Hudaydah agreement patrols. We reiterate the urgent need to implement the prisoner swaps provided for in the Stockholm Agreement, a point that also now carries a new urgency in the light of the pandemic as detention centres are high-risk spots for transmission.

We support the Special Envoy's efforts to continue to broker peace, as well as his proposal in that regard. We concur with his important point that diplomatic consensus is essential if we want to find a peaceful solution. We also note that the Special Envoy has been in contact with many layers of society, including women and civil society, and I hope that their appeals will be heard by the leaderships in Yemen.

Finally, Indonesia stands ready to continue to support the peace efforts in Yemen. As the world awaits the month of Ramadan in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, there is perhaps no better time or opportunity for Yemenis to walk the road to peace together. Ramadan is supposed to be a time for peace and tranquility; therefore, this is an appeal to all parties.

Annex X**Statement by Mr. Niandou Aougi, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations**

Let me begin by thanking all the briefers for their valuable presentations this morning.

At the previous briefing to the Security Council, on March 12 (see S/PV.8745), Mr. Griffiths expressed his concern about the risks of a prolonged military escalation. Unfortunately, the situation as we have observed since mid-January, and again recently, with the fighting around Marib, the capture of the city of Al-Hazm and the clashes in Al-Hudaydah, have only confirmed our fears. The Niger condemns the military escalation and calls on the parties to respond favourably to the Secretary-General's appeal of 23 March and to the appeal of his five Special Envoys to the Middle East, issued on 11 April, for an immediate cessation of hostilities in all theatres of conflict in the region.

We welcome the unilateral ceasefire decided by the coalition led by Saudi Arabia and call on the Houthis to follow suit without delay, in order to give relief to the Yemeni people, who have already been severely affected by this prolonged conflict. We call on the wisdom and responsibility of the parties in order for all hostilities to cease immediately. Today, more than ever, the parties in the Yemeni conflict must acknowledge that peace will be based on the understanding that military solutions to the conflicts in the region are not viable. My delegation calls on both parties to respect their commitments, to resume peace talks and to respect previous agreements, including those reached during the national dialogue, the Riyadh agreement and the Stockholm Agreement, which we continue to fully support.

With regard to the humanitarian crisis, my country insists on the need to put an end to the recurrent restrictions on the movement of humanitarian agencies so that much-needed assistance can be delivered to affected populations.

We urge all the parties to focus on the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which is our common enemy. Indeed, given the precarious health system in Yemen, which has been weakened by several years of war, the population's extreme poverty and the lack of infrastructure and medical personnel, the outbreak of coronavirus in the country could be particularly disastrous.

In conclusion, we appeal to the international community and the Security Council to prevent a disaster caused by the COVID-19 pandemic situation, which is an exceptional and generalized threat to human life, health and subsistence.

Annex XI

Statement by Mr. Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

We thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their comprehensive review of the situation in Yemen.

We welcome the decision of the Arab coalition to unilaterally stop all military operations for the next two weeks with a prospect of extension. In that regard, we supported the relevant Security Council press statement adopted in line with the call of the Secretary-General and Special Envoy Griffiths on all parties involved in the Yemeni conflict to put an end to the confrontation, which has recently exceeded five years, and to take all necessary steps to combat the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Regrettably, reports indicate that hostilities continue.

We strongly believe that all sides should cease hostilities and embark upon the path of political settlement. We support Mr. Griffiths's efforts to establish contacts between representatives of the Government of Yemen, Ansar Allah and the Arab coalition under United Nations auspices in order to ensure de-escalation, a sustainable ceasefire, confidence-building measures and the launch of a comprehensive and inclusive political process in Yemen. Dialogue is absolutely essential. We do not expect instant results, but we would very much hope that this time, with this dialogue, there is a chance of entering a new stage of conflict resolution in Yemen.

For our part, we will continue to provide support to United Nations efforts. Humanitarian assistance remains a priority, as well as response to the threat posed by an outbreak of COVID-19. But let us also not forget that Yemen and some 20 million Yemenis have already gone through other severe epidemics, including cholera and diphtheria, and, what is no less sad, hunger. It is important to ensure unimpeded access for humanitarian and health-care workers to all areas of the country.

We are hopeful that Mr. Griffiths's efforts will bear fruit this time. We will continue to engage and to be cooperative.

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

We thank Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock for their invaluable updates on the situation in Yemen.

It remains critical, particularly at this moment, that we continue to remain fully aware of all developments amid the ongoing pandemic. We have also seen the devastating flash floods in Sana'a, where the people are in urgent need of assistance, and we express our solidarity with those who are suffering. We must do all that we can to assist in efforts to help to overcome the damage caused by the flash floods and to mitigate the chances of increasingly severe weather patterns.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its far-reaching consequences add another layer of complexity to the conflict and dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. It threatens to further deteriorate the living conditions of the Yemeni people and undermine the humanitarian response. Yemen's infrastructure has been devastated during the years of conflict, making it extremely vulnerable to the adverse impacts of this pandemic. In that regard, we encourage cooperation between all relevant national agencies and the World Health Organization (WHO) to contain the spread and stress the need for regional and international collaboration in this shared fight. We take this opportunity to welcome the cooperation between the United Nations, WHO and the Yemen authorities in managing preparedness for the coronavirus, including through the provision of thousands of tests to all the governorates of Yemen and the establishment of a quarantine facility in Aden. We also welcome WHO's efforts to build the capacity of the intensive care units in hospitals, as well as the training of health-care workers.

Furthermore, we welcome the announced ceasefire by the coalition and the subsequent commitment of the Government of Yemen to the ceasefire. We encourage all parties to engage and implement a permanent cessation of hostilities in good faith amid the efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. We also encourage safe and unhindered access for health-care workers and humanitarian personnel operating to slow the rate of infection and provide life-saving assistance. In that vein, we emphasize the important role of donors, which secure and sustain that critical aid. While the people of Yemen are threatened with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, they are also suffering from the consequences of a five-year conflict. Sustaining humanitarian aid at this juncture is critically important.

Before concluding, we express our continued concern over the inaccessibility to the FSO SAFER oil tanker, which represents a looming marine environmental disaster. For Yemen, the region and the protection of our global commons, that remains an issue that must be urgently addressed.

We conclude by underscoring Mr. Griffith's assessment that "an opportunity has emerged to bring peace to Yemen". Let us seize it. We reiterate our support for the work of the Special Envoy and encourage all parties to the conflict to resume negotiations towards a sustainable and inclusive peace. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its support for this peace process and stands in solidarity with the people of Yemen.

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

We thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their briefings. South Africa continues to reiterate its support to the Special Envoy and applauds his efforts to find a peaceful solution to the situation in Yemen during these distressing times amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

South Africa joins other members of the Security Council in welcoming the unilateral ceasefire that was announced by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the Joint Forces Command. This is in line with the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in Yemen, and we trust that all parties can make similar commitments in support of the United Nations peace process. We note and welcome the Government of Yemen's positive response and look forward to the Houthis making a similar commitment.

As pointed out, South Africa supports the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy. We therefore encourage the parties to continue their cooperation with him in order to reach a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned, comprehensive and inclusive political settlement that addresses the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis. In that context, we also call for the full and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of an inclusive political process.

In the same vein, we emphasize the full implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement by all parties, which we believe will direct the path to continued dialogue and a political settlement. Furthermore, we welcome the announcement of the Special Envoy's comprehensive initiative to supplement all diplomatic efforts to end the war in Yemen.

South Africa remains concerned at the alarming number of deaths, exceeding 100,000, that have resulted from this war thus far. It has also led to widespread starvation amid the dire humanitarian situation, which continues to worsen owing to the continuing conflict. South Africa strongly urges all parties to resume political negotiations that will result in a lasting peace in Yemen and will allow for the rebuilding of the country.

The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Yemen on 10 April, in Hadramaut governorate. Yemen remains critically under-equipped to bear the burden that this virus will place on its health facilities, bearing in mind that only half of its health-care infrastructure is operational. South Africa welcomes the measures taken by both the Government of National Accord and the Houthis to curb the spread of COVID-19 in Yemen. Those measures highlight the ability of both sides to work together towards a common goal.

In the light of the coronavirus pandemic, South Africa calls on the parties to the conflict to fulfil their responsibility to the people of Yemen by ensuring access and the unhindered passage of humanitarian and medical supplies to those in dire need and to stop the spread of the virus. This is certainly the time to lay down arms and take up the fight against the coronavirus, together. South Africa reiterates its call on all parties to the conflict to adhere to their obligations in terms of international human rights and international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, this unprecedented humanitarian crisis is a strong indicator of the human toll of continued military action and conflict, which necessitates an urgent commitment to a ceasefire and the pursuit of a negotiated, peaceful and inclusive solution to the crisis. We wish to reiterate that the only sustainable solution to this

conflict will be a negotiated, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political settlement that provides a strong economic and political future for all Yemenis.

Annex XIV**Statement by Mr. Kais Kabtani, Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations**

At the outset, I thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock and General Abhijit Guha, Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), and I would like to reiterate our appreciation of their efforts to help Yemen, especially during these very difficult and uncertain times.

Yemen, which has been ravaged by war and is witnessing the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with millions of displaced persons and more than half the population in urgent need of humanitarian or protection support, is facing the imminent danger of a potential outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which threatens to further deepen the suffering of the Yemeni people. The continuing hostilities and escalation can only make this outbreak unstoppable and extremely deadly, in a country with an infrastructure devastated by war and that does not have the resources or the preparedness to deal with this pandemic, and where fighting and armed groups are continuing to block access to humanitarian aid.

In this regard, as we reiterate Tunisia's full support for the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and his call to end hostilities in Yemen and ramp up efforts to counter a potential outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we underscore Special Envoy Griffiths' proposals on a ceasefire, a resumption of the political process and economic and humanitarian measures to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people, build confidence and support Yemen's ability to respond to the pandemic.

In the same perspective, Tunisia welcomes the announcement made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the coalition, in support of a unilateral ceasefire in Yemen. We also commend the Government of Yemen's positive response in support of the United Nations peace process.

Tunisia stresses the urgent need to build on these efforts for an immediate and effective cessation of hostilities and de-escalation, so as to create a conducive environment for the parties to discuss the proposals on steps and mechanisms to implement a permanent ceasefire and retake the path of political settlement towards a comprehensive political solution in Yemen. In that connection, we endorse the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, and we call for the full implementation of the Stockholm and Riyadh agreements to enhance confidence-building measures.

In conclusion, we reiterate Tunisia's principled position that there can be no military solution in Yemen and that only through dialogue and peaceful negotiations will the parties be able to reach a comprehensive settlement, in line with the terms of reference established by the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the Comprehensive National Dialogue and the relevant Security Council resolutions, to end the conflict, alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people and restore peace and stability in Yemen.

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

I wish to thank Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock, of course, for their briefings, but, more importantly, for their unceasing work on this file and for that of their teams. The very last thing that Yemen needs is a major outbreak of COVID-19, as Mark set out the impact that could have through the communities there.

The United Kingdom is providing \$930 million to support the response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic globally, and we are assessing how we can support Yemen directly to prepare and respond to an outbreak of COVID-19. I will just note that the United Kingdom gave \$300 million in the last financial year and has given \$1 billion since the conflict began.

As we face COVID-19 in Yemen, we encourage the Government and the Houthis to continue engaging with United Nations bodies and agencies, including the World Health Organization and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which were leading the response, in particular, of course, with Lise Grande on the ground. A total of 24 million people are currently in need of some form of humanitarian and permanent assistance in Yemen, and this will help the World Health Organization to identify requirements, procure equipment and ensure supplies, and reach those in need.

I think that there are three important steps that the parties must take to mitigate the worst effects of the COVID-19 outbreak: first, agree to a ceasefire; secondly, engage with the United Nations-led political process; and, thirdly, improve humanitarian access.

Now, a ceasefire and cooperation with the United Nations political process is the best defence we have against the most devastating effects of COVID-19. Mr. Griffiths was clear in his statement about the urgency that the Yemeni people, from wherever they might come, feel for their leaders to come and make peace. The Saudi ceasefire announcement following the Secretary-General's call on 25 March is a rare opportunity to deliver peace in Yemen. And as we endorse that global call by the Secretary-General, we as the Security Council need to apply it in specific country contexts. In that respect, I call on all parties to seize this opportunity. This ceasefire needs to be made permanent so that the United Nations-led political process can resume and we can achieve a political solution to this terrible conflict.

I welcome the Government of Yemen's positive response to Saudi Arabia's declaration and its willingness to engage in peace talks to achieve a nationwide ceasefire. And I know, too, that the Houthi responded positively to Secretary-General Guterres's call for a nationwide ceasefire in Yemen, but it is disappointing that they have not yet seized the opportunity to make this a reality. So I urge the Houthis to show the international community and, more importantly, show their own people, that they, too, are serious about ending this conflict by immediately ceasing hostilities, engaging constructively with Martin Griffiths's proposals, including on confidence-building measures, of course, for more parties to commit publicly to attending a meeting of the Yemen parties under United Nations auspices as soon as possible.

We need to be clear, as an international community, that any refusal to engage with the Special Envoy's proposals or any attempt to undermine his efforts through military action is an attempt to frustrate the efforts of the United Nations to end this awful conflict, and will be viewed internationally as such.

On the humanitarian side, I think Mr. Lowcock's message was clear: COVID-19 could have a huge and devastating impact on Yemen. The equation is simple: the more food, the better fed the people; the more medicine, the fewer infections and the fewer deaths. So we just have to get humanitarian access and supplies in. It is deeply disturbing to hear Mr. Lowcock used words like "non-permissive environment" in this circumstance. The Houthis must now deliver on the minimum operational requirements that the international community has clearly set out. They include allowing independent needs assessments, signing principal and sub-agreements and allowing humanitarian agencies to operate independently and freely. That last point is vital. It will ensure aid gets to the right people. I know that the World Food Programme has already been forced to alternate monthly food distributions in the north because it could not implement biometric registration beneficiaries. If these minimal operating requirements are not met, then assistance will be scaled back elsewhere. At the same time, picking up on what Mr. Lowcock said, let me call on the Government of Yemen to grant the necessary approvals and complete the necessary bureaucratic requirements, as Mr. Lowcock set out elsewhere.

I have raised the significant risk posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker a number of times before. A substantial oil leak from the *FSO SAFER* tanker would have a devastating effect on Yemen in the Red Sea. And while negotiations are under way to find a diplomatic way forward, I urge the Houthis to allow either the removal of the oil or a repair mission to proceed. Their continued inaction on this issue is reckless. Huge environmental and humanitarian damage must be avoided.

We remain extremely concerned that the Central Bank of Yemen will run out of foreign currency reserves in the next few weeks, threatening a major economic collapse with humanitarian and political consequences. Significant external assistance to the Central Bank is urgently needed to keep imports coming in. We call on the Government of Yemen to urgently come up with a credible and transparent plan that reassures potential donors of their investments to the Yemeni people. Like Mr. Lowcock, let me echo my gratitude for the announced contribution by Saudi Arabia.

I conclude by noting that in the Council we have said for some time now that it is self-evident that no one party can win a military victory in Yemen. Over the years, we have called for political talks and the peace process to take effect, most recently in our press statement on 10 April (SC/14159). Now is that moment. We should all send a strong message of support from the Council to Mr. Griffiths and his team for their efforts, and to the parties to get behind those efforts and to seize this opportunity for the sake of the people of Yemen.

Annex XVI**Statement by Mrs. Kelly Craft, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations**

I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths. As always, it is great to see him, and I thank him for his briefings and the ongoing dedicated work of his teams, especially in these challenging times. We were pleased to see the parties' statements in support of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and for countering the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We welcome the Saudi Government's unilateral ceasefire, as well as the response from the Government of Yemen to comply with the ceasefire. We urge the Houthis to make the same commitment.

Unfortunately, as is too often the case in Yemen, many areas of concern remain. In Ma'rib, internally displaced people and host communities remain equally vulnerable to continued ground fighting and the very real danger of a COVID-19 outbreak. The Houthis' ballistic missile attacks on Riyadh are unacceptable and directly contravene their stated support for the Organization's global ceasefire initiative. All parties must renew their commitment to de-escalation and resume talks toward a political solution, as further military escalation will only hinder the access of health-care workers and limit the access of the Yemeni people to health care. Special Envoy Griffiths and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been working diligently to convene a crisis meeting to address the fighting. We urge the Yemeni parties to accept the invitation and attend that meeting.

Additionally, we urge all Member States to fully comply with the arms embargo established in resolution 2216 (2015), and note our concern about ongoing reports of Iranian interference in the conflict, including through the provision of lethal aid to the Houthis. Once again, we are forced to call out Houthi obstruction of humanitarian operations. The Houthis' deliberate interference with aid delivery limits the ability of the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations to help the most vulnerable Yemenis. Such obstructions are unacceptable and have already caused significant delays to existing aid programmes. They have also forced the United States Government to partially suspend existing assistance awards in Yemen's north for all but the most critical life-saving treatments and threaten international efforts to provide assistance crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Yemen.

The Trump Administration restates its call to the Houthis to allow United Nations inspection and maintenance of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. United Nations officials must have immediate access to inspect and maintain the *FSO SAFER* in order to prevent an environmental catastrophe that would have far-reaching effects in Yemen and around the Red Sea. The Houthis must stop blocking a solution to this problem and permit required assessments and repairs. We have all endorsed the Secretary-General's call for the cessation of hostilities in Yemen, and the United States emphasizes the need to concentrate efforts on mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring principled humanitarian assistance operations and the unhindered access of health-care workers and medical assistance. Now is the time to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, not each other.

Annex XVII**Statement by Mr. Dang Dinh Quy, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations**

I would like to thank Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General, and Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, for their briefings and updates.

Viet Nam is very concerned about the fighting that broke out in Yemen after just a few days of implementing the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen, with the support of the Government of Yemen. Viet Nam welcomes the aforementioned announcement and calls on all parties, especially the Houthis, to immediately cease hostilities. Viet Nam commends the tireless work of Special Envoy Griffiths and the United Nations team in helping the parties concerned de-escalate the situation.

Viet Nam also supports the joint appeal on 11 April 2020 by the five United Nations Envoys to the Middle East to urge warring parties in the region to work towards an immediate ceasefire, in line with the Secretary-General's recent call for a global ceasefire during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

With regard to humanitarian issues, we regret to have learned about the recent move by some donors to cut funding to humanitarian work in Yemen. The World Food Programme now has to cut off 50 per cent of aid for several areas in Yemen. Against the backdrop of a disastrous humanitarian situation, the country is now facing the risk of an outbreak of COVID-19 following the country's confirmation of a positive case of coronavirus. In the light of the foregoing, my delegation wishes to make following observations.

First, we call on all parties to commit to an immediate ceasefire to facilitate humanitarian work and the fight against COVID-19.

Secondly, we call on the United Nations, its States Members, international organizations and international donors to continue to support humanitarian work in Yemen. Financial assistance, medical supplies, test kits, ventilators and necessary training are needed to a greater extent than ever before.

Thirdly, we echo the call of other Member States for the parties concerned to make further efforts aimed at upholding their obligations to fully implement the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh agreement. We also stress the need for an inclusive political process that assures the full and meaningful participation of women. Accordingly, we call on all parties to continue their cooperation with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen on the basis of his three-pillar proposal.

In conclusion, we call for closer cooperation among the United Nations, international partners and all parties in Yemen in the fight against the COVID-19. It is extremely urgent at this critical moment for us to implement appropriate measures to protect people in Yemen from both the pandemic and resurgent violence.

Annex XVIII**Statement of Mr. Abudullah Ali Fadhel Al-Saadi, Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations**

At the outset, allow me to extend my most sincere wishes for good health and well-being to members of the Security Council in these challenging times that the world is witnessing owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Government of Yemen has always expressed its clear and consistent position in support of all peacemaking efforts based on the three agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanisms, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, and relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), which represents the core and genuine essence of peace.

The Government of Yemen has complied with all calls and initiatives to bring about a ceasefire and de-escalate the conflict, in accordance with the directives of President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, which came in response to the invitation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, to unify efforts aimed at combating the implications of an outbreak of the coronavirus disease pandemic in Yemen and at creating an environment conducive for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen to succeed in achieving sustainable peace. The Government has engaged positively with these initiatives that could alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people and save them from the catastrophic humanitarian situation caused by the Houthi militia coup. It has welcomed the announcement of a two-week unilateral ceasefire by the coalition to support legitimacy, led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Government's position flows from its unwavering commitment to giving high priority to the humanitarian issue in its logic of priorities. The Houthi's similar commitment to these issues could represent an opening for convening discussions on other issues, which would ultimately allow for reaching a comprehensive settlement that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people for the restoration of their State, end the coup, lay down arms and resume the political process from the point where it stopped.

The situation in Yemen demands a complete cessation of all forms of escalation and a united stand in terms of global and humanitarian efforts aimed at saving civilian lives and responsibly addressing the pandemic, as well as at establishing urgent and effective mechanisms to prevent the exploitation of the humanitarian truce for military escalation by the Houthis, in the light of their recent military expansion across all fronts and the outcomes of previous truces, which, due to the Houthi militias's intransigence and arrogance, have become an integral tool for prolonging the war — preparing for war rather than striving for peace.

The Government of Yemen calls upon the international community to exert further pressure on the Houthi militias to comply with these calls and initiatives without preconditions and hold them responsible for their ongoing escalation of violence, especially after the first case of COVID-19 in Yemen was recorded. The fact is that the Houthi militias persist in committing such vicious crimes as the targeting of civilians in Ma'arib, Al-Hudaydah, Taiz and other locations, attacking the displaced persons camps in Razih district in Sa'dah governorate on the same day the coalition to support legitimacy in Yemen announced its ceasefire, the shelling of the women's section of the central prison in Taiz, which resulted in the death or injury of a number of female prisoners early last week, and the bombing of an oil pumping station owned by Safer oil company in Ma'arib.

All of those actions are ongoing and unjustified violations and breaches that should provide the international community with clear and compelling evidence of the criminal nature of the Houthi militias, which serves Iran's destructive project for the region. These actions also prove that the militias wish to deepen the rifts that triggered the war it started and to expand the circle of victims to include all Yemenis. The international community's continued disregard for these brutal crimes encourages the Houthi militias to continue pursuing their subversive project in violation of all resolutions of the international community and contravening international humanitarian and human rights law.

In stark contrast to the efforts of the Special Envoy and the Government's call to implement what was agreed upon in the initiative to release all prisoners and detainees, which was based on the all-for-all principle in the light of the risk of a looming pandemic outbreak, the Houthi militias issued death sentences for four journalists who had been kidnapped and detained by the Houthis since 2015 on charges of practicing journalism. We call on the Security Council to condemn these unlawful sentences and stop them from being carried out.

Combating an outbreak of COVID-19 is the Government's highest priority. The Government has worked on equipping quarantine centres and enhancing hospital preparedness in all governorates. It is doing everything possible to save the lives of citizens throughout Yemen. Furthermore, the Government of Yemen is trying to obtain the necessary supply of medicine and ventilators to prepare to combat the pandemic. It will provide required resources within the means at its disposal.

The Supreme National Emergency Committee for Coronavirus is making great efforts to this end. We highly value the support provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to enhance the capabilities of the health-care sector to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, and we stress the importance of receiving urgent support from donors, international organizations and Yemen's development partners.

Finally, the Yemeni Government renews its support for the efforts of the Special Envoy for Yemen aimed at reaching a comprehensive and sustainable solution that ushers in a new phase that could bring about an end to both the suffering of the Yemeni people and the ongoing war perpetrated by the Houthis, which is now in its sixth year.
