



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8840th meeting
Monday, 23 August 2021, 10 a.m.
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Provisional

President: Mr. Tirumurti (India)

Members:

China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Estonia	Mr. Lipand
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
Niger	Mr. Aougi
Norway	Mr. Kvalheim
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

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: 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. Mohamed Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations; Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of the United Nations International Children's Fund.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Khiari.

Mr. Khiari: I am pleased to join you today, Mr. President, to brief the Security Council on current developments in Yemen.

Unfortunately, since the most recent Council meeting on Yemen (see S/PV.8797) there has been no further progress in the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to reach an agreement based on the four-point plan presented to the parties, which is composed of a nationwide ceasefire, the reopening of Sana'a airport, the easing of restrictions on the flow of fuel and other commodities through Al-Hudaydah port, and the resumption of face-to-face political negotiations between the Yemeni parties.

The Houthis have continued to condition the resumption of their participation in the political process on the opening of Al-Hudaydah ports and Sana'a airport, as well as on the ending of what they call the "aggression and occupation". On the occasion of Eid al-Adha, the Head of the Houthi Supreme Political Council reiterated that stance.

The negotiations facilitated by Saudi Arabia on the Riyadh agreement, which were focused on the return

of the Prime Minister and other ministers to Aden, have yet to resume following the Eid break in July. No date has been set for recommencing those efforts. Timely progress on the implementation of the Riyadh agreement remains vital to addressing the tensions in the south, particularly since the security situation in Aden and the southern governorates continues to deteriorate. The situation is compounded by continued problems with the provision of basic services, including the electricity supply, despite the Saudi transfers of fuel grants. That has been accompanied by further protests and industrial action in Aden and other areas of the southern governorates. All stakeholders must cooperate to avoid further escalation.

Military activity in Yemen continues to ebb and flow. Sporadic fighting has been observed in Al-Jawf and Taiz, but Ma'rib appears to remain the key strategic focus. In Al-Bayda, to the south of Ma'rib, the initial gains made by Yemeni forces supported by the Saudi-led coalition were subsequently reversed by the Houthis, who have now moved further north around the border between Ma'rib and Shabwa governorates. Based on those continued evolutions in the military situation, the main arterial routes to Ma'rib are now more seriously threatened. In the light of this, we reiterate our call to all parties to completely and immediately cease such attempts to achieve territorial gains by force.

Following a brief lull in cross-border ballistic-missile and drone attacks against southern Saudi Arabia, land- and sea-based infrastructure in this area have once again been targeted in recent weeks. There have also been continued reports of air strikes being launched by the coalition.

The difficult economic situation is palpable throughout the country. The value of the Yemeni rial in Government-controlled areas continues to deteriorate, reaching a record low, trading at 1,000 rials to the United States dollar. The gap in exchange rates between Sana'a and Aden has also increased to approximately 400 rials. The Southern Transitional Council recently threatened to enforce an independent local exchange rate in Aden and other areas under their control in southern Yemen — a situation that is likely to further complicate efforts aimed at a cohesive economic recovery. The Houthis and members of the private sector have also opposed the Government's increase in the price of the customs dollar fee from 250 to 500 rials for imports.

Lastly, I would like to address the concerning issue of the fuel supply, which continues to worsen, particularly in Houthi-controlled areas. Only three commercial fuel vessels have been given clearance to berth at the port of Al-Hudaydah since the beginning of July. Four fuel vessels remain in the coalition holding area. All but one petrol station of the Yemen Petroleum Company in Houthi-controlled governorates have reportedly closed. The Yemen Gas Company indicated that there are increasingly severe cooking-gas shortages, with waiting times understood to be approximately one month to refill empty cylinders. That has significantly driven up prices in the parallel market. We reiterate our call on the Government of Yemen to urgently allow the entry of all essential commercial supplies — including fuel ships — to Al-Hudaydah without delay. All parties must prioritize civilian needs and refrain from weaponizing the economy, particularly in the light of the critical humanitarian situation in the country.

The appointment of Mr. Grundberg as new Special Envoy for Yemen presents an opportunity to build on the tremendous efforts of Martin Griffiths in his role as Envoy; assess the overall mediation approach; and focus on overcoming the obstacles that remain ahead of us. In that regard, it is imperative to resume an inclusive Yemeni-led political process to reach a negotiated solution to the conflict. We call on all parties and stakeholders, including the Council, to extend their full support and cooperation to Mr. Grundberg in his upcoming efforts.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: I thank Mr. Khiari for his briefing. I am very pleased to join Council members today for what is, of course, quite a familiar topic, although from a rather different point of view. This is my first outing in the Council in my new functions. I am therefore very glad it concerns Yemen.

Yemen really is a magnificent country. We were talking about that just before today's meeting started. It is home to a rich culture, amazing history, beautiful places and wonderful people. It is so much more than the war that we discuss here every month. However, after six years of war, the war overshadows everything. As Mr. Khiari mentioned, in my previous role, I had the immense privilege of trying to help Yemenis to get across that line, make peace and end the war. During that time, I was repeatedly struck by the shocking brutality

of the humanitarian crisis and listened carefully to the briefings of Mark Lowcock. I am therefore grateful to have an opportunity now to address those issues before the Council.

There is much to address, and, in all cases, it is civilians, and, as members will hear from Ms. Fore, particularly children who bear the brunt. The war grinds on, as Mr. Khiari has described, including the devastating Ansar Allah offensive in Ma'rib and clashes along nearly 50 other front lines. Hostilities this year have so far reportedly killed or injured more than 1,200 civilians. Institutions and public services have imploded, depriving people of clean water, sanitation, education and health care, and helping to spread diseases such as cholera and coronavirus, as we were discussing before the start of the meeting.

The war has also decimated the economy. That collapse, as I will describe, if I may shortly, is perhaps the biggest driver of people's humanitarian needs, including the risk of famine. As if all that were not enough, climate change is taking a direct and immediate toll. Rains this year have been among the heaviest ever, with more than 100,000 people affected by flooding in the past few weeks alone.

The list goes on and on. More than 20 million people in Yemen need humanitarian assistance and protection. That is approximately two thirds of the population, and it continues to be quite an astonishing figure. However, out of all those needs, there is perhaps one overarching humanitarian priority, and that is to stop the famine. Today, approximately 5 million people are just one step away from succumbing to famine and the diseases that go with it. Some 10 million more are right behind them.

Famine is not just a food problem; it is a symptom of a much deeper collapse, as everyone knows. In many ways, it is all of Yemen's problems rolled into one, and it demands a comprehensive response. That means, of course, providing immediate relief to the millions of people who are on the verge of famine. It also means attacking the problems that are pushing Yemen towards famine in the first place. It is on that particular point I think the world can do more to help.

Let us start with what the aid agencies are already doing. On that point, we have a good story to tell for a change. Humanitarian funding has surged since the March pledging event. I would like to thank all donors, many of them in this Chamber, that have made that happen, including major new funds announced over

the past six weeks by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United States. Today the Yemen response plan — the annual humanitarian programme — is 50 per cent funded and has received more money than any other appeal in the world. It is therefore a testament to those who have advocated for the needs of the people of Yemen. I would like to thank all our donors.

Those funds enable humanitarian partners and agencies to help 10 million people across the whole country every single month. Without that help, Yemen would, of course, succumb to famine. I should add that the majority of our partners — those humanitarian partners and agencies — are Yemeni non-governmental organizations, working in every single one of Yemen's 333 districts, during a live war, and that is no small feat.

We are also working to deepen the aid presence across the country. I should like to pay tribute here to David Gressly and his team, who have travelled to many parts of the country in recent weeks. That means more staff in field locations, more aid flights to places like Ma'rib, where we needed to build up the staff, and more road missions to front-line areas, and that is quite a change.

Delivering aid, as we have often discussed here, is often harder than it should be, mostly due to bureaucratic impediments. We are working with everyone to resolve those access challenges, and support from donors and Member States will continue to be crucial on that point. Naturally, we are also asking donors to increase their contributions to ensure that funds are adequately distributed across various sectors.

Although the appeal is indeed, as I said, relatively well-funded relative to other appeals around the world, agencies will soon start running out of money again in certain sectors in the months to come. By October, for example, food aid will probably face cuts and programmes in other sectors, especially health, water, sanitation and shelter — I am sure that Ms. Fore will speak about that — are already struggling. If aid levels fall sharply, the risk of famine roars back. Next month, the European Union, Sweden and Switzerland will host a humanitarian event on Yemen during the high-level week of the general debate of the General Assembly. That meeting is an opportunity for the world to reiterate its commitment to addressing the crisis with new funds.

However, I must be clear that even a well-funded humanitarian operation does relatively little to empower people to look after themselves, which is

what most Yemenis want. The biggest challenge is the economy. Indeed, Mr. Khiari already discussed that. As Mark Lowcock often said, people in Yemen are not starving because there is no food in the country; they are starving because they cannot afford it. One reason is because incomes have dried up. The gross domestic product has plummeted by 40 per cent since 2015, taking many jobs with it. A quarter of the population, including doctors, teachers, health professionals, social workers and water and sanitation workers, rely on civil servant salaries, which, as Council members know, are paid only sporadically, erratically and unreliably. Paying civil servant salaries, which is not a new issue but one that has been much discussed, would put money in the pockets of millions of people. It is also essential to keeping basic services running, many of which are key institutions for the humanitarian response. Therefore, we are, of course, eager to work with the parties to continue to try to find a solution to that. I think that a lot of work has been done on that, certainly by the mission but also by the United Nations Development Programme and others, with regard to how to meet those immediate needs.

However, we must also take steps to boost other people's incomes, as well, protecting remittances, for example, which are a lifeline for millions of families and constitute Yemen's largest source of foreign exchange. There was recently a story about the possibility of remittances from Saudi Arabia being at risk, and they are, of course, a very important source of income for many people in Yemen. That means promoting economic opportunities for farmers, fishing communities and local business. I want to stress that it is not unusual for a humanitarian official, as I now am, to talk a great deal about the need for livelihoods, development funding and institutions to survive through that kind of support and assistance.

Another reason that many people in Yemen cannot afford to eat is because, as I said, commodity prices are skyrocketing — not only food, which now is more than three times as expensive as before the war, but also fuel, which is four times as expensive and which, of course, has knock-on effects for other products. Prices are rising in part because the Yemeni currency, the rial, has collapsed — a disaster, of course, in a country that relies on imports. As Mr. Khiari mentioned, foreign exchange injections through the Central Bank of Yemen would help to stabilize the rial. In that regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was very generous in the

past. It is very good news to hear today's announcement by the International Monetary Fund that Yemen will receive, I think, \$665 million in special drawing rights, which will also help the liquidity and, hopefully, stem the fall of the rial.

Prices are also rising because the parties interfere with the market. With the exception of food, Government restrictions now re-route nearly all commercial imports away from ports held by Ansar Allah — Al-Hudaydah, of course — to Aden and elsewhere. Many of those imports are then shipped by road up to the north of the country, adding to the cost and, indeed, affecting the black market. That approach is much more expensive. It opens the door for market manipulation, and the end result is much higher costs and prices for people who cannot afford the previous prices.

I want to be very clear about the fact that restrictions on commercial imports beyond the international arms embargo should be lifted right away. That means that Al-Hudaydah and Saleef ports should be open without additional impediment. Other market manipulation, such as profiteering downstream through the informal market, must also stop. Doing that, as Mr. Khiari already said, would boost civilians' access to the goods that they need to survive. He talked about the need for fuel ships to enter those ports. That is consistent with the obligation of all parties to treat the civilians under their control humanely, as is required by international humanitarian law. It is an obligation and a responsibility; it is not an option.

It is also consistent with the obligation under international human rights law to uphold an adequate standard of living. Refraining from interference with access to essential goods and services is an important step towards fulfilling that obligation. I want to make that appeal to the Council.

On a related point, I believe that Sana'a airport should be reopened — at least for the thousands of civilians to travel abroad for medical care. International humanitarian law requires all parties to care for the wounded and the sick, and that should include travel abroad when treatment is not available.

To conclude, I have gone on perhaps excessively about the way in which the economy is driving needs and risking famine in Yemen and that it is also the economy to which we need to pay attention in order to give people safety from that threat. But we must not forget what caused the economy to collapse in the

first place, that is, the war. The world must push, as we have so often done in this Chamber, for the nationwide ceasefire that Mr. Khiari mentioned today. A ceasefire will give desperate civilians a break. It will create space to address the drivers of the crisis, which I described at some length, as well as to provide the basis, as Mr. Khiari said, for the resumption of the all-inclusive political process necessary to end the war.

From my own experience, I know that resuming that political process is no easy task but it is essential. I want to congratulate Hans Grundberg, whom I know well, on his appointment as Special Envoy. He, of course, has all our support for his difficult and essential central task. I hope that the war, which has gone on for too long, can now come to an end.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Fore.

Ms. Fore: More than six years ago, adults started a war in Yemen. They did so despite knowing the terrible toll that violent conflict exacts on children. The war in Yemen, now in its seventh year, has created the largest humanitarian crisis in the world — one made worse by the public health and socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Since I last spoke to the Security Council about Yemen in the Chamber two years ago (see S/PV.8525), little has changed for the country's civilian population. Each day, the violence and destruction wreak havoc on the lives of children and their families. This year has seen growing displacement, with 1.6 million children now internally displaced because of the violence, particularly around Al-Hudaydah and Ma'rib. Basic services, such as health care, sanitation and education, all of which are vital to the humanitarian response, are incredibly fragile and on the brink of total collapse. The widespread lack of access to safe and sufficient water is of the utmost concern. Those who are internally displaced are particularly vulnerable to the ongoing water cuts taking place across the front lines.

As both Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Khiari thoughtfully outlined, Yemen's economy is in a frighteningly poor condition. The gross domestic product has dropped by 40 per cent since 2015, causing jobs to disappear and family incomes to plummet. Approximately a quarter of the population, including many doctors, teachers and sanitation workers, rely on civil servant salaries, which are paid erratically, if at all. There is food in Yemen, as

Martin Griffiths just said, but those who cannot afford it are at risk of starvation.

Today in Yemen, almost 21 million people, including 11.3 million children, need humanitarian assistance to survive. There are 2.3 million children who are acutely malnourished and nearly 400,000 children under five are suffering from severe acute malnutrition and are at imminent risk of death. More than 10 million children and close to 5 million women cannot properly access health services. In Yemen, one child dies every 10 minutes from preventable causes, including malnutrition and vaccine-preventable diseases. As Mr. Griffiths said, children's education in Yemen has also been gravely impacted by the war. Two million children are out of school and one in six schools can no longer be used. Two thirds of teachers — more than 170,000 teachers in total — have not received a regular salary for more than four years because of the conflict and the geopolitical divides. That places approximately 4 million additional children at risk of disrupted education or of dropping out, as unpaid teachers quit teaching to find other ways of providing for their families. Children who do not finish their education are trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty. If out-of-school children or those who have dropped out recently are not properly supported, they may never return to school, so we are deeply worried.

These are the numbers. But the numbers do not really tell us what it is like to be a child growing up in Yemen today. Being a child in Yemen means watching one's parents struggle to provide enough food for the family to eat in order to not starve. It means that a child who is fortunate enough to have a school to go to could be killed by a bullet, an explosion or by stepping on a mine walking along the road simply to get to school. It means possibly being one of the children recruited to join the fighting, used by a party in a non-combat role or forced into marriage the family is out of options.

Being a child in Yemen means probably experiencing or witnessing horrific violence to which no child should ever be exposed. Children who survive the war might carry physical and emotional scars for the rest of their lives, undermining their development and happiness as adults. Fighting around their communities means that it may be impossible for children to get vaccinated against polio or other diseases. And if they do get sick, there may be no hospital or clinic for them to safely visit. Being a child in Yemen is the stuff of nightmares.

We are doing everything we can to help children get through this ordeal. Shoulder to shoulder with our local partners, we are providing access to clean water and sanitation along with health, nutrition, protection and education services. Those efforts include delivering vaccines and supporting primary health-care centres and hospitals to remain operational. We are responding to COVID-19 and are providing emergency cash transfers to 1.5 million households every quarter, benefiting approximately 9 million people.

Across the country, UNICEF is supporting the treatment of acute malnutrition in more than 4,000 primary health-care facilities and 100 therapeutic feeding centres. We are working to rehabilitate schools and have provided financial support and supplies so that secondary-school students can sit for national exams. But none of that is enough given the scale of the humanitarian needs amid the ongoing violence.

There have been glimmers of progress on the political front and occasional signs of hope that this nightmare could soon come to an end. Yet there are no tangible signs of peace on the ground. In fact, hostilities have increased significantly in places such as Ma'rib. All the while, children continue to suffer. After six years of war, when will parties to the conflict and those with influence over them place children first? I once again call on them and the members of the Council to make every possible effort to keep children safe and to abide by their legal obligations to keep them out of the line of fire. That includes sparing from attack the essential infrastructure on which children depend, such as health facilities and water and sanitation systems.

I want to emphasize that respecting and protecting education, including schools, students and teachers, is of the utmost importance for Yemeni children and youth. We remain gravely concerned about the severity and frequency of threats and attacks against education and the use of schools for military purposes. The implications of such attacks on the safety of students and their ability to enjoy their right to education cannot be overstated. All parties bear responsibility for killing and maiming children. All parties have regularly failed to take the necessary precautions to protect civilians. This must end.

In addition, UNICEF and our partners need sustained, unconditional and uninterrupted humanitarian access to people in need wherever they are in Yemen — no matter who controls the areas in

which they live. Bureaucratic hurdles should not get in the way of our ability to deliver aid. We value support from donors and Member States in resolving those challenges. We need help to safely and effectively carry out the crucial demining work needed.

Yemen imports nearly everything, including humanitarian supplies. We must reopen the port of Al-Hudaydah to commercial imports and fuel. Millions more could be plunged into famine if vital imports remain restricted.

The last time I addressed the Security Council on Yemen was before the pandemic (see S/PV.8525). As Mr. Griffiths has noted, COVID-19 has further complicated this already dire humanitarian situation. The health system is hanging by a thread. So is the economy. Vaccination campaigns across the country must be urgently expanded, especially with the emergence of highly transmissible COVID-19 variants.

I also take this opportunity to urge the international community to increase its financial support to help meet the immediate needs of children and make longer-term investments to prevent the complete collapse of health, water, sanitation, nutrition, protection and education systems — all of which Yemeni children need now and over the years to come.

UNICEF and our partners are ready to work with the parties to ensure that the salaries of civil servants are paid regularly — a step that would put money back in the pockets of millions of people, helping families to survive. It would also support the functioning of the basic services that are essential to a successful humanitarian response.

Likewise, we must also take steps to boost people's incomes. That means protecting remittances, which are a lifeline for millions of families and constitute Yemen's largest source of foreign exchange.

Ultimately, children in Yemen need a comprehensive and lasting peace. Parties to the conflict must work to reach a negotiated political solution. They must prioritize and uphold the rights of children. Only then will children be able put this nightmare behind them and turn hopefully towards their dreams for the future.

The President: I thank Ms. Fore for her briefing.

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

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I welcome Mr. Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, in his new functions. I would like to thank all of our briefers today, and I would like to welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of Ambassador Grundberg as Special Envoy to Yemen. We look forward to working with him, as we did with Under-Secretary-General Griffiths.

Ambassador Grundberg's appointment is an opportunity to inject new momentum to peace efforts in Yemen. We all know that there is no military solution. Over a year and a half since it began, the Houthis offensive on Ma'rib remains entrenched, and they resort to enlisting child soldiers. The Houthis must not replicate previous patterns of behaviour and should engage in good faith with the new Special Envoy to secure a political solution to the conflict.

As highlighted by our briefers, urgent steps are needed to address the economic crisis. In the south, the Yemeni rial recently passed the symbolic mark of 1,000 rials to the dollar for the first time. That decline is symptomatic of the health of the wider economy. As Mr. Griffiths said, dire humanitarian conditions are driven by the lack of purchasing power, not by the lack of goods themselves. The Yemenis cannot afford food or to pay for a trip to the hospital, let alone pay for treatment once they get there. External financial support is needed, but urgent reform is required by the Government of Yemen in order to facilitate that.

I would also like to recognize and thank the United States and Gulf donors for their recent additional contributions to the humanitarian appeal, which have helped Yemen avoid famine for now. However, a relatively well-funded humanitarian response will not be able to keep pace with the deteriorating economy forever.

We also continue to be concerned about the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). It is only a matter of time before the delta variant reaches Yemen and exacerbates an already terrible situation. The authorities must acknowledge that impending risk rather than suppress the collection of health data. They should encourage rather than impede the vaccination programme. In partnership with the World Bank and the World Health Organization, the United Kingdom will fund the roll-out costs for nearly 2 million doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine

allocated to Yemen by the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility.

The conflict is having a disproportionate effect on the marginalized people of Yemen, particularly children, as we heard from the Executive Director of UNICEF, and each day that peace is delayed, they are being robbed of a future. The United Kingdom supports the important work of UNICEF, having provided more than \$16 million so far this year, with a further payment of at least \$6.5 million expected next month.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to our briefers today, Mohamed Khaled Khiari, Martin Griffiths and Henrietta Fore, for the information that they provided.

We are concerned about the continuing escalation of violence in Yemen. Reports indicate an increase in the number of Yemeni deaths in Ma'rib province as a result of the Houthis' attempts to take control of the city and the Government army's retaliation, with massive air support from the Arab coalition. Attacks on civilian infrastructure, including in Saudi Arabia, are of serious concern to us. In the six years since the conflict began, it has become clear that there is no alternative to intra-Yemeni talks that take into account the interests and concerns of all.

In that regard, we call on all parties to the conflict to immediately and fully cease military operations, strictly observe the provisions of international humanitarian law and pursue political and diplomatic paths towards resolving all differences. We intend to continue to support the relevant United Nations efforts to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the conflict and actively encourage all sides to adopt a constructive approach to and show a readiness for compromise. In that context, we note and welcome the mediation efforts of the States of the region, including Oman.

We are convinced that a cessation of hostilities must be accompanied by the implementation of a number of confidence-building measures in the political, military and socioeconomic spheres, which would truly help alleviate the dire situation of the Yemeni population, which the United Nations has characterized as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

We call on donors to scale up efforts to provide the necessary financial support for United Nations humanitarian assistance. At the same time, we stress the need to fully lift the naval, land and air blockade

of Yemen and restrictions on the delivery of food, medicines, fuel and other essential goods. We would recall that the assistance provided must not be biased or discriminatory.

Furthermore, we are convinced that mutually acceptable solutions, free from hidden political agendas, can also be found to resolve the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. Unfortunately, we are compelled to note that talks have yet to bring about the desired result. At the same time, it is important that other nationally conceived solutions to the issue have emerged and that the Ansar Allah movement is showing its willingness to engage in dialogue with the United Nations. Confidence-building measures constitute one of the keys to solving the *FSO SAFER* issue. In that regard, we count on the assistance and efforts of the new Special Envoy to restore such measures through contacts with all Yemeni and regional stakeholders.

We hope that the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, will be able to develop fresh approaches to resuming the comprehensive negotiation process under the auspices of the United Nations. We eagerly look forward to his first briefing before the Security Council in September, as well as to actions and initiatives to achieve a swift political settlement. We hope that he will act impartially and neutrally. For our part, we will continue to assist United Nations mediation in Yemen through regular contacts with all parties concerned.

We believe that the role of the Security Council is not to take sides but to support the Special Envoy, including by creating a constructive environment in relations among the parties concerned in the region. We call on colleagues once again to cooperate together at the international level to achieve a region-wide de-escalation. In that regard, we draw attention to the updated Russian concept for collective security in the Persian Gulf region, which we recently circulated within the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We begin by welcoming the remarks provided by Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths, with whom it is indeed a pleasure to continue working. We also welcome Ms. Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF, and thank her for her remarks.

The recent UNICEF report entitled "Education disrupted" is illuminating. The figures highlighting the

number of children out of school and those in need of emergency education support are of concern, as well as the number of children in need of humanitarian help, including those without access to safe water, sanitation or hygiene — all of which contribute to a very desolate and disheartening picture.

Of particular concern is the fact that some of the children born into the conflict have known only this dismal quality of life, which is indeed heartbreaking. They are living their lives against the backdrop of crisis-level food insecurity, a pandemic, ongoing hostilities and a humanitarian crisis so grave that it has been designated the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Restricted access to education is directly impacting those children and indirectly damaging the prospects for building a stronger and more stable Yemeni civil society. We take this opportunity to welcome the work that UNICEF and its partners have been doing to combat the collapse of the education situation, provide access to formal and non-formal education and ensure the healthy and sustainable growth of children.

On the humanitarian front, we welcome the additional funding of the humanitarian response plan, which has preserved a number of life-saving humanitarian operations. We also welcome the recent funding announcements made by international partners and call on the international community to maintain the momentum. We take this moment to underscore the link between the economic and the humanitarian situations, both of which are dependent on one another. Without support for the economy, many Yemenis are unable to afford the basic food and services needed for everyday survival.

In that context, we emphasize the importance of remittances from abroad, on which many Yemenis rely. Those remittances are a crucial lifeline to those within Yemen, the loss of which would only exacerbate the humanitarian and economic situation. We must also emphasize a humanitarian and existential risk that is beyond the control of the parties in Yemen, namely, climate change. Let all of us around this table fulfil our responsibilities to the most vulnerable in the world and tackle the problem of climate change in earnest.

As the world continues to grapple with the ongoing coronavirus disease pandemic, let us not forget that for many in Yemen, this is another toxic dimension to the conflict that further exacerbates its socioeconomic impact. We recognize all international

efforts made towards providing aid to Yemen, but there must be internal accountability as well. We urge all authorities to continue their efforts and divert their attention away from fighting. The pandemic is affecting an already vulnerable population, and a fragile health-care system is now breaking under the weight of it all. We call on all actors within Yemen to ensure unhindered and equal access to health care and to humanitarian assistance.

Mohamed Khaled Khiari began his briefing this morning by underscoring that since the most recent briefing on Yemen to the Security Council (see S/PV.8797), there has been no progress. Let me close by emphasizing that the unrelenting efforts towards military gain, the impact of which is unjustifiably borne by the civilian population, must cease immediately. Nothing in the six years of this conflict has indicated that this approach is an appropriate or justified one. The only way to achieve a successful end to the war is through an inclusive and balanced Yemeni-led, Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-focused dialogue. We call on all actors on the ground, and those with influence over them, to concentrate efforts on achieving a nationwide ceasefire that would support credible political negotiations undertaken in good faith and in the spirit of compromise.

Mr. Lipand (Estonia): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari, Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Executive Director Fore for their briefings. I also welcome the nomination of Mr. Hans Grundberg as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. We wish him success and look forward to working with him in his efforts to achieve peace in Yemen. We also call upon all parties to engage constructively with the new Special Envoy.

It has been very disappointing to witness the lack of progress over the past months, as was also lamented by Mr. Khiari. If the past six years of war have shown anything, it is that the conflict has no military solution. It is vital that all parties show willingness to compromise and agree to a sustainable and nationwide ceasefire and resume an inclusive political process, with the participation of women and youth.

We call upon the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council to refrain from actions that will further increase tensions in an already volatile situation. We urge them to resume the implementation

of the Riyadh agreement, which is an essential step on the path towards achieving a wider peace.

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing hostilities, which continue to have a devastating effect on the people of Yemen, especially in Ma'rib, where the Houthis' assault continues, but also in Al-Bayda and elsewhere. Alarming, the number of civilian casualties has reached levels higher than before the signing of Stockholm Agreement in December 2018. In Ma'rib alone, tens of thousands have been displaced this year. This all adds to the already dire socioeconomic conditions, the impending famine, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the widespread flooding, as was well illustrated by Mr. Griffiths.

Turning to the effects of the conflict on children, we fully share the concerns raised by Ms. Fore. Without an end to the hostilities, humanitarian organizations have only limited means to help the 400,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition, the families affected by COVID-19, the children being deprived of education and the record number of families forced to flee their home due to the conflict.

We are deeply worried about the high number of child casualties in attacks by various parties to the conflict. We also condemn the continued attacks on schools and hospitals, as well as the recruitment and use of children in hostilities, in clear violation of international humanitarian law.

In order to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation, it is important to ensure unhindered access of humanitarian actors, so as to reach all in need. It is also essential to guarantee a regular flow of fuel and other essential commodities to all parts of the country.

Finally, we reiterate our call upon the Houthis to ensure immediate and full access to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker for the United Nations team.

Mr. Aougi (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Khiari, Mr. Griffiths and Ms. Fore for their briefings.

The Niger deplors the fact that after so many years of a multifaceted crisis and intensive diplomatic efforts, the parties to the conflict in Yemen are unable to agree on the minimum necessary for a return to peace in the country. That minimum, as we all know, is the cessation of hostilities throughout the country, which is a *sine qua non* condition for making real progress on all other aspects of the crisis.

Two months ago, Martin Griffiths' assessment at the end of his three-year mandate (see S/PV.8797) was that there had been a failure of the various proposals aimed at reconciling the positions of the parties in order to achieve a national truce that would create the conditions for resuming the political process.

The parties to the conflict must come to terms with the fact that the civil war between them cannot be resolved by military force but rather through sincere, inclusive dialogue without any conditions. Achieving a ceasefire remains essential to giving the political process a chance to resume for a comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the crisis, which has been tearing the country apart for seven years.

We call on all actors to show not only responsibility and restraint but also great compassion for the people of Yemen, who have suffered so much, by putting an end to this tragedy, which has lasted far too long. Indeed, that is our only hope for a return to peace in this country and an improvement of the humanitarian crisis that has plagued Yemen for several years.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, my delegation remains concerned about the distressing conditions of the people of Yemen, primarily caused by the continued war in the country. Nearly 20 million people need assistance to survive, but the humanitarian response plan is only 47 per cent funded. My delegation calls on donor countries, in particular those in the region, to be more generous in order to prevent further loss of life. It is equally crucial that the obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the country, in particular through the port of Al-Hudaydah and the airport in Sana'a, be lifted immediately to prevent Yemen from slipping into a large-scale famine.

The situation of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker also remains a source of great concern, particularly because of its condition and the increased risk of environmental disaster that it poses. It is high time that the Ansar Allah authorities assume their responsibility to avert an oil spill by granting without delay all necessary authorizations and guarantees to the United Nations team.

In conclusion, the Niger welcomes the appointment of Mr. Hans Grundberg as Special Envoy for Yemen and assures him of its full support for all his efforts to ensure a resumption of dialogue between the parties in Yemen and restore peace in the country.

Mr. Kvalheim (Norway): Norway would like to start by thanking the briefers. We join Council members in welcoming Mr. Griffiths back, now in his new capacity as head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). We extend a special thanks to Henrietta Fore of UNICEF for her remarks. Indeed, children are the main victims of war, and we thank UNICEF, as well as Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Gamba de Potgieter, in her briefing last month to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), for bringing attention to the war's horrific toll on children.

The United Nations has long characterized Yemen as the world's worst man-made humanitarian crisis. There is an urgent need for a nationwide ceasefire. A ceasefire would allow for much-needed humanitarian relief, the opening of roads to many parts of the country and children to safely attend school. We are therefore concerned about the offensive continuing in the area around Ma'rib and other parts of Yemen, worsening the already dire humanitarian situation. We continue to be worried about increasing tensions in the south and the lack of cooperation in accordance with the Riyadh agreement. Rivalry and fragmentation, whether in the south or on the west coast, only derail efforts to secure peace and stability.

It is clear that humanitarian needs are immense. Restrictions on imports through the Al-Hudaydah port continue, thereby contributing to severe fuel shortages and price increases. Restrictions on freedom of movement across the country and bureaucratic impediments are a real challenge for people in need of humanitarian aid and basic services. Despite the difficulties, I am glad to hear from OCHA that the United Nations is delivering aid to all provinces.

Norway is also concerned about reports from the World Health Organization of attacks on health-care workers and patients. Protecting the health, welfare and lives of health-care workers on the front line is critical to enabling a better humanitarian response. Additionally, camps for the growing population of internally displaced persons lack basic infrastructure and services. According to Save the Children, nine out of 10 children in camps for displaced persons do not have sufficient access to basics, such as food, clean water and education. Overall, we call on all actors to ensure immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

We welcome the appointment of Hans Grundberg as the new Special Envoy for Yemen and hope that he can push forward towards much-needed progress. Mr. Grundberg has Norway's full support, and we look forward to working with him. We would also like to once again stress the need for progress on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker issue and urge the Houthis to engage constructively with the United Nations and others to avert an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe.

Norway will also continue to advocate for an inclusive political process that prioritizes the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women. Indeed, participation should not be limited to those who resort to violence. The process must be Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-led, with regional actors and diverse Yemeni actors also playing a key role. Only a political solution can bring about lasting peace and prosperity in Yemen.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Khaled Khiari, Martin Griffiths and Henrietta Fore for their briefings. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work done by Martin Griffiths as Special Envoy for Yemen. I thank him for all his efforts and wish him all the best in his new role. I also welcome Ms. Fore to today's meeting. The plight of children in the armed conflict in Yemen deserves the Council's full attention.

We have repeatedly stated that only a political solution will bring an end to the war in Yemen. However, today the Houthis reject all solutions. Instead of seeking peace, they continue their offensive against Ma'rib and Saudi territory. We strongly condemn such actions. Instead of preventing an environmental, humanitarian and economic disaster, they continue to engage in unacceptable blackmail, refusing to allow the United Nations mission to inspect the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. It has been more than a year now. The Houthis must grant the United Nations immediate and unconditional access to the oil tanker.

Instead of allowing Yemeni children to return to school, they recruit and enrol them in summer camps, and make heavy use of them on the battlefield. We firmly condemn such acts and call for them to end. We call for respect for Security Council resolutions, including those on children in armed conflict and international humanitarian law. The Council must be ready to take the necessary measures. The Houthis must also engage in good-faith dialogue towards a political solution with

the new Special Envoy, Hans Grundberg. Of course, he can count on France's full support.

We know what is needed to end the crisis in Yemen — a comprehensive ceasefire, the reopening of Sana'a airport and the port of Al-Hudaydah and discussions on a comprehensive, inclusive political solution that will allow for the effective participation of women. Here in the Council, we have also repeatedly expressed our concerns about potential threats to Yemen's territorial integrity. We firmly reiterate that it must be fully respected.

So long as the Houthis reject peace, the Yemeni people will continue to suffer. We must do our utmost to ease the suffering of the 20 million people depending on humanitarian assistance, as Martin Griffiths recalled, including the more than 4 million displaced persons, of whom nearly 2 million are children. The risk of large-scale famine increases each day. We have a collective responsibility and moral duty to stop this humanitarian tragedy in its tracks.

We must do our utmost to accelerate the coronavirus disease vaccination campaign and enable equitable access to vaccinations. Now more than ever before, immediate, comprehensive, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access must be guaranteed to all persons in need, in particular in all Houthi-controlled areas.

Lastly, and we cannot stress this point enough, the protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical staff, must remain an absolute imperative. Arbitrary detentions, torture, gender-based sexual violence and the use of children in hostilities are intolerable. The perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law will not go unpunished.

France will remain fully mobilized to bring an end to the war in Yemen and resolve tensions in the region. The Council has in unison made its demands clear, and it is high time for them to be met.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Mohamed Khiari, Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and Executive Director Henrietta Fore for their briefings. We welcome Mr. Griffiths in his new capacity and wish him every success in his latest role. Lastly, I welcome the delegation of Yemen, here with us today.

We are again deeply concerned about the increase in violence. In addition to Ma'rib, pockets of fighting

continue to break out in several areas, including Abyan, Ad Dali', Al-Hudaydah, Lahij and Taiz. We also note the continuing attacks on Saudi targets.

Mexico welcomes the biannual report of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen. We call for the Group's inspection of the weapons seized near the Yemeni coast to be facilitated. We are deeply concerned about the numerous violations of international humanitarian law reflected in the report. We urge the parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, protect civilians, allow unhindered access to humanitarian assistance and promote respect for human rights, in particular with regard to vulnerable groups such as women and children.

We also express deep concern about the approximately 3,500 Houthi-run summer camps and centres for the recruitment of minors, which are attended by children as young as seven years old. Mexico calls upon Ansar Allah to put an end to such practices, which radicalize Yemeni youth. We would recall that instigation of and incitement to violence are a serious threat to peace, security and stability in Yemen and the region, and must therefore cease. We also note that, while recruitment by armed groups affects mostly boys, the number of girls who fall victim to sexual violence or are forced into early marriage continues to grow at an increasing rate.

Such actions not only jeopardize the peace and prosperity of future Yemeni generations but also represent serious violations of international humanitarian law. While we appreciate the coalition's commitment to ceasing and preventing violations against the rights of children, we urge it to redouble its efforts to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian law, as well as to further mechanisms to identify and bring to justice those guilty of crimes against children.

Mexico reiterates the importance that all parties to the conflict protect Yemeni children. Finally, we urge the continuation of efforts to strengthen cooperation among the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF.

On other issues, we applaud the efforts by Saudi Arabia and Oman, as well as the United States Special Envoy, to mediate between the parties. We emphasize

that the solution to the Yemeni conflict will not be by armed means but requires a nationwide ceasefire and a political process led by the Yemenis themselves. We therefore urge the Houthi leadership, as well as the other parties to the conflict, to participate constructively and actively in the United Nations-facilitated dialogue. We also stress that the broad participation of the various political, civil society and minority groups, including the full, equal and meaningful participation of Yemeni women, is indispensable to the political transition.

Unfortunately, we must reiterate our deep concern about the situation of the *FSO SAFER* tanker and the risk that it poses to the environment, humanitarian access and trade in general. Mexico urges Ansar Allah to cease obstructing the inspection of the vessel by United Nations technical bodies.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): The United States greatly appreciates today's informative briefing. We welcome Under-Secretary-General Griffiths back to this monthly meeting on Yemen in his new capacity. I also thank Executive Director Fore for her briefing and Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his update. We also welcome the participation of the Yemeni Government in this meeting today.

We warmly welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of Hans Grundberg as the United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen. The United States is eager to work with Special Envoy Grundberg as he consults widely with a broad cross-section of the Yemeni people. We look forward to his plan for the next stage of the United Nations peace efforts and to his briefing the Security Council soon. We were disappointed to hear today that there has been no progress on these talks since the last briefing by Assistant Secretary-General Khiari.

Today I would like to discuss three aspects of the conflict in Yemen: the need to put an end to all violence; the need to address the humanitarian crisis; and the need to address the underlying economic and fuel grievances exacerbating the conflict.

The new Special Envoy presents us with a real opportunity. The conflict in Yemen is a rare case where the Security Council and the international community share a broad consensus. We all agree that the fighting must end, and we all agree that a political path to peace, one with meaningful participation by women, minority leaders and civil society, must be pursued. Let us seize

this moment because time is precious and lives are being lost.

The Houthi offensive on Ma'rib has stalled but it has not become any less brutal. June was the deadliest month for civilians in nearly two years. That offensive is costly. We have all seen the images of Houthi missile strikes that killed women and children. We urgently need a nationwide ceasefire so that other areas of Yemen do not endure unnecessary violence and suffering.

The Saudi-led coalition and the Government of the Republic of Yemen have shown openness to a ceasefire but the Houthis seem determined to continue their military campaign. This is the moment to change their minds. Between the stalemate in Ma'rib, the appointment of a new United Nations Special Envoy and an unprecedented regional consensus on resolving the conflict, we have a valuable opportunity for dialogue. The parties must seize that opportunity and finally bring the conflict to an end.

Only a durable peace agreement between the Yemeni parties can begin to reverse the dire humanitarian situation facing Yemenis, with more than 2 million young Yemenis facing life-threatening malnutrition. To address that situation immediately, the United States announced nearly \$165 million in additional humanitarian assistance for Yemen earlier this month. That will support the World Food Programme in providing emergency food assistance for more than 11 million people every month.

We reiterate the call for other countries, especially those in the region, to increase their support for the United Nations Yemen humanitarian response plan, which remains severely underfunded. In that regard, I thank Qatar for its recent contribution of \$100 million to support humanitarian operations in Yemen.

We also cannot lose sight of another heartbreaking dimension of this conflict — the abuses that the Houthis continue to inflict on children. I thank Henrietta Fore for raising such concerns. The United States is alarmed by the latest reports of the Houthis' recruitment of thousands of children into military training and indoctrination camps. That threatens the country's long-term stability, but, more important, it is just plain wrong and gut-wrenching. Children are not warriors. That cannot continue, as Council members heard from the Executive Director of UNICEF. We must place children first and we must keep them safe, allowing them to pursue their education.

Finally, taking a step back, we must address the economic issues in Yemen because they are inextricably linked to the broader peace and humanitarian efforts. We cannot reach a durable solution to the conflict or adequately address food insecurity if the underlying economic grievances that have driven the conflict since its beginning are not addressed. Martin Griffiths laid out the concerns quite effectively, noting that 5 million people are on the verge of famine.

For the same reasons, the United States urges Saudi Arabia, the Yemeni Government and the Houthis to take steps to ensure that fuel is adequately imported and distributed throughout Yemen at a fair price. We again urge all parties to the Riyadh Agreement to redouble efforts aimed at its implementation and to return the Yemeni Government to Aden so that it can restore basic services and take steps to improve economic stability.

We continue to have grave concerns over the state of the *FSO SAFER* tanker, as the Council heard from other members today. With their delays and unreasonable demands, the Houthis have thus far squandered the opportunity that the United Nations has afforded them to avoid an environmental and economic calamity.

Despite all those challenges, I would like to end where I started — with a note of hope. We have a real opportunity here for peace in Yemen. Let us therefore stand together, our voices united as one Council, and do everything we can to support some of the world's most vulnerable people. Let us put an end to this terrible conflict.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I thank Mr. Khiari, Mr. Griffiths and Ms. Fore for their comprehensive briefings, and I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in our meeting today.

On the peace process, despite the increasing efforts of regional partners and the international community, we have not seen any progress in the negotiations of the relevant parties in Yemen. The continued fighting in parts of Yemen is one of the biggest obstacles to the peace process. Casualties, including women and children from all sides, have been on the rise in recent months.

In that context, we reiterate our view that there is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. Instead, all parties should heed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, in accordance with resolution

2532 (2020), and explore opportunities for face-to-face negotiations. It is also important to work closely with the new Special Envoy, regional partners and the international community on the United Nations-led peace proposal for Yemen.

On the humanitarian front, it is encouraging to learn about recent contributions from donors to the humanitarian work in Yemen. However, we would like to stress the importance of greater funding and increased reimbursement so that the humanitarian agencies are able to provide aid for those in need in the country for the rest of the year.

In addition, we remain concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in the country. Military escalation, economic crisis, food insecurity, famine risk, heavy rain, floods and subsequent displacement and the coronavirus disease pandemic have put Yemen in extremely difficult and miserable circumstances. Around 21 million people, including more than 11 million children, need humanitarian assistance. About 2.25 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition, and more than 2 million school-aged girls and boys are now out of school. In Ma'rib, at least 154 civilians have been killed and 21,500 people displaced since the beginning of 2021.

Against that backdrop, we would like to re-emphasize the importance of providing safe and unimpeded humanitarian access for those in need in Yemen. It is urgent to fully remove the sea blockade in order to ensure food and fuel supplies. Moreover, we reiterate our support for UNICEF's calls for all stakeholders in Yemen to uphold children's right to education and work together to achieve lasting and inclusive peace. All parties must also comply with international humanitarian law and implement resolution 2573 (2021), including the protection of civilian infrastructure.

On the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker issue, it is crucial now more than ever to turn commitments into actions. The United Nations technical team should be allowed to access the tanker without further delay. We cannot emphasize enough the threat that the tanker poses to the environment, economy and people in the region.

Last but not least, we believe that the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh agreement should be honoured and promoted.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I would like to thank today's briefers and welcome Mr. Martin Griffiths to the Chamber. It is good to see him here in his new role. I am always very happy to see Ms. Henrietta Fore in the Chamber.

I would also like to welcome the appointment earlier this month of Mr. Hans Grundberg as the new Special Envoy for Yemen. We look forward to working with him as he takes forward the crucial work of seeking solutions to this devastating crisis, building, of course, on the valiant and tireless efforts of Mr. Griffiths.

Regrettably, as we have heard from other speakers, the summer months in Yemen have seen a further deterioration of the political, security, human rights and humanitarian situations, with devastating consequences for the ordinary people in Yemen — the civilian population.

Ireland reiterates our firm conviction that there can be no military solution to this conflict. A nationwide ceasefire is urgently needed in order to open the way for inclusive negotiations on the badly needed political way forward. Such processes require the full, equal and meaningful participation of women.

Ireland also calls for the full implementation of the Riyadh agreement and for all parties to set their differences aside and, finally, to act in the interests of the Yemeni people. We reiterate our strong support for the unity Government of Yemen and call on all sides to resume dialogue, with the aim of the safe return of the Government to Aden.

The continued absence of any women in the cabinet is very regrettable. We hope that this issue will be addressed in the very near future. The voice of Yemeni women in finding a pathway to peace is critical. We will return to this point again and again until it is done.

I repeat Ireland's call for all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as for accountability for crimes committed against the Yemeni people, which is critical for any lasting peace.

The briefing we just heard from Ms. Henrietta Fore, taken together with recent reports, lays bare the devastating combined impact of war and poverty on the innocent children of Yemen. I will not repeat the horrifying facts and figures. They are staggering and all too familiar by now. They make clear that Yemeni

children, particularly girls, remain the primary victims of this horrific crisis.

As we approach the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, we are reminded that every child should have a desk where they can learn in safety and security and begin to build a brighter future for themselves, their family and their country. We know that when girls have access to education, they are empowered and equipped to participate fully in political and social life in later years and to break devastating cycles of violence, conflict and poverty.

It is therefore shameful that more than 2 million Yemeni children are currently out of school; that a harrowing 70 per cent of Yemeni girls are married while still children, which automatically denies those girls access to education; and that schools in Yemen continue to be attacked and used for military purposes.

Ireland fully supports the critical work of UNICEF in addressing those vitally important issues, including in providing access to education and in supporting teachers and school staff whose salaries have gone unpaid for many years.

Ireland remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the protracted conflict in Yemen, further compounded by the continuing violence across the country and the serious economic pressures that Yemenis currently face.

Today, we heard again from Under-Secretary-General Griffiths that the humanitarian and economic crises in Yemen are conflict-driven. The lack of fuel entering Al-Hudaydah port directly and indirectly affects the ability of millions of Yemenis to access food. Rising fuel prices means rising food prices. The only food on shelves in Yemen today is food that few can afford. Let us not forget that the effects of famine, horrific as they are, are not only immediate, but also intergenerational. The effects are intergenerational. The effects of stunting and education lost will undermine the ability of Yemenis to rebuild their country once this brutal conflict finally ends. In other words, Yemen's future will be marked for decades to come by famine. We call for the lifting of restrictions of imports into Al-Hudaydah port, the payment of civil servant salaries and the preserving and strengthening of critical humanitarian access to all those in need.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Mohamed Khaled Khiari,

Mr. Martin Griffiths and Ms. Henrietta Fore for their valuable briefings on the situation in Yemen. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen at this meeting.

The multidimensional crisis in Yemen has been ongoing for several years. The security, living, humanitarian and health conditions in the country have continued to deteriorate. Despite diplomatic efforts, the fighting goes on in many regions, while the prospect of a political solution has stalled and the parties to the conflict insist on the military option. That has led to thousands of deaths, millions of displaced Yemenis, the wide-scale destruction of infrastructure and an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and recent flooding have further exacerbated the situation.

In that context, Tunisia reiterates its firm position that military options will only lead to greater suffering for the Yemeni people and that ending the crisis can be achieved only through a political settlement based on an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and the active engagement of the parties to the conflict in a political dialogue that first and foremost prioritizes the interests of Yemen and leads to a settlement that restores security and stability in Yemen while preserving its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Furthermore, Tunisia stresses the need for the political process to be inclusive and for women and youth to actively participate in it.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Hans Grundberg as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and we underscore our support for continued United Nations, international and regional efforts to end the hostilities and launch the political process and negotiations among the parties to the conflict. We also emphasize the need to end military operations, in particular the Houthi attack on Ma'rib governorate, as they further complicate the crisis and jeopardize civilian lives. We reiterate Tunisia's condemnation of the repeated attacks by the Houthis on the territory of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and we call for an end to be put to such attacks. In addition, we stress that the parties must refrain from attacking civilians and respect their commitments in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen is a source of deep concern. Living and economic conditions continue to deteriorate, as we have heard

from Mr. Martin Griffiths, and the health situation continues to worsen because of the COVID-19 and other pandemics and diseases in addition to the decline in purchasing power and the deteriorating food situation. Millions of Yemenis are at risk of famine, and millions of children are suffering from acute malnutrition. Furthermore, more than 2 million school-age children are unable to attend school, and internal displacement is continuing. That has very serious implications at different levels today and will continue to do so in future. In that context, we reiterate the need to allow unimpeded access for humanitarian and medical assistance and to open seaports and airports for the delivery of basic living necessities to the Yemeni people. We also emphasize the importance of providing the necessary funding for humanitarian operations in particular, as the number of persons reliant on such humanitarian assistance continues to increase and as living conditions continue to deteriorate amid the continuing military operations, leading to displacement and the destruction of infrastructure.

The continued presence of the *FSO SAFER* even as its structure deteriorates threatens an unprecedented environmental, economic and humanitarian disaster in the region. Therefore, we call on the Houthis to facilitate the necessary measures for the arrival of international experts to carry out the necessary technical inspection and repairs as soon as possible.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): Let me begin by welcoming Mr. Martin Griffiths, in his new capacity as the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, with whom we look forward to working. We also thank Assistant Secretary-General Mohamed Khaled Khiari and UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore for their briefings. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in this meeting. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Hans Grundberg on his appointment as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. We wish him every success and assure him of our cooperation.

However we look at it, the protracted conflict in Yemen has no winners — only losers. Those who lose the most are the vulnerable — children, youth, women and the elderly, whose daily prayer is for an end to the ravaging civil war, a return of peace and, with it, the opportunity to rebuild their lives and regain their ability to fend for themselves.

The continuing lack of progress on the political track, including the stalled ceasefire talks, is disappointing. It is reflective of the failure of the parties to prioritize the needs of their own people. We appeal to all Yemeni stakeholders to realize that there is no military solution to the conflict. The time has come for them to engage in soul-searching and participate constructively in an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned process, with the support of the United Nations as well as regional and international partners.

In such a process, the parties must be willing to make the compromises necessary to break the existing stalemate and achieve a working nationwide ceasefire within an agreed time frame and, ultimately, a sustainable, negotiated political solution to the conflict. We remain disturbed about the escalation of fighting in Ma'rib, Abyan, Al-Bayda, Al-Hudaydah, Al-Jawf, Taiz and other areas. Of particular concern is the fact that some parties have resorted to recruiting children to fight in those battles. I reiterate Kenya's condemnation of the use of children in military trainings or on the front lines of battle, or even exposing them to weapons of war.

The congratulatory message sent by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula to the Taliban is an indicator of the fact that the recent events in Afghanistan could inspire and embolden jihadist groups in the region and beyond. It is important that the Security Council respond in a united and assertive manner to counter such threats globally.

Kenya is gravely concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation, including the heightened risk of famine affecting more than 20 million people. We continue to support calls for not only increased humanitarian assistance but also guarantees for humanitarian access. Special attention should, in this regard, be accorded to addressing the surge in coronavirus disease infections.

We are also concerned by suffering of millions of children, including the more than 2 million who remain out of school owing to the protracted conflict. That will affect their ability to have meaningful livelihoods and instead serve as a reservoir for recruitment by armed and terrorist groups.

Kenya commends the efforts undertaken by UNICEF to ensure the continuity of learning for children in Yemen. We call on the international community to enhance support for the education sector, including by

ensuring that teachers receive their salaries and are enabled to continue teaching.

We condemn any attacks on, or conversion of, civilian infrastructure such as schools and health facilities for military use. We urge the concerned parties to desist from such and allow the boys and girls of Yemen to receive medical care, education and other services necessary to their well-being.

The increasing number of mysterious attacks using water-borne improvised explosives and other explosive devices on ships off the coast of Yemen and other nearby waters are deeply concerning. Such acts threaten the safety of international shipping and navigation, with a possible costly disruption of international trade and commerce affecting the region and beyond.

On this note, it is disappointing that little progress has been made towards resolving the situation around the *FSO SAFER* tanker. Once again, we call on the Houthis to engage constructively in finding a solution and avert an environmental catastrophe.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Kenya's solidarity with the people of Yemen. We support efforts to find innovative ways of helping them to surmount their challenges in order to rebuild their country and their lives.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari, Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Executive Director Fore for their respective briefings. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen at this meeting.

No progress has been made in alleviating Yemen's economic and humanitarian crisis or its political and security challenges. The Yemeni people, especially Yemeni children, are still suffering a great deal. All parties in Yemen and the international community must step up their efforts to find a way out of the current predicament.

First, a comprehensive ceasefire must be achieved as soon as possible, and the peace process must be resumed at an early date. A military solution is not an option for Yemen; a political solution is the only way to overcome the crisis there. The Secretary-General recently appointed a new Special Envoy for Yemen of whom all parties have high expectations. We hope that Special Envoy Grundberg, upon assumption of his new function, will perform his duties objectively and impartially in accordance with his mandate, fully

listen to the views of all parties, actively respond to the concerns of the international community to promote the implementation of Security Council resolutions, strive to achieve a comprehensive ceasefire at an early date and make progress in dialogues and peace talks. China has always supported the work of the Special Envoy and looks forward to Mr. Grundberg's briefing to the Council on his work plan and considerations as soon as possible.

Secondly, we must give full play to the role of the countries of the region and create synergy so as to promote peace talks. Recently, the countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia and Oman, have continued to engage in mediation efforts, for which China expresses its appreciation. The United Nations and the countries in the region should compare notes on their good offices in a timely fashion and strengthen coordination and cooperation. Countries with important influence on Yemen should continue to play an active and constructive role to promote mutual trust among all parties to the conflict and adhere to the general direction of a political settlement.

China has always actively supported and constructively participated in the Yemeni peace process. When State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Wang Yi visited the countries in the region in the first half of this year, he put forward a five-point initiative on achieving peace and stability in the Middle East. China stands ready to maintain communication and close coordination with all parties on the five-point initiative in a concerted effort to seek peace, build security and promote development in the Middle East.

Thirdly, we must scale up international humanitarian assistance to ease difficulties in Yemen's economy and people's livelihood. The Yemeni people are suffering from the many-faceted distress of war, famine, pandemic and flooding. China notes that the Yemeni Government has taken tailored measures and made active efforts to restore the economy, stabilize the currency and protect people's livelihood. China appreciates and supports those efforts. The international community, especially donors, should honour its commitments and increase assistance and support to Yemen. All parties to the conflict in Yemen should provide safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to ensure that channels for humanitarian assistance remain open and conditions conducive to easing the humanitarian situation are established.

Last but not least, with regard to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, China once again urges the Houthis to strengthen communication with the relevant United Nations agencies and provide United Nations technical personnel with cooperation and access as soon as possible to prevent an avoidable economic, humanitarian and marine environmental catastrophe.

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

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their briefings. In particular, allow me to welcome Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths to our meeting in his new role. I thank the Executive Director of UNICEF, Henrietta Fore, for sharing her insights on the situation of children in Yemen. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting today.

The continued military escalation in Ma'rib has triggered counteroffensive operations in other provinces of Yemen. Violent clashes continue to rage along multiple front lines across Yemen, which have undermined the prospects of peace in the country. We call on all parties to refrain from military action that could lead to a further escalation of hostilities. We also reiterate the importance of the full implementation of the Stockholm and Riyadh agreements, which is an essential requirement for maintaining calm and stability in Yemen. Countries in the region are also encouraged to continue their efforts, and we support efforts in that direction.

While the security situation remains precarious, the humanitarian situation worsens with every passing day. The recent rise in coronavirus disease infections and deaths has triggered fears of a third wave of the pandemic. The recent torrential rains and widespread flooding have resulted in the loss of life and property, and consequently worsened the humanitarian situation in the country. All those developments only underscore the need for regular, predictable and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance and adequate funding for humanitarian operations on an urgent basis. India calls for enhanced and effective humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni population throughout the country without any discrimination.

We heard from the Executive Director of UNICEF about the grave impact of the protracted conflict on Yemeni children. Women and children have suffered

the most during these long years of conflict in Yemen. Around 1.7 million children have been uprooted from their homes and displaced multiple times. The ongoing conflict has also deprived them of access to immediate basic medical care, safe water and sanitation. The education of children in Yemen has also been severely disrupted. The forcible recruitment of children and their indoctrination through camps remain a cause for concern. If that situation continues, it will have a long-lasting impact on an entire generation in Yemen, as well as on the future of Yemen.

The recent oil spill created by the *Dia* oil tanker off the coast of Aden is a pertinent reminder of the urgent redressal of the situation surrounding the *FSO SAFER* tanker. An oil spill in the Red Sea as a result of *FSO SAFER*'s dilapidated condition would have a far more serious and long-lasting environmental and humanitarian impact on Yemen and the region. We therefore strongly support the call for urgent access to the *FSO SAFER* tanker for the United Nations team.

The time has come for the international community, in particular the Council, to step up its efforts for an immediate cessation of hostilities. As a long-standing friend of Yemen, with historical ties that have been nurtured and strengthened over centuries, India reiterates its call for an urgent nationwide ceasefire, followed by a robust and inclusive political process, with full respect for Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Only such an approach can result in enduring peace in Yemen.

In that regard, we welcome the appointment of Hans Grundberg of Sweden as the new Special Envoy for Yemen and hope that he will infuse new momentum into the negotiations, which have reached a stalemate. We urge all parties in Yemen to immediately end the fighting and engage with the Special Envoy in good faith without any preconditions, for the well-being of the Yemeni people.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. I wish you and your friendly delegation every success in your tasks. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent

Representative of France, for a successful presidency last month.

I thank my dear brother Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing and welcome Mr. Martin Griffiths, who is present with us today and briefed us on the most recent developments on the humanitarian situation in Yemen since he assumed his new post. I wish him every success. We stand ready to cooperate with him so as to ensure success in his upcoming tasks.

The Government of Yemen once again welcomes the appointment of Mr. Hans Grundberg as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. He has our full support in his efforts to resume the political process and reach a comprehensive political solution to put an end to the coup d'état and war fuelled by the Houthi militias. We call for recent efforts to continue and be built upon while discouraging any new tracks and ideas that would prolong the suffering of the Yemeni people without investing in the achievements registered to date. I would also like to thank Ms. Henrietta Fore for her briefing.

Our Yemeni people cannot endure any more humanitarian suffering or additional burdens. Houthi militias, supported by the Iranian regime, continue with their destructive approach and aggression against the country and its social fabric. They continue with their intransigence and arrogance while rejecting all regional and international solutions and initiatives aimed at bringing about a comprehensive and lasting peace. Houthi militias continue their military escalation against cities and camps for displaced persons while targeting civilians and civilian locations in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Government of Yemen, represented by His Excellency Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi, President of the Republic, underscores once again its eagerness to put an end to the conflict, which has led to the worst humanitarian crisis and to the displacement of millions of Yemeni people. We have responded positively to the various options and endeavours to bring about peace and end this loathsome and absurd war in order to maintain the security, unity and stability of Yemen and ease the humanitarian suffering.

We have agreed to compromise in order to stop the bloodshed among the people of Yemen and reach a comprehensive political settlement, in line with the political terms of reference agreed, namely the Gulf

Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the Comprehensive National Dialogue and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). Those terms of reference are the basis for a genuine national partnership and peaceful coexistence among all segments of the Yemeni population. They pave the way for a new and democratic Yemen.

In that regard, we stress the need for the international community and the Security Council to shoulder their responsibilities and bring pressure to bear on the Houthi militias to choose peace and stop the escalation of violence and killing of Yemenis. The lack of decisive action has encouraged the militias to continue the war and reject peace initiatives and any engagement with the international community and the Security Council. We look forward to productive regional and international efforts to reach a political solution in Yemen, with positive results that would meet the aspirations of the Yemeni people for stability, security and development while easing the humanitarian suffering that they have endured since the coup d'état perpetrated by the Houthi militias in 2014. All Yemeni people want to live in peace and enjoy stability and prosperity. They would like to overcome the current challenges caused by the coup d'état and move towards reconstruction while addressing the economic and humanitarian impacts of the conflict.

The Houthi militias have used Al-Hudaydah and its ports as a base from which to prepare and launch booby-trapped vessels that are controlled remotely and to plant sea mines, in addition to engaging in piracy. That constitutes a threat to regional and international peace and security, in particular because it targets, in an unprecedented manner, international navigation and trade routes, which, in turn, affects global energy security on one of the most important international maritime waterways in the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandab Strait. Those militias also use the Stockholm Agreement to destabilize Yemen and the region while targeting civilians and civilian locations in Al-Hudaydah, where scores of attempted attacks by Houthi militias supported by the Iranian regime have been thwarted. The militias impose limitations and place obstacles to obstruct the work of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA). The Government has stressed before the Council in many occasions the need to move UNMHA

headquarters from Houthi-controlled areas so that it can discharge its mandate.

The continued attacks by the Houthi militias on Ma'rib governorate and the systematic targeting of civilians and camps for internally displaced persons using ballistic missiles, drones and various heavy weapons have led to increased suffering of the more than 2 million displaced people. They have also led to the killing of civilians, the majority of them women and children, in addition to the daily killings perpetrated by those militias using heavy and medium weaponry on inhabited areas in Tazz. Snipers have also targeted civilians, causing a significant number of casualties. Those represent crimes against humanity and a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We call upon the international community and human rights organizations to shoulder their legal and ethical responsibilities with regard to such systematic crimes against civilians and internally displaced persons, which aim to thwart international efforts to bring about peace. We also call upon the Security Council to assume its role, stop such attacks, alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people and push towards a political solution to end the conflict.

Houthi militias are also obstructing relief efforts by international organizations and United Nations agencies in areas under their control. They are adopting starvation policies while disregarding the humanitarian suffering and the loss of livelihoods of millions of Yemenis. The militias are exploiting the tragic situation of Yemenis to mislead the international community. We call for an end to such practices in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches the millions who are in need. We also call for an end to attempts by the militias to widen the scope of the humanitarian disaster.

The considerable efforts made by the Yemeni Government to alleviate the destructive economic repercussions of the war are insufficient. In that regard, we reiterate the call to the international community to contribute by providing urgent support to the Government's efforts and by assisting its measures and plans to achieve economic stability and prevent the dangerous consequences of the growing humanitarian disaster. That would be achieved by supporting the efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national economy and prevent the collapse of the national currency by taking many measures, such as establishing a mechanism for the disbursement

of donor funds for relief work in Yemen through the Central Bank of Yemen, which would help to support the value of the national currency and economic stability, as well as by including development priorities and needs in all humanitarian interventions towards achieving an early recovery by focusing on community economic activities, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and shifting from relief work to supporting development areas and the productive and economic sectors.

The Yemeni Government holds the Houthi militias fully responsible for any damage caused by the floating *FSO SAFER* oil tanker after they obstructed the arrival of the United Nations technical team to conduct an assessment and maintenance operations. We warn against the worst disaster in the Red Sea,

which would have serious economic, humanitarian and environmental consequences in the event of the largest oil spill in history due to the repeated rejection by the Houthis. It would damage the ecosystems in the Red Sea, lead to a collapse of the fishing sector in the region and affect international shipping lanes and the global economy. We once again call on the United Nations to step up its efforts to reach the tanker and carry out the necessary measures without delay before the occurrence of that impending disaster.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion on the subject in closed consultations.

The meeting rose at noon.