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Seventy-sixth year

8929th meeting

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Abarry	(Niger)
 <i>Members:</i>		
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	India	Mr. Tirumurti
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya	Mr. Ndung'u
	Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
	Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
	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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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 (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; and Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: As I recently expressed in my call for restraint, I am deeply alarmed by the ongoing military escalation and continued violence in Yemen. Since I last addressed the Security Council (see S/PV.8878), the conflict has escalated considerably. There is a risk that this could open a new chapter of war in Yemen that is even more fragmented and bloody. That risk is acknowledged by a wide range of Yemeni and regional interlocutors.

Yet, even as the parties to the conflict all profess to me their desire for peace, the focus remains on military options. I have been clear that military options will not result in sustainable solutions. Restraint, de-escalation and dialogue are urgently needed now. Before continuing to elaborate on my engagements and conclusions, allow me first to recapitulate some of the major events since my last briefing.

In Al-Hudaydah, on 12 November, the joint forces affiliated with the Government of Yemen evacuated their positions from large parts of the governorate. Ansar Allah forces immediately took control of most of the vacated areas. That led to a major shift of the front line in the governorate. In the first two weeks following the withdrawal, the new front lines in the southern

districts of Al-Hudaydah were highly contested, with the parties employing heavy artillery and air strikes.

While hostilities have seen a noticeable decline since the start of the month, the impact on civilians has been of concern, with reports of civilian casualties and thousands of displaced families since the withdrawal. As confrontations on the west coast temporarily took centre stage, the pivotal battle for Ma'rib continued. Fighting has intensified, with Ansar Allah renewing its push for the city and oil fields in the governorate and the coalition increasing its air strikes in support of the Government of Yemen. I remain concerned about the possibility of urban warfare in the city, which would have terrible consequences for the civilians.

Ansar Allah's offensive on Ma'rib is having worrying ripple effects across other front lines. In my meetings with the parties, I have stressed the urgent need for the escalation and immediate measures to protect civilians. But the intensification of the fighting and shifting front lines is endangering civilians and, in many cases, forcing them to flee for a second or even a third time.

I am alarmed by the military escalation by all sides of the conflict in Yemen. The increased use of artillery, missiles and air strikes endanger civilian lives, infrastructure and services. I am also concerned about attacks against Saudi Arabia, targeting civilians and commercial infrastructure. The summary execution on the west coast of 10 individuals belonging to local security forces on 13 November, which the United Nations has condemned, is another example of the worrying disregard of international law in this conflict.

I therefore reiterate that wars do have rules. All actors in the conflict, whether directly or engaged or in a supporting role, are accountable and have obligations under international humanitarian law. That includes the protection of civilians and the humane treatment of prisoners of war. In that respect, we have seen the rising number of detainees held by the parties to the conflict. My Office remains in regular contact with the parties in order to convene them and facilitate the fulfilment of their obligations to release all conflict-related detainees, as per the commitments under the Stockholm Agreement.

Allow me to highlight a topic that continues to top the agenda of all my Yemeni interlocutors — the economy. I heard a strong sense of frustration and despair in Aden, Taiz and everywhere I met with Yemeni men and

women. In Aden and the surrounding governorates, the value of the Yemeni rial reached an unprecedented low against foreign currencies, further depleting people's purchasing power. The exchange rate is more controlled in Sana'a, but the economic hardship is severe. Inflation still poses a challenge and people need salaries. The cost of transferring Yemeni rials from Aden to Sana'a has soared, placing immense burdens on the private sector and on people supporting families in various parts of the country. In recent informal consultations with Yemeni businesswomen, they described the severe challenges they are facing in conducting business. I would like to remind everyone of the drastic regression of women's rights as a result of the conflict — a situation that is made even worse by the economic collapse.

As will also be underscored by Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham, there is an urgent need for economic de-escalation and wide reforms to improve livelihoods, lower the cost of goods and protect the currency.

The Government of Yemen has recently undertaken some reforms, including with respect to the Board of Governors of the Central Bank in Aden. I hope these steps will open the door for further badly needed reforms. There is an urgency to address the economic needs of the country as a whole, and for that we need genuine engagement from the Yemeni stakeholders and close coordination within the international community to find solutions.

On the subject of massive challenges Yemenis face in going about their daily lives, I regret to have to highlight yet again how restrictions of freedom of movement for both people and goods continue to impose significant hardship on the Yemeni population, especially women. In Taiz, I heard about and saw first-hand how road closures and checkpoints hinder civilians' ability to seek medical care, education and trade opportunities. The roads must be opened. Similarly, Sana'a airport must reopen. Impediments to imports and the domestic distribution of fuel also continue to cause hardship for civilians and should be removed, including by, but not limited to, lifting restrictions on Al-Hudaydah port. Movement of people and goods is not a geographically isolated problem. It is a serious issue across the country that needs to be addressed by the conflict parties and supported by the international community.

As a final point with regard to the latest developments, I would like to add my disappointment

about the detention of United Nations staff members that Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham will comment on in his briefing.

Allow me now to come back to my engagement so far, and the conclusions I draw from them. I have devoted these first three months of my tenure to efforts set forth in the outline I presented at my first briefing to the Council (see S/PV.8854). The primary aim has been to engage with a diverse array of Yemenis on how to reverse the current escalatory trajectory and start a political process. This effort has included numerous meetings, both inside Yemen and in the region. The discussions have often been difficult, which highlights both the complexities and the gravity of the conflict. An understandable sense of frustration and despair has been evident in my conversations, as past attempts at finding solutions have not delivered the desired results.

The other aim of the beginning of my tenure has been to establish close relations of trust with Member States in the region to seek their support for a political process. I have also engaged members of the Security Council on these matters and am grateful for the support expressed for my efforts.

The efforts of the past years to reach an agreement based on the conflict parties' preconditions have not yet delivered, and my view is that this is partly due to the fact that the parties' conditions are tied up in political questions that can only be addressed through more comprehensive talks. Let us therefore be frank. Given that the parties have not met to discuss a broader set of issues for over five years, establishing a renewed political process is a complicated task. The conflict has continued unabated since the talks in Kuwait in 2016, and the gaps between the parties have only widened. In order to have constructive talks about the way forward, some common understandings should be reached.

On this note, I would like to reiterate that a serious commitment to peace requires, at a minimum, granting unconditional and regular access to the Envoy. All communication channels need to be kept open if we are to have any chance of finding a durable solution to this conflict.

As the conflict intensifies, and from my discussions with Yemenis and others over the past three months, I am convinced of the need for a comprehensive approach and have drawn a number of conclusions about the way forward. First, piecemeal solutions can at best only provide temporary relief. They will not produce

sustainable peace. Immediate needs and priorities must be addressed within the context of a process that is geared towards a comprehensive political settlement.

Secondly, a solution will not be sustainable if it does not represent the interests of diverse Yemenis, both those who are involved in the fighting and those who are not. We need to work towards a just and sustainable peace, and not merely the absence of war.

Thirdly, structured and coordinated international and regional support is essential for this process. External actors have a responsibility to support Yemenis as they discuss and build consensus on peaceful solutions. They need to take concrete actions that support the peace process and broader stability. The support of the Security Council will be critical.

Based on these conclusions, I am envisaging an inclusive Yemeni-owned and internationally supported political process. The process should support near-term solutions to de-escalate the violence, prevent further economic deterioration and mitigate the impact of the conflict on civilians. It should also identify and build consensus around the elements of a political settlement that sustainably ends the war, establishes inclusive governance arrangements and ensures Yemenis' civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

The process should be designed in a way that allows for parallel progress on different agenda items of importance to Yemenis. It will address the parties' stated priorities in the context of a broader agenda that represents the interests of diverse Yemenis. I want to initiate a comprehensive process that allows for incremental progress. Engagement on this process has already begun, involving a wide range of Yemeni stakeholders, including the conflict parties, and it will be intensified. Clearly this work is challenged by the intensification of the military conflict. However, military escalation should not be allowed to stop this process, and in fact it makes the work that we are doing all the more essential.

As I alluded to in my introduction, I remain convinced that warring parties can, and indeed must, talk, even if they are not ready to put down their arms. Channels of communication should be open without precondition, and as a matter of priority. I will continue looking to the members of the Security Council to support United Nations efforts to establish an inclusive, comprehensive process for bringing this conflict finally to a just and sustainable end.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Rajasingham.

Mr. Rajasingham: The humanitarian crisis in Yemen continues to deteriorate as a result of conflict and economic collapse. I will focus my remarks today on what this means for civilians, what aid agencies are trying to do about it and, crucially, what the world can do to help.

Let us start with the war, which, despite repeated international and domestic calls for a nationwide ceasefire, has escalated along several fronts. In Ma'rib, Ansar Allah forces continue their offensive, which has displaced more than 45,000 people since September. Indiscriminate shelling by Ansar Allah is being reported with alarming regularity in Ma'rib, including missiles that struck a camp for displaced people on 9 December, injuring five civilians.

Fighting also intensified in southern Hudaydah and Taiz following the redeployment of Government-aligned forces that the Special Envoy has just described. More than 25,000 people have been displaced in these areas since the redeployments. Civilian casualties have also increased, including five civilians reportedly killed in an air strike in Taiz on 3 December.

In parallel, hostilities have continued along nearly 50 front lines across the country. In recent weeks, this has resulted in civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure following renewed air strikes in Sana'a, heavy clashes in Sa'ada, missiles landing near internally displaced person camps and other incidents.

All parties must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law at all times, including obligations to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to facilitate impartial humanitarian relief. We also renew our calls for Ansar Allah to stop the Ma'rib offensive and for the parties to adopt a nationwide ceasefire that will end the fighting everywhere else.

In the meantime, aid agencies are doing everything they can to help. In Ma'rib, Hudaydah and Taiz, humanitarian partners have provided emergency aid to about 80 per cent of recently displaced people, and, across the country, the wider aid operation is helping more than 11 million people every month – or about one third of the population. These programmes are making an enormous difference, but they also face serious gaps

in their ability to provide a comprehensive response to the most vulnerable people in Marib and elsewhere. This year's response plan originally aimed to help 16 million people, or about 5 million more than we have actually managed to reach.

Funding constraints are one major reason for the gap and they are about to get worse. Looming shortfalls mean that the World Food Programme must consider cutting back food rations for millions of hungry people in the coming weeks and months. UNICEF may also have to cut back support for hundreds of thousands of malnourished children, as well as water and sanitation activities. Critical sectors such as water, sanitation, health and shelter have been drastically underfunded all year, receiving no more than 20 per cent of requirements.

Camp coordination — which in places like Marib is an absolutely essential service for an effective internally displaced persons response, including the protection of women and children — has received just 9 per cent of requirements. We call on donors to increase their support for Yemen and especially to ensure that their support does not decrease next year. We expect the 2022 response plan to be about as big as this year's, which asked for \$3.85 billion to help 16 million people. Nationwide assessments are under way now to support that.

Beyond funding, humanitarian partners are also thinking carefully about how we can improve our own operations. An inter-agency evaluation of the Yemen response is currently under way. Results will be out in the new year and findings will be incorporated into the 2022 response plan. Of course, we continue to call on all parties to facilitate principled aid delivery in Yemen, in line with international humanitarian law. Aid agencies continue too often face delays at checkpoints, visa problems, security threats, harassment and other obstacles.

Despite some improvements over the past year, many of the most difficult challenges persist in areas controlled by Ansar Allah, including restrictions on the movement of aid workers and unacceptable attempts to interfere with the selection of partners or beneficiaries. That has to stop.

We are also extremely disappointed that Ansar Allah authorities continue to detain two United Nations staff members in Sana'a, as the Special Envoy mentioned. That is despite assurances from their leadership, which we conveyed to the Council last month in consultations,

that they would be quickly released. To date, we have had no access to the detained staff and have received no official information concerning their arrest.

In Government-held areas, aid agencies are concerned about the apparent rise in bureaucratic hurdles, including visa delays and cumbersome procedures to approve aid projects. We have raised those issues with the Government and are working together to resolve them.

We are also deeply concerned about the arrest several weeks ago of a United Nations contractor in Marib. Despite requests to senior Government officials, the United Nations has not been granted access to the person in question. Neither have we received any official information on the arrest, which like those in Sana'a appear to be violations of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations. We call for immediate access to the staff and official information to be shared with regard to the arrests.

The biggest challenge for the aid operation, however, is actually not funding, access or security. It is the fact that despite scaling up assistance, the underlying problems just keep getting worse. That is because Yemen's economy remains in freefall, pushing millions more people into dependence on humanitarian aid, but humanitarian aid is not the way to solve those problems.

As I said last month, there are substantial opportunities for improving the economic situation right away, even before the war ends. Everyone, including donors, Member States and the parties themselves, should act on those opportunities now. The United Nations has developed an economic framework that sets out a way forward. Yemen mostly relies on commercial imports to meet its survival needs; therefore, the framework mostly seeks to boost purchasing power, reduce the cost of imported goods and improve macroeconomic stability.

That will require a mix of financial and political investments. For example, funding will be needed to resume foreign-exchange injections through the Central Bank. Such injections would, as in the past, help stabilize the Yemeni rial — a key factor in people's ability to afford food and other essential goods. The Government is keen to work with partners to devise a feasible programme for those injections. I note the recent appointment of a new Governor and Board of Directors for the Central Bank in Aden and I urge

Yemen's partners to work closely with them to improve economic conditions in the country.

Other measures in the economic framework, such as lifting restrictions on commercial imports through the Red Sea ports, will require political commitments. Ending those restrictions will help lower commodity prices and import revenue could then be used to pay civil servants' salaries, which one quarter of Yemenis rely on. The United Nations is eager to work with everyone to find a way to make that happen.

The vision is to roll out those and other economic framework activities in parallel with the humanitarian response next year. As the economy improves, humanitarian needs will start to reduce. Eventually, the size of the aid operation could start to reduce as well. To be clear, though, we are not there yet. Yemen continues requires a massive humanitarian response, at least through next year. As we deliver that response, we will need adequate funding for all sectors and we will need all parties to ensure an operating environment that facilitates principled aid delivery.

We also call on everyone to do more to help Yemen end the crisis for good. That means implementing the United Nations economic framework in parallel with the immediate humanitarian response, helping people both to survive and take care of themselves. It also means moving towards a political solution as quickly as possible. In that regard, I would like to offer my unqualified support for the Special Envoy's call for regular and unconditional access to the parties. Peace is the only sustainable solution in Yemen and in order to achieve peace everyone must be willing to talk.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Rajasingham for his briefing.

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

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham for their briefings, which were both informative and very sobering.

The United Kingdom is also deeply concerned about the further escalation in the conflict in Yemen over the past month. It pushes the country deeper into a humanitarian crisis, with increased civilian casualties and displacement. We are particularly worried by the impact of fighting on front lines in populated areas, such as Al-Hudaydah, Taiz and Marib.

We also once again condemn the continued Houthi attacks across Yemen's border into Saudi Arabia, including the recent ballistic missile attack near Riyadh. Such attacks are unacceptable and diminish the opportunity for real progress towards a political settlement.

As the military picture worsens, the humanitarian imperatives increase. Facilitating humanitarian access across the country to those in need is paramount. The United Kingdom calls on the Government of Yemen to facilitate access for non-governmental agency partners to the country to help deliver much-needed life-saving assistance.

We are encouraged by the new appointment of Ahmed bin Ahmed Ghaleb Al-Maabqi as the Governor of the Central Bank of Yemen, but the Government of Yemen must commit to carrying out necessary economic reforms now, as Mr. Rajasingham emphasized. The international community and international financial institutions must also continue to assist the Government of Yemen in the implementation of reform and the facilitation of immediate external financial assistance.

We should also not lose sight of the humanitarian urgency of diffusing the threat posed by *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which continues to deteriorate off the coast of Yemen, risking an oil spill that would devastate the livelihoods of nearly 4 million people.

Lastly, I should like to express our appreciation to Hans Grundberg for his continued efforts to chart a way forward for peace in Yemen. I know that the international community looks forward to receiving his road map and we are committed to helping him and mobilizing behind the United Nations-led approach. The United Kingdom calls on all parties to work with the United Nations to reach sustainable peace in Yemen.

Mrs. Tra Phuong Nguyen (Viet Nam): I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Assistant-Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham for their insightful briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in our meeting today.

On the peace process, we welcome Mr. Grundberg's diplomatic efforts to engage more partners and stakeholders for an inclusive political process in Yemen. We encourage regional partners and concerned parties to continue supporting his work.

On the security front, we are gravely concerned about the situation in 2021, which has shown no sign of improvement in comparison with the previous year. Intensified military fighting and cross-border attacks have caused severe casualties on both sides, including civilians in Yemen. Those acts undermine peace efforts in Yemen and stability in the region, while causing more suffering for the Yemeni people.

We therefore stress the urgent need for the cessation of hostilities in all parts of Yemen, especially Marib, and a return to talks and support for the Special Envoy's efforts to reach a comprehensive political settlement to the conflict. We also encourage concerned parties to fully implement the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh Agreement. In that process, it is necessary for the international community and regional partners to create a conducive environment for United Nations-led mediation and negotiations among parties.

On the humanitarian issue, we cannot stress enough how much we remain worried about the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The protracted conflict, the economic crisis, food insecurity, the collapse of essential services and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, inter alia, have posed enormous challenges to the already deteriorating situation in the country. Due to those challenges, many Yemeni people are unable to access basic services.

We condemn the recent attacks that killed civilians, especially women and children, in Aden and Marib. It is also frustrating to learn from the findings of the recent UNICEF report that four Yemeni children have been killed every day since the escalation of the conflict in March 2015. We are also very concerned about the detaining of United Nations staff.

In that context, we call for full compliance with international humanitarian law, international human rights law, the protection of civilians, including women and children, and the implementation of Security Council resolution 2573 (2021), including the protection of civilian infrastructure.

We also reiterate our call for predictable funding for humanitarian aid and other adequate support for Yemen. It is also essential to ensure the free movement of people and goods into and across Yemen and provide unhindered access for humanitarian assistance.

Last but not least, we urge the Houthis to provide the United Nations team with access so they can carry

out the necessary assessments and repairs on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker without delay.

Like their peers elsewhere in the world, Yemeni children deserve the right to live in peace, go to school and forge a bright future for their country. We hope that their dreams will come true.

As our term in the Council comes to a close, we remain hopeful that United Nations-led comprehensive political solutions to the Yemen will be reached in the near future. We stand ready to support the goal of peace and stability in Yemen.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I wish to thank our briefers, Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, for their briefings. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen and look forward to his statement later.

As we have heard this morning, the humanitarian situation in Yemen remains dire and the needs of the Yemeni people clear. With continued conflict, Yemen's economy will deteriorate further and with it the livelihoods of millions of Yemenis. Lives will continue to be endangered and generations of Yemenis to come will bear the scars.

I once again wish to thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his briefing. As alarming as it was, we are encouraged by his efforts to consult a broad range of Yemenis as he develops his new framework for the inclusive political process so urgently needed in that conflict. All parties must meaningfully engage with him in that political process. To that end, the Council has an important voice. We must continue to urge all parties to work in good faith with Special Envoy Grundberg and we must speak out if and when any party fails to do so.

Unfortunately, we have seen a series of Houthi actions in recent months that undermine peace. Last month, the Council came together to condemn in the strongest terms the detention by the Houthis of local staff of the United States Government in Sana'a, as well as the breach by the Houthi security services of the compound formerly used as our embassy. The Council's statement was followed by similar statements from nearly two dozen countries and multilateral organizations. I wish to thank those countries and organizations for their support and clear messages that such action represents an affront to the entire international community.

Yet still the Houthis continue to detain and harass our local Yemeni staff and intrude in the former embassy compound. The Houthis must immediately release — unharmed — all current and former Yemeni employees of the United States. They must immediately vacate the United States compound and return all seized property and cease making threats against their own fellow citizens simply for being employed by us.

Similarly, the Houthis have ignored repeated calls from the Council and the international community to cease their offensive in Marib province. The offensive endangers thousands of civilians and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has warned that it could lead to the displacement of half a million people. The Houthis must stop that offensive immediately.

On 9 December, a Houthi missile hit an internally displaced persons camp managed by the International Organization for Migration. Five children were among those injured. That is unacceptable. We condemn, in the strongest terms, that and similar all too frequent attacks against civilians.

We also condemn the intensification of Houthi cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia in recent months, including three ballistic missiles launched at Riyadh just last week. The Houthis have conducted well over 350 such attacks this year — a staggering number and a shocking increase over last year's total.

Those provocative and dangerous actions are impediments to peace. They also underscore the need for Iran to end its lethal support to the Houthis, which contravenes Council resolutions and enables the Houthis' reckless attacks. Each of those Houthi attacks on its own is unacceptable, but together they send a chilling and unmistakable signal about the Houthis' unwillingness to participate in a peaceful political process or in a future Government that upholds the rule of law.

While the Houthis continue their escalatory actions, we welcome the efforts of other parties to improve conditions in Yemen, including the United Nations initiative to scale up its approach in addressing the drivers of food insecurity throughout Yemen.

In addition, like the United Kingdom, we are encouraged by the appointment on 6 December of a new Governor and Chair of the Board of the Central Bank of Yemen, as well as other new Board members. We hope

that those appointments serve as a step forward towards addressing the economic instability that is deepening humanitarian suffering and that they will advance the needed reforms. However, true progress cannot be sustained without additional resources. We hope that countries can seize this moment to support Yemen's economy and bring urgently needed relief to its people. The Special Envoy's strong appeal for action has been heard loudly and clearly by the Council.

Finally, the *FSO SAFER* tanker remains an environmental, humanitarian and economic threat of vast proportions. The Houthis bear responsibility for the situation, and the United States supports discussion of any solution that can safely and urgently address it.

The Yemeni people deserve peace and prosperity. In the face of Houthi provocations, harassment and violence against its own people, I want the Houthi to know that the United States will never give up on the people of Yemen. I again thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his proactive efforts during his first few months to kickstart the peace process. I hope that the Council will continue to stand united as we do everything in our power to bring this conflict to an end.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We thank our briefers for their presentations this morning. We welcome our colleague, the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

It is unfortunate that we have to begin our remarks today with a statement of condemnation of the continued hostilities in Yemen, including the recent indiscriminate strikes that landed on an internally displaced persons camp in Ma'rib and the bombing in Hajjah, both of which resulted in loss of life. We echo the calls for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and for the parties to engage in political dialogue.

For years, the conflict in Yemen has continued unabated, leading to consequences that will reverberate even after a political solution is achieved. Lives and livelihoods have been lost, critical infrastructure destroyed and the health-care system fractured. The economy has been decimated and food insecurity has intensified, with many lacking the purchasing power to access basic food and essential services. The multifaceted nature of this conflict demands that a solution be equally multifaceted.

In that regard, a political solution to the armed conflict must be pursued in parallel with a

comprehensive plan to reinvigorate the economy. Those two factors, that is, the lack of a political solution and the decimated economy, are drivers of the conflict and are deeply connected to the catastrophic humanitarian situation. That has left millions in need of assistance, including nutrition, health care and critical Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All supplies. To that end, we appeal to donors to disburse funds and increase pledges with a sense of urgency to ensure a sustained humanitarian operation, and we call on the parties to honour their obligations under international law to ensure and facilitate the safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to those most in need.

While we underscore the indispensable nature of humanitarian aid, we also note that that is merely a palliative response to the symptoms of the conflict, not a solution. Our ultimate goal is a durable end to the daily suffering of the people in Yemen, which can be achieved only through an inclusive political solution.

This is the final statement that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will deliver on this file in the Security Council. Since our assumption of responsibilities on 1 January 2020, we have repeated our appeals monthly for the parties to commit to a sustained cessation of hostilities and the resumption of an inclusive political process that is Yemeni-led, Yemeni-owned and reflective of all groups within Yemeni society. Women cannot be excluded from the process, but must instead be afforded the opportunity to meaningfully participate in decision-making and in shaping the agendas and practices.

While there exists diplomatic momentum within the international community for an end to the conflict, that momentum will not be translated into concrete action on the ground without the political will of the parties. We appeal to stakeholders with influence to engage constructively with the parties to the conflict to encourage an end to the violence and a resumption of dialogue.

To our counterparts in the Security Council, as we take our leave, we urge them to remain united on this file, with the well-being of the Yemeni people and the peace, security and prosperity of their nation and the region at the forefront of all discussions and actions. On that note, we reiterate our support for all efforts made in good faith to address the ongoing threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker.

In conclusion, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will continue to stand in solidarity with the Yemeni people as this organ works towards the discharge of its mandate, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is time for the people of Yemen to experience the state of peace that they inherently deserve.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham for their briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to today's meeting.

This is the last time that the Security Council will consider the issue of Yemen this year. In the past year, the situation in Yemen has not improved; instead, in general it has deteriorated. Military hostilities in Ma'rib and on other fronts have caused a large number of casualties. Frequent attacks on civilian facilities in Saudi Arabia have seriously threatened the safety of civilians. China is deeply concerned about such developments. As the Special Envoy rightly said in his briefing just now, what has been happening on the battlefield fully demonstrates that no one side can be a winner, there is no way out by military means and a political settlement is essential.

China supports the peace process in Yemen mediated by the United Nations and welcomes the peace initiative proposed by Saudi Arabia in March. Special Envoy Grundberg just mentioned a number of preliminary conclusions based on his earlier contacts with all parties. We hope that the Special Envoy can use that as a starting point and put forward an actionable road map for peace as soon as possible. All parties in Yemen must put the country's future and the people's interests first, return to the right track of dialogue and negotiation without delay and facilitate the work of the Special Envoy through support and cooperation.

With regard to matters such as achieving a ceasefire in Ma'rib and the lifting of the blockade on Sana'a airport and Al-Hudaydah port, all parties to the conflict must demonstrate political will, continue to move in the same direction and find solutions to the key issues that are acceptable to all. The countries concerned should also create an enabling external environment for the restoration of peace and stability in Yemen.

During the six-year conflict in Yemen, food prices have more than doubled, employment has shrunk and the population's purchasing power has

declined, repeatedly pushing the country to the brink of famine. While Yemen's humanitarian needs are becoming increasingly urgent, in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic and increasing global humanitarian needs, the humanitarian resources that can be mobilized and allocated to Yemen are declining. We in the international community must provide more effective and sustainable means in response to Yemen's economic and humanitarian crisis to protect and save more lives.

In that regard, the United Nations recently launched the Yemen Economic Framework, which seeks to provide short-term and medium- to long-term assistance in a phased manner. It is committed to ensuring emergency food aid to Yemen, improving local food productivity and the population's purchasing power, reducing the prices of imported food and promoting market liquidity. China commends that. We encourage the international community, including donor countries, to increase bilateral and multilateral assistance to Yemen and coordinate more closely with the United Nations system.

We welcome the recent adjustments made by the Yemeni Government to its financial and fiscal sectors, which enable them to function in a more professional and efficient manner, thereby bolstering international confidence in Yemen's economy.

I would also like to emphasize that the parties to the conflict must guarantee safe and unhindered humanitarian access, maintain the operation of all ports and ensure immediate delivery of humanitarian goods to those in need.

The issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker must be addressed without delay. We hope that the Houthis will fulfil its commitment to allowing the United Nations team to board the vessel to conduct inspections and repairs without delay.

Mr. Ndung'u (Kenya): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen.

The recent withdrawal of coalition forces from Al-Hudaydah and the inability to build cohesion between the Government and the Southern Transitional Council forces showcase a serious challenge to the full implementation of the Riyadh and Stockholm agreements.

The growing internal divisions among the parties have further fragmented Yemen. There is a need for dialogue to enable a national reconciliation that will further a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned peace process and recovery. We encourage the Special Envoy to work with relevant stakeholders to develop a framework that furthers dialogue and reconciliation.

Increasingly, armed groups in multiple countries, including Yemen and Somalia, are using the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean off the coast of Somalia to smuggle weapons that directly feed the conflict. There have been multiple captures of smuggling vessels, indicating that more could be traversing the area unimpeded.

That undermines existing arms embargoes and increasingly threatens peace and security in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. It also undermines the decisions of the Security Council, and should therefore be met with stronger actions to tighten the implementation of the existing embargoes. It is for the Security Council to make clear its determination to deal with those supplying arms to the conflicts in the region and benefiting from the suffering of the people of Yemen.

We remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating economic situation and welcome the appointment of the Governor of the Central Bank and the proposals for a recovery framework as positive steps. For that initiative to succeed, it will need to integrate the operations of the Central Bank.

We also recognize and support the need for increasing humanitarian assistance. However, the people of Yemen should not be solely dependent on international assistance; such aid should be structured in a way that stimulates local economies and enables the growth of livelihood that further promotes growth. More should also be done to grow livelihood activities, with an important focus on women and children.

We remain concerned at the situation of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker anchored off the coast of Al-Hudaydah. We continue to urge the Houthis to demonstrate that they have a sense of responsibility, not only to the people of Yemen but also to the regional as a whole. A spill under their watch would have catastrophic impacts on the millions of people in the region who depend on the sea for their livelihood and survival.

With regard to the violence in Ma'rib, there have been a large number of casualties. We note that the capture of Ma'rib will provide only access to resources but will not end the conflict in Yemen.

In conclusion, Kenya supports the efforts undertaken by the Special Envoy and all relevant stakeholders aimed at seeking security and stability in Yemen.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham for their briefings.

Estonia is deeply concerned about the continued hostilities in several parts of Yemen.

The situation is particularly worrying around Ma'rib, where the Houthis have continued their escalation, resulting in civilian casualties and further displacement. It is alarming that since September alone, 45,000 additional people have been displaced in the Ma'rib area. Special focus should be placed on the protection of women and children, who make up 80 per cent of the 1 million internally displaced persons currently located in Ma'rib.

It is also worrisome that after the withdrawal of pro-Government forces from Al-Hudaydah, the fighting has also intensified on the Red Sea coast, leading to the displacement of more than 25,000 people.

We reiterate our strong condemnation of the Houthis' cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia. All parties should refrain from escalating hostilities and indiscriminate attacks against civilian objects.

We fully support Special Envoy Grundberg and urge all parties to engage without preconditions in the United Nations-led efforts to achieve peace. Only an inclusive political process can bring a lasting solution to the conflict. In that context, we welcome the Yemeni Tribal Forum, which was held last week in Amman. It is also essential to increase the meaningful participation of women and young people in the peace negotiations and involve them more widely in politics.

Estonia calls for placing more focus on the issue of human rights, including by ensuring better coordination among different United Nations agencies. While the Human Rights Council failed to extend the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts, it is more vital for the Security Council to intensify its calls for monitoring

the human rights situation in Yemen in order to promote accountability and the fight against impunity.

Additional efforts are also needed to improve the humanitarian situation.

We repeat our call upon the parties to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and agree on the impact of fuel and commercial imports through Al-Hudaydah port. We also commend the efforts of the United Nations efforts to develop a strategic approach to improving Yemen's economic situation and urge all parties to engage with those efforts constructively.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I want to convey our thanks to our briefers, even if the news we received is far from good.

As the Council convenes to consider Yemen for the final time this year, I would like to make four points.

First, with regard to the military situation, I deeply regret that despite all efforts to secure peace this year has seen a further deadly deterioration on the ground. The truth is that Yemenis want to wake up from this nightmare. Just last week, more than 40 tribal leaders convened and called for a comprehensive and immediate ceasefire. Each month in this Chamber, Ireland calls for the same. We will continue to do so until the parties to the conflict finally bring the unconscionable violence to an end.

We call on the Houthis to immediately halt their offensive on Ma'rib. The International Organization for Migration estimates that since September 46,000 people have been displaced in Ma'rib, many for the fourth or fifth time. Vulnerable civilians, especially women and children, continue to bear the brunt of the hostilities. Just last week, we saw further deplorable attacks against the internally displaced person camps where the most vulnerable seek refuge.

We are also deeply concerned about the recent deterioration in and around Al-Hudaydah, in particular the humanitarian consequences of the further displacement of 25,000 people. We call on all parties to respect the Stockholm Agreement and we reiterate our full support for the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement.

We strongly condemn cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia, such as the missile attack targeting Riyadh last week. All parties must respect international humanitarian law and protect civilian lives.

Secondly, I turn to the political process. We deeply appreciate Special Envoy Grundberg's ongoing efforts to consult with actors in Yemen and beyond, as well as the priority he affords to inclusivity, which we believe is critical. However, we know that those efforts must be matched by decisive political will from the parties to engage seriously with the Special Envoy. More than six years of crisis in Yemen have shown that no one party can hold a monopoly on governance. All parties must accept that reality in order to move towards an inclusive and diverse political landscape.

As we have repeatedly stated and as others today have said, women and young people must be an integral part of that endeavour. We have heard from Yemeni women peacebuilders in the Security Council and their message is clear and consistent — all aspects of Yemen's peace negotiations must be gender-mainstreamed and women's participation must happen in all diplomatic tracks and at all stages of the peace process. We stand with the women of Yemen in seeking their places in those forums.

Thirdly, I want to address the humanitarian situation in Yemen. It is abundantly clear that the economic impact of the conflict is one of the most significant drivers of the humanitarian crisis, with truly severe consequences for the levels of hunger across the country.

Ireland welcomes the economic framework for Yemen proposed by the United Nations and we encourage all parties, including international financial institutions, to constructively engage with those proposals. We really cannot condemn Yemen's population to yet another year of catastrophic food insecurity and poverty. We have an obligation to do everything we can here in order to avert that.

We also appeal for the immediate release of the three United Nations agency staff detained in Yemen. Such actions are totally unjustifiable here, as they are everywhere else, and we look forward to positive developments soon in that regard.

Finally, let me conclude with a message to the people of Yemen — Ireland will not tire in its efforts to strive for the accountability they deserve and to address impunity for violations, which have been widely documented throughout the conflict years. We believe that evidence-based monitoring and an independent, international and impartial capacity to follow the

deteriorating human rights situation are absolutely essential. The people of Yemen deserve nothing less.

Looking ahead to 2022, all actors bear a heavy responsibility to ensure that next year finally marks the end of this deadly conflict. The international community, including the Council, bears its own responsibility to stand firmly united behind such efforts. Ireland is certainly committed to playing its part.

Mr. Cherif (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their important briefings on the latest developments in the Yemeni conflict. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

Tunisia expresses its concern about the escalation of the fighting in Yemen. We stress once again that no military solution can be a solution to the protracted Yemeni crisis. The past few years of fighting have only brought about destruction, killing, displacement and the unprecedented deterioration of the humanitarian situation, in addition to a collapse of the economy, livelihoods and an escalation of tensions and instability in the entire region.

We therefore stress that there is no alternative to a comprehensive political solution based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and other agreed terms of reference. That solution should also be based on constructive and peaceful negotiations that uphold the national interests of the Yemeni people and must put an end to their suffering and restore security and stability.

Moreover, the solution must guarantee the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen. That in turn cannot be achieved unless there is an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire; a resumption of political negotiations, with the active participation of women and young people; and the facilitation of humanitarian access in order to save lives and deliver unimpeded assistance to those in need, who constitute more than half of the population of Yemen, including millions of women and children.

In that context, we renew our support for the efforts of the Special Envoy and welcome his comprehensive approach. We would also like to commend all regional and international parties for their efforts to

put an end to the violence and reactivate the political settlement process.

We also commend the communiqué of the Yemeni Tribal Forum, which was held in the Jordanian capital with the participation of more than 40 Yemeni tribal leaders. The conference underlined the need to reach a comprehensive and immediate ceasefire agreement, open all roads and humanitarian corridors, and secure the release of detainees and prisoners. It also called upon all parties to immediately engage in the initiative sponsored by the United Nations and adhere to the implementation of the Riyadh and Stockholm Agreements.

We also call upon the Houthis to announce their commitment to a political solution and we condemn their attacks on the Ma'rib and Taiz governorates, among others, as well as their attacks against the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with the targeting of civilian installations. We reiterate the need for all parties to respect international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

We reiterate our deep concern about the seriously deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen. That trend will continue as long as the fighting continues. There are many indicators of the difficulties faced by the population in obtaining access to basic food and health services and there are signs of worsening food insecurity, which call for increased and concerted efforts to support humanitarian relief operations. We therefore call for increased financial support for humanitarian activities in Yemen and the lifting of all related restrictions.

Maintaining the status quo with regard to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker without a solution threatens an unprecedented environmental, economic, maritime and humanitarian catastrophe — not only in Yemen but also in the entire region. In that regard, we once again call on the Houthis to take a positive approach to the matter and facilitate the access of maintenance and repair teams.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham for their briefings. I welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting.

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing escalation of hostilities in Yemen. The military campaign of Ansar Allah and the consequent intensification of

fighting in Ma'rib governorate and the surrounding areas have caused large-scale displacements and restricted the movement of civilians and humanitarian access to the people in need in the governorate.

Another development of concern is the shift in the front lines in Al-Hudaydah because of the redeployment of forces aligned with the Government of Yemen away from the Al-Hudaydah port city, which has resulted in Ansar Allah taking up key positions in those territories and the alteration of the political-security dynamics in Al-Hudaydah. The civilian population has been displaced as well. We encourage the parties to coordinate all future redeployments with the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement. We also condemn cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia.

Yemenis continue to bear the brunt of the protracted conflict in their day-to-day lives. While the Yemeni Government and international and national aid organizations have exerted considerable efforts to alleviate their plight, the underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis have not been addressed. The considerable economic decline and the coronavirus disease pandemic have only compounded the dire situation for the Yemeni people, especially children.

We support the call of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for concrete short-term and long-term measures that could help improve the economic situation in Yemen, and we welcome OCHA's efforts aimed at establishing an economic framework to address the issue. Such measures as regular payment of salaries of Government employees, removing restrictions on essential commodities and humanitarian goods, and foreign exchange injections through the Central Bank can have quick and transformative impacts. International support — political and financial — is an essential requirement for the framework to be successful.

I also underscore the urgent need to address the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which represents a serious threat that could cause an unprecedented environmental, economic, maritime and humanitarian crisis in the region. Ansar Allah should prioritize a solution for the repair and maintenance of the *FSO SAFER* with a sense of urgency.

As a long-standing friend of Yemen, India reiterates its call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire across Yemen, followed by a robust and inclusive political process with full respect for Yemen's unity,

sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. I call upon all parties to the conflict to end the fighting and engage unconditionally with Special Envoy Hans Grundberg in his efforts to seek a political solution to the conflict. We support his inclusive approach aimed at getting all the parties in Yemen to the negotiating table. Such an inclusive approach must not only extend across parties, but within them as well, through the full and meaningful participation of women. We encourage him to continue his coordination with the countries in the region, as their cooperation would be critical to reaching a long-lasting solution to the Yemeni conflict. We also call on countries in the region with influence on Yemeni parties to exert sincere efforts aimed at restoring peace and order in Yemen, as this is in the shared interests of everyone.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank Mr. Grundberg and Mr. Rajasingham for their briefings.

The dynamics on the ground in Yemen are very worrying. The security situation continues to deteriorate. France shares the concern expressed by the Special Envoy, namely, that the escalation on the ground is serious. Since the beginning of the conflict, we have been saying that the military option will lead nowhere because it locks the parties into a cycle of murderous violence.

The manifestations of this violence are visible everywhere on the ground: deadly clashes, bombings and displacements of people. France strongly condemns the Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia. They must stop. They threaten the security of Saudi territory and constitute an attack on the stability of the region. France reiterates its call for a nationwide ceasefire. In the south, the deterioration of the situation, particularly economic, is worrying. We reiterate our support for the Yemeni Government and call for the full implementation of the Riyadh Agreement so that tensions can be brought to a lasting end.

The unbearable suffering inflicted on the Yemeni people continues. In Ma'rib, rocket fire recently hit camps for displaced persons, which is absolutely unacceptable. We cannot repeat it enough: international humanitarian law is an obligation for all. I am thinking in particular of the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

We condemn the arbitrary arrest by the Houthis of two United Nations staff and call for their immediate

release. While the needs are immense, it is essential to allow humanitarian operators to deliver aid. This is essential for speeding up the vaccination campaign against the coronavirus disease. In this respect, we call for the immediate issuance of visas for humanitarian personnel.

France supports the efforts of the Special Envoy aimed at relaunching the political process. It calls on all Yemeni parties to cooperate in good faith with him and recalls that there should be no preconditions to meeting him. Only a comprehensive and inclusive political process can bring stability to the country. The international parameters, including the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, are well known. Actors from the region have an important role to play. They must be able to contribute, within the framework set by the Special Envoy, to facilitating negotiations between the parties, in the spirit of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

The *FSO SAFER* tanker continues to be an environmental time bomb. The Houthis must allow immediate access without preconditions. Their blackmail is unacceptable.

I assure the Special Envoy of our support. France remains fully prepared to help bring this conflict to an end.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, for their substantive briefings.

We are closely following developments in the situation in the Republic of Yemen. For more than seven years now, there has been an ongoing bloody conflict with no end in sight. The political process remains stalled under the Stockholm and Riyadh Agreements. This is coupled with a widespread uptick in violence and increased hostilities on all fronts, including Ma'rib and Shabwah provinces.

Stagnation in the political process is nearing the point of no return. After that, piecing the mosaic of the Yemeni State back together will simply not be possible. Given this, the international community should recognize that the reality is that the parties have dug their heels in and are not prepared to relaunch direct negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations. In

this context, the mediation efforts of the Special Envoy aimed at bringing the parties to the Yemeni conflict to the negotiating table are and will remain unsuccessful.

We heard Mr. Grundberg's views, especially with regard to his future plans, and we are prepared to support his efforts. However, it is becoming clear that making progress within the existing framework for a Yemeni settlement — and by that, I mean resolution 2216 (2015) — is no longer possible. The resolution, adopted in 2015, has nothing whatsoever to do with the situation on the ground in the Yemeni theatre of hostilities.

The new reality is that the political landscape and the balance of powers in the country have undergone significant changes, which resolution 2216 (2015) quite simply does not reflect. In this regard, we see a real need for Council members to review the bases for political settlement while maintaining the central role of United Nations mediation efforts and the constructive contribution of States of the region. Only in this way can we help Mr. Grundberg, not just in words but in deeds, develop a new road map for settlement that would reconcile the numerous competing interests of the various players in the Yemeni domestic political conflict.

We would urge the members of Security Council to think about a much-needed solution to this long-standing problem — a solution that would turn the conflict into a peaceful political situation and provide necessary assistance to millions of Yemen inhabitants who desperately need humanitarian help. However, we see that our ultimate aim is to reach a comprehensive and long-term settlement of the numerous problems facing Yemen, which are also felt to a significant extent by Yemen's neighbours. Unfortunately, we have to note that, time after time, our Western colleagues prove how quick they are to sacrifice the unity of the Council on Yemen, guided purely by their own selfish interests. They use the language of sanctions, thus rejecting the possibility of finding any other kind of solution. Once again, we reiterate that Security Council sanctions should be used only to push the political process in Yemen forward. Sanctions should not seek to increase pressure on any one party to the conflict.

A source of grave concern is the serious humanitarian situation in Yemen. As we heard from Mr. Rajasingham, the situation, which is worsening on a daily basis, increasingly resembles a full-scale

humanitarian disaster. We are seriously concerned by attacks on civilian facilities. We strongly urge the warring parties to strictly comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law and to swiftly and fully refrain from hostilities, which are destroying non-military infrastructure and causing civilian casualties.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank Acting Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Rajasingham and Special Envoy Hans Grundberg for their valuable briefings.

As we heard from both briefers and as we approach the end of the year and look back over the past 12 months, in which we have grown increasingly concerned about the situation in Yemen, we regret to see no signs of de-escalation. We also continue to be concerned about the recurring cross-border attacks into Saudi-Arabia. Lately, we have also seen an increase in air strikes by the coalition.

Increased violence in areas such as the governorates of Ma'rib, Shabwa and Al-Hudaydah has had huge consequences for the civilians in those areas. We strongly urge all parties to show restraint. Norway has repeatedly condemned the ongoing Houthi offensive in Ma'rib. As fighting intensifies, we witness an increasing number of displaced people living in camps in Ma'rib governorate in difficult conditions. They now total 45,000 in number — a tenfold increase since September according to the International Organization for Migration.

Just last week, there was also an attack on the Al-Hamma camp in which four children and one woman were injured. Unfortunately, that is not the first attack on a camp for internally displaced persons. We condemn such attacks. We urgently call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and protect civilian lives.

Children continue to bear the main burden of the conflict in Yemen. We are appalled by the latest report by Save the Children, which documents Yemen as one of the three countries in the world in which children are most at risk of being recruited for use in armed conflict. That is unacceptable.

I must also raise the recent developments in the Al-Hudaydah governorate. Since the withdrawal of coalition-supported forces, the condition for civilians has worsened. We are concerned about the report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

Affairs (OCHA) of the displacement of 25,000 people in November alone.

We encourage the parties to the Stockholm Agreement to accept the offer of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement and facilitate discussions among the parties.

As stressed previously, the economic situation in Yemen must be addressed and there is an urgent need to stabilize the currency. In that regard, we join others in welcoming the recent appointment of a new Governor, Deputy Governor and Board of the Central Bank of Yemen. Ambitious reforms and fighting corruption will be key going forward.

We also echo the calls that OCHA and others have made to the Houthis to urgently release detained United Nations and United States staff members.

Lastly, after seven years of destruction and violence, Norway urges the parties to devote renewed vigour towards achieving peace. In that regard, I would like to reaffirm our support for the Special Envoy and his efforts to reach a sustainable, political settlement to the conflict through a broad and inclusive political process in which a variety of voices are heard. We call on all parties to fully cooperate with the Special Envoy, without preconditions and without delay.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham for their briefings.

First, I would like to address the violence prevailing in the country. The offensive against Mar'ib has intensified, while at the same time we have seen the re-emergence of other centres of conflict in Al-Hudaydah and Taiz, as well as air strikes on Sana'a. That violence has had a severe impact on the civilian population and has led to new waves of displacement. In that regard, we condemn the firing a few weeks ago of two missiles — into a camp for internally displaced persons run by the International Organization for Migration in the governorate of Mar'ib and into Saudi Arabia.

The parties to the conflict must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction and proportionality. We call on the parties to coordinate with the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement the unilateral withdrawals of

military contingents in order to avoid clashes. At the same time, we underline the outcome of the most recent conference of tribal Chiefs to reiterate the need for an immediate nationwide ceasefire.

Moreover, in echoing the recent press statement issued by the Security Council (SC/14707), my country, Mexico, strongly condemns the raid on the compound formerly used as the United States Embassy in Sana'a and condemns the harassment and detention of many of the Embassy's former employees by Ansar Allah.

We also condemn the recent detention of two United Nations staff members and urge the Houthis to release them immediately. The parties must guarantee due humanitarian space. The absence of an impartial mechanisms to ensure accountability is also regrettable. Such mechanisms to combat impunity are imperative for social reconciliation in countries that are torn by conflicts such as the conflict that Yemen is experiencing.

With regard to the political situation, we welcome the consultations that Special Envoy Grundberg has continued to conduct both in Yemen and with international partners and we are grateful for his updates and tireless work. There is no military solution to the conflict. The only successful solution will be achieved through genuine political dialogue. It is clear that without the will and genuine commitment of the parties, little progress can be achieved towards a peace agreement. Mexico therefore urges the parties to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive United Nations-facilitated political process.

The conflict has undoubtedly been one of the main causes of the economic collapse. Consequently, without the laying down of arms it will be impossible to strengthen State institutions, without which it will in turn be impossible to implement the needed economic policies, such as the management of ports, the payment of salaries to public servants and the collection of taxes. In that regard, we welcome the appointment of the new Governor of the Central Bank of Yemen.

We also welcome the proposals put forward by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to advance the economic recovery. Accordingly, we commend the efforts to efficiently coordinate operations among the various United Nations agencies and donor countries.

Lastly, we note the discussions under way with a private company that could lead to mitigating the risks posed by the *SFO SAFER*. Once again, we call on Ansar Allah to cooperate with the relevant United Nations agencies and facilitate the operation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Niger.

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham for their excellent briefings.

For more than seven years, the civil war in Yemen has exhausted the country and plunged its people into one of the worst ever humanitarian catastrophes, exacting a toll of death, destruction and suffering. Opportunities to end the tragedy have not been lacking. They have presented themselves on many occasions but have just as soon faded away, leading to further deadly confrontations and displacements of civilians, including women and children.

My delegation remains convinced that a solution to the crisis in Yemen cannot be a military one. The battle of Ma'rib, which has been raging for some months, illustrates that reality. If the crisis is to be resolved in a lasting way, it must be the result of an inclusive dialogue that is led by the Yemenis themselves, with the support of the international community.

In order to give every chance to the rapid resumption of that process, in which my country invites all parties to participate, the following conditions are essential.

First, the parties must commit to a nationwide ceasefire by putting an end to hostilities in the country. A truce remains essential for the resumption of peace talks.

Secondly, the parties must then act in good faith and constructively for the return of peace to their country. Indeed, that long-awaited peace will be achieved only through the commitment and will of the Yemenis themselves and the compromises they are willing to make for the good of Yemen and all its people.

Thirdly, it is equally important that regional actors, as well as Council members with influence on the parties, continue to work towards bringing the parties together and supporting them in the negotiations.

The main consequence of the ongoing war in Yemen has been the severe humanitarian crisis in

which the country has been immersed for several years. As the fighting has continued over the years, the living conditions in the country have continued to deteriorate unbearably, causing the Yemeni people great despair.

The report of the United Nations Development Programme stresses, among other things, that nearly 60 per cent of deaths in Yemen are due to indirect consequences of the conflict, such as the lack of drinking water, hunger, disease, the deterioration of basic services, economic collapse, extreme poverty and the lack of a means of subsistence. That bleak picture is compounded by a number of other aggravating factors, including natural disasters and the coronavirus disease pandemic, as well as interruptions of the delivery of humanitarian aid and the growing food insecurity.

The risk of large-scale famine continues to grow in Yemen due to the absence of household income and the lack of predictable and sustainable funding to provide vital assistance to thousands of families in need. We therefore call on donor countries, in particular those in the region, to be more generous in their contributions to alleviate the suffering people of Yemen by funding the Yemen humanitarian response plan, in keeping with the commitments made at the recent conference organized by the United Nations in October.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its concern at the situation of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, on which inspection work is still delayed, while the advanced state of disrepair of the vessel continues to expose Yemen and the countries bordering the Red Sea to serious risks of an environmental disaster with incalculable consequences. To avoid such devastating damage to the environment due to the explosion of the tanker, we call on the Houthis to demonstrate responsibility and honour their commitments by issuing the necessary authorizations to the United Nations team in charge of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker inspection operations.

The Niger commends the tireless efforts of Mr. Grundberg and reaffirms its full commitment to support all efforts by the international community aimed at bringing the crisis in Yemen to a successful conclusion.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Grundberg and Mr. Rajasingham for their briefings.

Since the last open briefing of the Security Council on Yemen two months ago (see S/PV.8878), the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people has increased as a result of the persistent and brutal Houthi attacks on cities, population and internally displaced persons (IDPs), including in the governorates of Ma'rib, Al-Hudaydah and Shabwa, in addition to the difficult humanitarian conditions in the governorate of Taiz caused by the siege, systemic shelling, sniper fire, roadblocks and the kidnapping of civilians.

As a result of the recent Houthi attacks and escalation of hostilities, more than 17,000 families comprising more than 101,000 IDPs have been displaced, including more than 25,000 civilians displaced as a result of the recent Houthi offensive in the governorate of Al-Hudaydah in flagrant violation of the Stockholm Agreement. The Houthi militias have sought to obstruct the implementation of the Agreement and to undermine the ability of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement to carry out its mandate in line with Security Council resolution 2452 (2019).

The Mission has been held captive in Houthi-controlled areas and we question whether the Mission should continue to operate as it remains silent in the face of all the Houthi violations.

The Houthi militias have continued their offensive in Ma'rib, targeting civilians and IDP camps with ballistic missiles and drones. Most recently, the Houthi militias launched two Iranian-made ballistic missiles on the Al-Huma camp in Ma'rib — home to 1,264 families — which led to the death of a number of women and children. Just yesterday, the Houthis launched another ballistic missile against the city of Ma'rib as the Yemenis were celebrating a win in a football game.

The continued Houthi attack on Ma'rib, which is the final and safe refuge for millions of IDPs, is part of the Houthis' attempts to claim as many civilian lives as possible and to cause new waves of displacement in a retaliatory action that proves that those militias are bloodthirsty terrorists. It will require an urgent humanitarian intervention and an emergency response to meet the people's basic needs in order to bridge the significant humanitarian gap caused by those forced waves of displacement. We call on the Security Council to assume its responsibilities to end the Houthi

offensive on Ma'rib and save the lives of millions of civilians and IDPs.

As Mr. Rajasingham said in his briefing, the economic collapse has had a significant effect on the humanitarian situation. That is why support must be given to the efforts of the Yemeni Government in the temporary capital of Aden to overcome the economic and humanitarian challenges and implement structural reforms to improve the Government's performance.

Led by His Excellency Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi, President of the Republic of Yemen, the Government is determined to confront the current exceptional challenges, mobilize resources, regulate the financial sector, stabilize the currency and take all necessary measures to end the economic collapse and improve living conditions. A case in point was the recent appointment of the new Governor of the Board of the Central Bank of Yemen, which should spur recovery efforts and economic stability.

We call on the international community and all our friends and brothers to help the Yemeni Government to overcome the difficult economic challenges resulting from the war that has been imposed on our people, including by providing urgent support to Government plans to implement reforms and build State institutions.

Ending the suffering of the Yemeni people will not be possible without an immediate ceasefire, followed by the adoption of economic and humanitarian measures and a resumption of the political process towards achieving a sustainable and lasting peace.

That process must be conducted in line with the agreed terms of reference for a political solution, namely the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive national dialogue and relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). As my colleague the representative of Russia noted, we reiterate that resolution 2216 (2015) remains the basis for a solution in Yemen in order to achieve a sustainable and lasting peace.

Developments on the ground do not change the facts. The Houthi militias led a military coup against the national consensus, the outcome of the national dialogue and the political process. The Houthi militias have disregarded all relevant Security Council resolutions to reach a settlement for ending the conflict. Resolution 2216 (2015) remains the basis of a solution.

The Houthis do not believe in a political partnership; they believe in their ethnic and divine supremacy. They do not believe in dialogue and peace.

The Yemeni Government has responded by welcoming all initiatives and suggestions aimed at achieving peace. We have engaged positively and in good faith with the United Nations efforts, through the Special Envoy, to end the conflict. However, the Houthi militias view these peace efforts as a tool to continue the war in order to impose a fait accompli, because they believe in their divine supremacy. They have illusions that draw them to political domination and ethnic superiority.

These militias have impeded all diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict. They have used all international and regional initiatives and efforts as a tool to buy time and pursue their war and aggression against the Yemeni people. They target cities and civilians in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with ballistic missiles and drones, in addition to their provocative behaviour and aggressions against international organizations, humanitarian workers and diplomatic property in areas under their control. The Yemeni Government condemns the Houthi militias' breach of the American Embassy compound in Sana'a, detaining a number of local staff and looting and destroying property.

The Iranian regime continues to interfere in the internal affairs of my country and to destabilize security and stability in Yemen and the region. It continues to protract the war and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis by violating relevant Security Council resolutions and the arms embargo. This regime continues to provide the Houthi militias with arms and military expertise, as well as various kinds of missiles, most recently Iranian weapons that were intercepted on their way to the Houthi militias, including 171 surface-to-air missiles, 8 anti-tank missiles, cruise missile components, anti-shipping devices, thermal weapons optics and drone components, as well as 1.1 million barrels of oil derivatives. These Iranian practices will continue until the international community, the United Nations and the Council take a decisive and deterrent stance. The main obstacle to peace in Yemen is Iran's insistence on maintaining its aggressive and blackmailing behaviour through its sabotaging agents represented by the Houthi militias, which aim to serve Iran's dangerous project leading to chaos, terrorism and threatening international navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait.

Millions of Yemeni children live in Houthi-controlled areas. They are at risk of being recruited and used in combat operations. They are deprived of their right to education and to live a normal life, just like all children around the world. The Houthi militias continue to take tens of thousands of children from their homes, neighbourhoods and schools to camps, without regard for their fate or suffering of their families. They subject them to brainwashing with hostile slogans and imported extremist ideas. They drag them into crematoriums of death in the most extensive exploitation and recruitment of children in the history of humankind. The Houthi militias have also taken schools and educational institutions and turned them into military barracks and weapons depots, in clear violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. We call on the international community and human rights institutions to shoulder their responsibilities and bring pressure to bear on the Houthis to end their violations, protect children from their abusive behaviour and provide support to the Yemeni Government in implementing its national strategy to prevent the recruitment of children and their use in armed conflict.

The Houthi militias have not spared Yemeni women from their crimes either, subjecting them to kidnapping, forced displacement, psychological and physical torture and sexual harassment. They issue judgments based on false accusations against women, as in the case of Intisar Al-Hammadi and her colleagues.

The Security Council holds the Houthi militias accountable for any economic or environmental disaster resulting from the *FSO Safer* oil tanker. The tanker has received no maintenance or repair, making it a ticking time bomb and potential disaster that threaten Yemen and the regional countries. If that disaster occurs, it would be one of the worst economic and environmental disasters in the world. We call on the Security Council once again to pressure the Houthi militias to stop using the tanker as leverage and to allow the United Nations technical team to access the tanker in order to spare the region and the world a grave disaster.

In closing, I would like to express my thanks to the Council members that will be leaving at the end of the month. I thank them for their efforts to end the conflict in Yemen and alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. We wish them every success and their people peace and prosperity.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.