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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Baeriswyl	(Switzerland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Gaouaoui
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
	France	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Japan	Mrs. Shino
	Malta	Mr. Camilleri
	Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Najat Jumaan, professor and board member of the Jumaan Trading and Investment Company.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: As I address the Council today, the military escalation in the Middle East that we have now been witnessing for a year keeps intensifying and risks spiralling out of control. Countless lives have been lost, and pain and sorrow have spread through the region as hopes for progress seem distant. Regrettably, Yemen is part of that escalation, and risks being dragged further in. During this period, the safety of United Nations personnel has been increasingly at risk. It has been a particularly difficult year for United Nations personnel in the region. In Yemen, Ansar Allah continues to hold United Nations personnel, civil society workers and staff of diplomatic missions in arbitrary detention. With all that said, I echo the urgent call of the Secretary-General — an immediate ceasefire and regional de-escalation are needed to halt the widening conflict.

Yemen and its people are already feeling the impact of the escalating regional conflict. Since my previous briefing to the Council (see S/PV.9723), Ansar Allah has continued its attacks on international shipping and has made multiple attempts to target Israel with missiles and drones. Those repeated attacks, including the recent strikes on tankers, have significantly increased the risk of an environmental disaster such as the one

that was narrowly avoided after the attack on the *MV Sounion*. Such attacks on civilian shipping are wholly unacceptable and must cease immediately. The Red Sea is a global waterway, and it should be a safe passageway for the benefit of all. In response to those attacks, there have been United States-led air strikes on four Yemeni governorates, as well as Israeli strikes on Al-Hudaydah. The reports of casualties in Al-Hudaydah and damage to the city's critical infrastructure are concerning. That cycle of retaliation is pulling Yemen deeper into the regional conflict, jeopardizing its hopes for peace and stability. Moreover, it distracts from the urgent need to address Yemen's own international crisis.

Yemenis continue to yearn and work for peace after more than nine years of a conflict that has ravaged the country, displaced millions, separated families and shattered their economy. And yet they are still seeing their space for meaningful engagement and peacebuilding under attack, with arbitrary detentions, death threats and intimidation, especially in areas controlled by Ansar Allah. I call on Ansar Allah to immediately and unconditionally release all who have been arbitrarily detained, who include 17 United Nations personnel, four of them women and one of whom is from my own team, and to end the campaign of detentions. I am counting on the support of the Council in sending that clear message.

I recently spoke with several civil society organizations, women's groups, activists and local peacemakers, and they told me how deeply they have been affected by the latest wave of Ansar Allah's arbitrary detentions, which are compounded by vague and false accusations and a total lack of any due process, with the aim of tarnishing reputations and creating a climate of fear and mistrust. The latest reported referral of some of the detained to so-called criminal prosecution is a further blow to our collective efforts to build peace and stability in Yemen. I have repeatedly told Ansar Allah that such actions do not signal an interest in negotiating peace. Civil society actors and human rights defenders continue to play a critical role in addressing the urgent humanitarian needs and fostering social cohesion. They deserve strong protection measures and international support so that they can continue their work safely.

Since my last briefing to the Council, I have engaged in constructive discussions with Yemeni and international stakeholders during visits to New York, Tehran and Moscow. In addition to requesting support for the release of the detained, my engagements have

reaffirmed two critical messages that I want to share with the Council. First, not only is a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Yemen the most viable way forward, but more importantly it is definitely achievable. Secondly, the Yemeni people require sustained and unified international support, and we must collectively keep the focus on making peace a reality. Those are not mere aspirations. We have the elements and the tools to prepare the ground, and I would therefore like to elaborate on that.

First, we have the commitments made by the parties towards the establishment of a road map, including instituting a nationwide ceasefire, addressing humanitarian and economic needs and preparing for an inclusive political process. Despite the escalation, those commitments remain the essential building blocks for peace in Yemen, and the reference points for our discussions with the parties. In support of such discussions, this month my office initiated political dialogue sessions with Yemeni political party representatives and components, as well as civil society organizations, with the meaningful participation of women and young people.

Secondly, on the military front we have relative calm on the front lines, despite occasional flare-ups that remind us of the fragility of the situation. Communication channels with senior military leadership through the Military Coordination Committee remain active, reinforcing the message that the groundwork laid now will be critical to ensuring the stability of a future ceasefire and other security arrangements. We recently hosted a delegation from the Government of Yemen to plan and prepare for the nationwide ceasefire mechanism, and we hope to hold additional sessions with Ansar Allah and other relevant partners soon.

Thirdly, on the economic front, we have identified options at the technical level and are working to convince the parties that collaboration on economic issues is the only way to achieve economic viability and stability. We remain in close contact with key stakeholders, particularly in the banking sector, where the potential collapse of a major commercial bank highlights the urgent need for cooperation.

Let me be clear. The tools are there, and I urge the parties to demonstrate the necessary will and to put the needs of Yemenis first. In that regard, I am looking forward to the briefing of Ms. Jumaan. As we mark the anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on

women and peace and security, we must acknowledge the immense burden that Yemeni women continue to carry in the conflict, and we must recognize their bravery. Yemeni women have been at the forefront in driving peacebuilding efforts for years, and it is now more crucial than ever to amplify their voices. I call on all the parties to ensure that women are empowered to shape the decisions that will pave the way for lasting peace in Yemen. To support that, my Office, in partnership with UN-Women, has held specific consultations with more than 400 Yemeni women and men to advance a vision for an inclusive peace process in Yemen. The consultations aim to achieve the meaningful inclusion of women in negotiations and to lay the foundations for more inclusive and sustainable peace. Those efforts reinforce our commitment to enhancing women's direct participation across all tracks of the peace process.

My Office remains steadfast in pursuing every opportunity for peace in Yemen. The parties must demonstrate their commitments to peace through meaningful actions, including the immediate release of all who have been arbitrarily detained. The need for unity and purpose in and on Yemen has never been greater. I want to underscore again that despite the broader regional conflict, peace in Yemen is still achievable, and we must remain focused on making that a reality. The Council carries the hopes of the global community that conflicts can be resolved through international collaboration and diplomacy. As Special Envoy for Yemen, I want to convey the expectations of the Yemeni people and to urge the Council to unite in stopping the bloodshed and supporting every effort to bring peace to a region in desperate need of it.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Msuya.

Ms. Msuya: I thank Special Envoy Grunberg for his briefing and for his tireless efforts on behalf of the people of Yemen.

I would like to start once again by demanding the immediate and unconditional release of the United Nations personnel, staff of non-governmental organizations and members of civil society who have been arbitrarily detained by the Houthis since June of this year, as well as those of our United Nations colleagues who have been detained since 2021 and 2023. We categorically reject the allegations levelled against our colleagues. United Nations personnel should never

be arrested or detained because of the work they do in carrying out our mandate.

I therefore echo the extreme concern expressed by the principals of the organizations affected in a statement on Saturday, 12 October about the de facto Houthi authorities' reported referral to criminal prosecution of a significant number of our arbitrarily detained colleagues, including three United Nations personnel, two from UNESCO and one from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who were detained in 2021 and 2023. The possibility that charges might be brought against our colleagues is unacceptable. The arbitrary detention of humanitarian personnel and the false accusations made against them continue to significantly hinder our ability to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance in Yemen. The detentions reflect a growing and unacceptable pattern of attacks against humanitarian actors across the region. Humanitarian relief personnel must be protected, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Throughout the past month the United Nations has engaged in constant diplomatic efforts with the Houthi de facto authorities and other interlocutors for the release of those who have been arbitrarily detained, including during the high-level week of the General Assembly. I am thankful for the strong support we have received from Member States, including key countries in the region, and we also very much welcome the continuing commitment by Member States and donors to supporting humanitarian assistance across Yemen. As of today, thanks to the continued advocacy, we have confirmed that a majority of the detained United Nations staff have had contact with their families or relatives and those requiring medical care have received it. We continue to stress that our colleagues must be treated humanely and with full respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, including with regard to judicial guarantees, as applicable.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my condolences to the families of at least 48 migrants who recently lost their lives off the coast of Djibouti. We understand that they were returning from Yemen to Djibouti when they were forced off their vessel in the open sea by smugglers. According to our colleagues at the International Organization for Migration, 57 other people who were on board are still missing. The United Nations is supporting authorities in Djibouti with search-and-rescue operations. To date, 197 people

have been rescued and are receiving medical and psychosocial support. The year 2024 is now the deadliest ever for migrants crossing the sea between the Horn of Africa and Yemen. That incident is a tragic reminder of the dangers faced by migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers along such migration routes. Ultimately, those are challenges that require regional solutions.

We are deeply concerned about the impact on Yemen's humanitarian crisis of the rapidly deteriorating situation across the Middle East. We are very alarmed by the ongoing attacks from and on Yemen that have damaged critical infrastructure, including energy and port infrastructure in Al-Hudaydah and Ras Issa. Both ports remain operational and able to receive commercial and humanitarian imports. However, power stations throughout the city of Al-Hudaydah are running at very limited capacity. In response, the United Nations is providing support to health facilities to ensure the continuation of essential services. We would like to remind everyone that all parties must respect their obligations under international law, and we reiterate the Secretary-General's calls for the greatest possible restraint and for all concerned to avoid attacks that could harm civilians or damage civilian infrastructure. Infrastructure that is indispensable to the survival of the population must be spared. Yemen's Red Sea ports are lifelines for millions of people across the country. It is vital that they remain open and operational.

Against a backdrop of regional escalation, the humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to worsen both in scale and severity. Hunger continues to increase. In August, the numbers of people who do not have enough to eat soared to unprecedented levels, and severe levels of food deprivation have doubled in areas controlled by the Houthi de facto authorities since last year. Cholera also continues to spread. Since March, more than 203,000 suspected cases have been reported and more than 720 people have died, with women and girls accounting for 53 per cent of the cases, and our partners expect the number of cases to double between now and March 2025. The humanitarian community remains determined to deliver at scale for the 18.2 million people in need.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Member States and the donor community for their ongoing generous support to the humanitarian response in Yemen. The humanitarian appeal for Yemen is currently 41 per cent funded. However, critical response sectors need urgent additional funding. The food security

sector urgently needs an additional \$870 million. Without that, an estimated 9 million people across Yemen will not receive emergency food aid in the last quarter of 2024. Women and children, internally displaced persons and other marginalized groups will bear the brunt of the resulting spread of hunger, including heightened protection risks and long-term health consequences. Funding for the cholera response has already run out. Health partners have been forced to close 21 of 75 diarrhoea treatment centres and 97 of 423 oral rehydration centres. It is estimated that 70 per cent of the remaining diarrhoea treatment centres and 42 per cent of the remaining oral rehydration centres will close by December if urgent funding is not received. Long-term funding for gender-based violence programmes is also a critical requirement. That is a sector that remains chronically underfunded, with deep, lasting effects on women and girls' safety, dignity and mental health.

For too long, civilians in Yemen have suffered because of factors beyond their control. They have endured a devastating, decade-long conflict that has upended livelihoods, decimated Yemen's economy and driven millions of people into poverty and despair. Now their hopes for a brighter future, like those of many others in the Middle East, are falling under the shadow of a potentially catastrophic regional conflagration. The only way out is to redouble the efforts for sustainable peace. I once again commend Special Envoy Grundberg for his steadfast efforts in that regard, and I urge Member States to do everything they can to support him and to push for a resumption of the peace process and an urgent de-escalation across the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Msuya for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Jumaan.

Ms. Jumaan (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for inviting me to speak to the Security Council. I am grateful to the Council for its interest in listening to a voice from the private sector in Yemen. And I am grateful to all the Council members for the invitation and their interest in listening to the voice of the Yemeni people. The recent developments in Yemen emphasize that it is time that their voices were heard as they all aspire to achieving a human degree of well-being.

The war in Yemen erupted several years ago, and the speed and complexity of the events undermined the business environment and affected the economy in

general and the private sector in particular. That was followed by another period of conflict that was fought using various complex economic means, making the war even more devastating and worsening its effect on the economy and on the morale of Yemenis. The war's significant impact on Yemen's economy directly affected the private sector, with much of its infrastructure destroyed, including factories, warehouses and the vehicles used to transport goods between cities, resulting in heavy losses on the financial, human and economic fronts. Nonetheless, the private sector continued to play its national, social, humanitarian and economic role. We held on to our staff and continued to pay employees while shouldering our social responsibility by providing those affected with money and support, in view of the fact that after the war began economic activities were either reduced or brought to a complete halt.

In the war's second phase, the combatants have been using other instruments of economic warfare that have been even more devastating for the economy, including clear divisions of sovereign institutions such as the Central Bank, the country's Ministries of Finance and Communications and Yemen's national airline. That has also been evident in the division of monetary policies, the rise in foreign exchange rates, the division of financial authorities, the multiplicity and duplication of taxes and the doubling of customs duties. Moreover, the crisis in 2024 has affected our commercial, Islamic and microfinance banks, leading to an increase in accreditation costs and a refusal by international financial institutions to deal with Yemeni banks and by global companies to deal with our private sector. We lack capital and are facing the emigration of young people and skilled workers, including doctors, engineers and university professors. Many of those who had capital also left and decided to invest abroad, denying our society investment for development. And there are other challenges, such as a lack of transportation between major cities due to restrictions on people's movement and the closing of roads that are important for domestic trade and the circulation of goods and citizens among Yemeni cities and villages. That has created a war economy that benefits the armed groups and is depriving the Yemeni people of a better future.

Furthermore, the international conflict over the Red Sea has created a difficult economic environment for the private sector's economic and investment

activities. That has led to a drop in imports of basic commodities, including food and medicine, and to increases in the cost of international transportation and marine insurance. On top of that are the delays created in the entry of goods into the Yemeni markets, which have pushed up the prices of basic commodities, and the reluctance of foreign investors to invest in Yemen.

Yemen's involvement in the international conflict has hindered the ability of Yemenis' to reach solutions for achieving a lasting and just peace. The conflict and attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea, and the fact that some countries have responded by attacking Yemen, have made it difficult for Yemenis to realize the solutions mediated by the United Nations, represented Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, who is working diligently to achieve positive results in the efforts to reach a peace agreement that will bring stability for Yemen and the Yemenis. But there are ways to alleviate the economic burdens on the Yemenis, which I would like to summarize in the following concluding points.

First, we urge the Yemeni parties, the international community and the countries sponsoring peace to support the efforts of Mr. Grundberg, who is working for peace.

Secondly, we urge the United Nations to fulfil the efforts to implement what was agreed on in July and thereby achieve more comprehensive economic stability.

Thirdly, we urge the countries sponsoring peace and the Special Envoy to support the ongoing negotiations by civil society organizations aimed at opening roads and allowing safe movement of Yemenis and the transport of goods.

Fourthly, we urge the parties and the international community to engage all segments of Yemeni society and stakeholders in the peace process, including the private sector, women and young people, with the aim of achieving justice, equal opportunity, a fair distribution of wealth and a balance of power and authority, without focusing on some groups at the expense of others.

Fifthly, we urge the countries sponsoring peace and the United Nations to support the Yemeni institutions working to achieve peace in Yemen through the development of programmes and increasing their participation and effectiveness in the economic, social and humanitarian sectors in a way that fosters the achievement and maintenance of peace.

Sixthly, we urge the international community to support Yemen in obtaining the necessary funds and managing public financial resources in order to pay salaries, finance basic services, invest in infrastructure, improve vocational training and begin the country's recovery and reconstruction process.

Lastly, we urge the international community to help Yemen mobilize the necessary financial resources for recovery and reconstruction as essential factors for economic development, so that the private sector and its institutions can become part of the restoration and building process while establishing a reconstruction fund that aims to mobilize and allocate those funds to development projects.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Jumaan for her briefing.

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

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Jumaan for their briefings and for their work for peace. I want to make three points.

I would like to start by highlighting the pressing humanitarian need across all of Yemen, as our briefers have already done. Unimpeded humanitarian access is vital to the ability to deliver critical life-saving assistance to Yemenis. It is crucial to ensure that all humanitarian, United Nations and diplomatic staff are free from intimidation and threats if they are to operate safely and securely. The detention of aid workers by the Houthis has continued for 130 days, and we now understand that the detainees may face a so-called judicial process. The use of special political courts will not result in fair outcomes for the detainees. We therefore call again on the Houthis to immediately and unconditionally release the people they have detained, and to provide an appropriate operating environment for humanitarians. We call on the international community to stand united in calling for the immediate release of those detained.

Secondly, for an import-dependent country such as Yemen, commercial imports are critical to the livelihoods of its people. The Houthis' imports of weapons, in violation of the arms embargo, risk undermining the ability of humanitarian and commercial entities to import goods and are yet another demonstration of

their clear disregard for the welfare of the Yemeni people. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM) is key to facilitating those vital imports, and we urge international donors to work together to provide adequate and predictable funding to strengthen UNVIM's inspection capacity and ability to prevent the flow of weapons.

Thirdly and finally, we call on the Houthis to avoid dragging Yemen into a regional conflict through its continued attacks on Israel. It is vital that we bring that cycle of violence to an end and that the Houthis prioritize the needs of the Yemeni people. I reiterate the United Kingdom's call for urgent de-escalation in the region and progress towards sustainable peace in Yemen.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African members of the Council plus one (A3+), namely Algeria, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and my own country, Guyana.

We join other colleagues in thanking Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their valuable briefings, and we take note of the contribution of Ms. Jumaan on the situation in Yemen. We also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

As the briefers highlighted, the humanitarian situation in Yemen remains dire as the country endures one of the most devastating crises in recent history. The arbitrary detention of United Nations staff and other humanitarian workers by the Houthis, which is a clear violation of international humanitarian law, has also impeded the humanitarian response, to the detriment of the Yemeni people. The A3+ echoes the recent appeal of the Secretary-General and the principals of the United Nations agencies affected for the release of all arbitrarily detained personnel in Yemen. Their liberation is essential to the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance and the pursuit of peace in Yemen. We are alarmed by the reported referral to criminal prosecution by the Houthi de facto authorities of a significant number of arbitrarily detained aid workers, including three United Nations personnel who were detained in 2021 and 2023, and we renew our call for their immediate release and for full respect for their human rights. We deplore that unacceptable behaviour and emphasize the need for humanitarian personnel to be allowed to operate without fear or

obstruction. We urge the Houthis to desist from further actions that impede the efforts to provide humanitarian aid and protection to the millions of Yemenis in need, and to instead direct their attention to advancing the peace process.

After a decade of conflict, the Yemen peace process remains in a state of limbo — a product of a mutually damaging stalemate, misaligned expectations among internal and external stakeholders and shifting regional dynamics. All the while it is the Yemeni people who continue to pay the ultimate price. The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is considered one of the most severe and complex in the world, owing to the scale of human suffering, the protracted nature of the conflict, counterproductive actions and the geopolitical complexities that are impeding political progress.

We reaffirm the urgent need for a Yemeni-led political and peace process, as advocated by the United Nations Special Envoy, to facilitate a peaceful and inclusive transition. We urge the parties to the conflict and regional and other stakeholders to refrain from actions that would deepen divisions or hinder dialogue. The A3+ acknowledges the significant diplomatic efforts by Mr. Grundberg, who has made strides in re-engaging regional actors and ensuring that Yemeni political voices are included in the peace process. His message throughout the process has been clear — achieving peace in Yemen requires unified efforts from all stakeholders, both regionally and globally.

The recent Israeli air strikes on Houthi-controlled infrastructure represent a troubling escalation of regional tensions, raising the potential for a wider conflict that threatens the stability of the entire Middle East. The Houthi attacks in the Red Sea are jeopardizing the active maritime ecosystem in the Red Sea and posing a threat to commercial activities. That vital maritime corridor for global trade has become increasingly unstable, driving up transportation costs and disrupting food and fuel supplies not only for Yemen but the entire region. Maritime security is essential for global trade. The Houthis must cease those hostile operations immediately. The A3+ emphasizes the urgent need to secure the maritime routes and safeguard global commerce. We call on the Houthis to cease all attacks, which undermine navigation rights and freedoms. Considering those challenges, the A3+ firmly maintains that securing an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza is a critical first step

towards the achievement of lasting peace throughout the region. That ceasefire is essential to halting further escalation and creating the environment for a genuine and comprehensive peace process.

The humanitarian dimension of the crisis in Yemen is critical. Approximately 24 million people in Yemen, some 80 per cent of the population, require humanitarian assistance, one of the highest proportions globally of a population in need. That already dire situation is compounded by critical levels of food insecurity, with millions on the brink of famine, a devastated health-care infrastructure and reported outbreaks of preventable diseases such as cholera and diphtheria. The conflict has displaced more than 4 million people internally, further complicating aid efforts. Yet despite the severity of the situation, Yemen has often been underrepresented in global media compared to other crises, leading to lower public awareness and consequently less funding and aid. We urgently call on the international community to mobilize the necessary resources for the 2024 humanitarian response plan for Yemen.

The military dynamics of the conflict, driven by both internal and external actors, continue to fuel instability. The A3+ condemns all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. We call for an immediate halt to such actions and urge all parties to adhere to international humanitarian law. A political resolution is non-negotiable. Yemen can only find its way out of this quagmire through dialogue and mutual respect for its sovereignty. In that regard, we urge parties to the conflict, as well as other local stakeholders, including civil society, women and youth groups, to participate actively in the ongoing discussions being facilitated by the Special Envoy.

In conclusion, the A3+ reiterates the necessity of a comprehensive approach to resolving the crisis in Yemen. We advocate for sustained humanitarian support, a revitalized political process and unwavering respect for international humanitarian law. The people of Yemen deserve peace, and the world must not turn a blind eye to their suffering. We stand ready to support all efforts that lead to lasting peace and stability in Yemen and the region.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Najat Jumaan for their briefings and for their work for peace. I also

welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting.

I must begin my remarks by expressing Ecuador's condemnation of the new Houthi attacks against Israel, which, together with the attacks on ships in the Red Sea, expand the conflict in the Middle East and threaten the stability of the region.

My delegation takes note of Israel's announcement that its air strikes on the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Ras Issa were in response to the Houthi attack and urges Israeli authorities to respect international law and international humanitarian law and to meet the criteria of necessity, distinction and proportionality.

The fact that the Houthis have expressed that they will not cease their attacks is worrisome because of the vicious circle of retaliation that it has generated. Ecuador joins the calls for maximum restraint in order to avoid a new escalation.

These difficult circumstances have also had a negative impact on Yemen. Although the levels of violence continue to be lower than the period prior to the truce reached in 2022, armed clashes between the sides are a reminder that a return to war is still present.

It is therefore essential to maintain regional and international support for Special Envoy Grundberg's mediation efforts in order to create an environment conducive to a constructive dialogue that will allow us to resume the path towards a peace process. As such, Ecuador supports all activities with the aim of enhancing the significant participation of women in the peace process, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000).

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has deteriorated as a result of increasing levels of food insecurity and the spread of the cholera outbreak, especially on the west coast. That is compounded by seasonal rains that have caused damage and displacement across the country, affecting more than 500,000 people since July 2024.

Women and girls, already among the most vulnerable groups, face increasing risks, particularly displaced female-headed households, which account for more than 22 per cent of those receiving emergency assistance.

In that scenario, the provision of aid to those most in need is a humanitarian imperative that requires an operating environment that guarantees conditions of security and access. Humanitarian personnel arbitrarily

detained by the Houthis must be immediately and unconditionally released. Reports of possible charges being brought against them is unacceptable and further aggravates the prolonged detention they have already endured.

In conclusion, we deplore the tragic incident that occurred a few days ago off the coast of Obock, in which at least 45 migrants died when forced by smugglers to abandon their boat. Such tragedies highlight the urgent need to protect migrants along the eastern route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen and the Gulf.

Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Ms. Joyce Msuya and Ms. Jumaan for their briefings. I would also like to welcome the presence among us of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

France deplores the fact that the Iranian-backed Houthis continue to destabilize the Red Sea with their attacks on commercial vessels, despite resolutions 2722 (2024) and 2739 (2024), adopted by the Council. States have the right to defend their vessels against such attacks, in accordance with international law. The Houthis must immediately cease their destabilizing activities in the Red Sea. We call on them to immediately release the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew, held since November 2023.

France also strongly condemns the attacks carried out by the Houthis against Israel. These actions fuel the escalation in the region, for which the Houthis bear a heavy responsibility.

France reiterates its commitment to regional stability and the security of its partners in the region. It will pursue its commitment within the framework of the European Union's defensive security and defence policy Operation Aspides to guarantee maritime safety and freedom of navigation, in accordance with international law and alongside its partners.

France once again condemns the arbitrary detention of staff from the United Nations and local and international non-governmental organizations. It demands their immediate release. We are extremely concerned about the consequences of those detentions on humanitarian operations and by the charges brought against the detainees. The detentions, which are contrary to international humanitarian law, are hampering the delivery of aid and the emergency response, particularly in the face of the cholera epidemic. We call on the

Houthis to do their utmost to enable humanitarian actors to vaccinate the most vulnerable populations and to put an end to the disinformation campaigns orchestrated against those humanitarian actors.

We are concerned about the tragic projections for 2025 in terms of humanitarian needs, which continue to increase. Food insecurity now affects all regions of Yemen. The Houthis must stop taking Yemeni civilians hostage. Yemenis are the first victims of the restrictions that the Houthis impose on humanitarian operations. France calls for safe and unhindered humanitarian access. The international community must remain mobilized to meet the needs of the civilian population.

The regional context must not make us lose sight of the continuing importance of resuming peace negotiations under the auspices of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, to whom France reiterates its full support, particularly in the implementation of his political road map — the only way to achieve a complete and lasting cessation of hostilities.

The Houthis must return to the negotiating table, led by the Special Envoy. France stresses the importance of inclusive negotiations that guarantee the participation of Yemeni civil society and women.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Jumaan for their briefings.

Last week, we marked a solemn milestone: one year since Hamas's brutal 7 October terrorist attack on Israel. This week, we mark yet another grim anniversary: one year since the Houthis, seeking to exploit that devastation, launched cruise missiles and drones at Israel.

Much has changed in the months since. And yet, the Houthis continue to sow chaos and disruption, threatening international peace and security. Over the past year, the Houthis have taken the lives of innocent seafarers and disrupted essential imports to regional populations. They have boasted about their increasingly sophisticated weapons, which not only cause significant damage to passing ships, but threaten environmental disaster. And a few weeks ago, just hours after Israel eliminated the leader of Hizbullah, the Houthis fired a salvo of ballistic missiles at civilian infrastructure in Israel, including Ben Gurion International Airport.

The Houthis are not acting alone. There is verifiable evidence that they have been receiving weapons and

military supplies from Iran, in violation of the United Nations arms embargo. And there are alarming public reports that a permanent member of the Council considered providing the Houthis with supersonic anti-ship ballistic missiles and may be negotiating to give them small arms. It has therefore never been more important to enforce the arms embargo established under resolution 2216 (2015). Put simply: violators should know that there will be costs to supplying arms to the Houthis.

In addition, the Council should take steps to strengthen the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM). This Mechanism is critical to stanching the flow of weapons to the Houthis. And yet, right now, it is hamstrung by funding gaps and personnel shortfalls.

For our part, the United States has provided \$1 million to UNVIM in 2024, and we have approached many capitals to request additional contributions to its 2025 budget, with no restrictions. Now is the time for everyone to step up and to provide the funds needed for UNVIM to hire additional monitors and fulfil its mission because, frankly, it needs to fulfil its mission. The Mechanism is not perfect, but it is a way to ensure that arms and related materiel are not illicitly smuggled to the Houthis by Iran or any other malign actor.

Of course, the instability is hardly restricted to the Red Sea. Inside Yemen we continue to see rampant injustice. Humanitarian workers, along with United Nations and Embassy personnel, have been abducted. We are extremely concerned about the fact that the Houthis have reportedly started referring detainees to their so-called State security court, known for its use of video-recorded forced confessions, among other abuses. Let me be clear — no judicial process in the Houthis' hands has a shred of legitimacy. And we repeat our demand for the immediate release of the people being held. Given those developments, the United States stands firm in its belief that the United Nations and the international community cannot continue business as usual. The time has come for the United Nations to adjust its non-life-saving, non-life-sustaining programming and operations in Yemen to ensure the safety and security of all personnel. We were glad to see Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya call for that recalibration last month (see S/PV.9723). The United Nations country team and its agencies in the field must take immediate action to implement it.

The Yemeni people aspire to a freer, fairer, more prosperous future and a country that respects their human rights and upholds their fundamental freedoms. Let us stand for a Yemeni-Yemeni political process that leads to a durable end to the conflict, and let us stand by the Yemeni people as they call for justice, accountability and peace.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I want to thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Jumaan for their briefings today, and I welcome the Ambassador of Yemen to the Chamber.

Regrettably, recent weeks have seen a dangerous escalation in the region from which Yemen is not immune. We condemn the latest spiral of violence, which has seen Houthi attacks on Tel Aviv and Ashkelon and renewed Israeli strikes against the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Ras Issa. We reiterate that attacks on civilian infrastructure and objects are prohibited under international law. We urge all actors to exercise maximum restraint and to do their utmost to contain the escalation and avoid embroiling Yemen further in the crisis. A dangerous and unending tit-for-tat is not in anyone's interests. In particular, we call on the Houthis to focus on the needs and aspirations of the Yemeni people first and foremost. We urge all Yemeni actors to display courage and determination in order to refocus efforts on an inclusive Yemeni peace process and the Special Envoy's road map. Dialogue is the only way forward.

Meanwhile, as we have just heard from the briefers, the humanitarian needs of Yemenis on the ground are not subsiding, and the situation for humanitarians operating in Yemen continues to be extremely precarious. More than 100 days have passed since the Houthis' detention of United Nations staff and other humanitarian and non-governmental-organization workers. That is unacceptable, and we reiterate our calls for their immediate and unconditional release. We stress that United Nations personnel enjoy immunity from detention and that United Nations premises are inviolable.

Slovenia is also concerned about the potential humanitarian impact of the developments in the Red Sea and Yemen's western ports, whether they are the Houthis' unrelenting attacks on commercial shipping, which risk environmental catastrophe, or strikes on Al-Hudaydah and Ras Issa. It is vital that crucial waterways and port infrastructure remain open and

functioning, particularly given Yemen's heavy reliance on imports. And while needs are soaring across the region, we urge donors to continue to prioritize Yemen's humanitarian crisis and the life-saving and life-sustaining work that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian actors are doing on the ground across the country.

Before concluding, I want to take this opportunity to highlight the plight of Yemeni children following a decade of brutal conflict. From recruitment to early marriage, and from increased protection risks as a result of displacement to the greatest risks from landmines and unexploded ordnance, Yemeni children continue to bear the brunt of a war that they have played no part in creating. It is deeply distressing that while almost 40 per cent of Yemen's children are now unable to attend school and denied a regular education, others are facing indoctrination in Houthi summer camps, perpetuating an unending cycle of violence. Last month we adopted a Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), including a Declaration on Future Generations. All parties in Yemen must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, which include obligations to protect Yemen's children. Otherwise, we risk losing an entire future generation.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for their informative briefings. My appreciation also extends to Ms. Jumaan for her sobering testimony.

Yemen is on the brink. The country has been enduring hostilities, fragmentation and a humanitarian crisis for a decade, and now it faces an increasing risk of being dragged into a wider regional conflict. We must halt the downward spiral as soon as possible. I want to highlight three points for today's briefing.

First, Japan strongly condemns the series of irresponsible actions by the Houthis. Their reckless attacks on Israel are aggravating an already dangerous situation in the Middle East. That must stop immediately. They must also cease their continuing threats to international shipping and release the vessel and the crew members of the *MV Galaxy Leader* in accordance with resolutions 2722 (2024) and 2739 (2024). Global maritime transportation has been significantly disrupted for more than a year, and 25 innocent sailors have been held captive for nearly 330 days. That is totally unacceptable. The arbitrary detentions of

United Nations staff members and others for more than four months, and the judicial accusations being made against them, are outrageous. Those individuals were working for the benefit of Yemenis. Detaining them only impedes critical humanitarian assistance and human rights protection activities and worsens the dire situation in the country. Japan reiterates its demand for their immediate and unconditional release and the release of those who have been held captive for years. We also reject any criminal prosecutions that might be brought against them.

Secondly, to our deep regret, the peace process has stalled amid regional escalation, leading to growing insecurity and instability in Yemen. It is our firm belief that only a sustainable and inclusive dialogue among all Yemenis, without violence or hatred, can pave the way for lasting peace in the country. We are encouraged to hear from the Special Envoy that peace in Yemen is achievable. Japan will continue to support his efforts to restore momentum and facilitate peace talks between the parties.

Thirdly, Japan remains seriously concerned about the persistent food insecurity, disease and natural disasters in Yemen. The international community must scale up its assistance if we are to save the more than 18 million people suffering from the multifaceted humanitarian crisis. Their livelihoods depend heavily on imports. To that end, last month Japan committed to granting nearly \$5 million to the United Nations Development Programme for a project to streamline imports of food, humanitarian aid and other goods at the port of Aden, an essential maritime facility in Yemen. Japan will remain steadfast in its efforts to realize peace and stability in Yemen, in cooperation with the United Nations and fellow Member States.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Under Secretary-General Msuya and Ms. Jumaan for their briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the Chamber today.

Malta remains deeply concerned by the escalating tensions in the region, which continue to hamper progress towards peace in Yemen. For nearly a decade, the Yemeni people have suffered through this protracted conflict. That translates into millions of people experiencing acute food insecurity, with some districts facing critical levels of malnutrition. It is estimated that thousands of children will be acutely malnourished by

the end of 2024. Millions of people have been internally displaced, many of them multiple times. They are suffering a lack of water, healthcare and sanitation services. Hundreds of migrants have lost their lives this year, making 2024 the deadliest year for migrant sea crossings between the Horn of Africa and Yemen. Preventable diseases like cholera continue to spread rapidly. They are aggravated by heavy seasonal rains affecting Yemen's fragile water and sanitation systems.

The international community must act now to prevent greater suffering and loss of life. It must urgently scale up financial support for Yemen's humanitarian response plan, which remains underfunded. Despite the emergency, impediments to the delivery of humanitarian aid persist. We demand that movement restrictions on women be lifted to facilitate humanitarian access throughout the country.

Malta condemns the arbitrary detention by the Houthis of United Nations personnel, staff of non-governmental organizations and civil society representatives. We echo the Secretary-General's demand for their immediate and unconditional release. Those detentions are unprecedented and directly impede the delivery of humanitarian aid and protection to the 18.2 million people in need. We stress that, while they are detained, they must be treated with full respect for international humanitarian law and human rights. That includes allowing them to contact their families and legal representatives.

As we have heard today from Professor Jumaan, the economic situation of most Yemenis continues to decline and remains a large driver of suffering. The effects of natural disasters and climate change also add to the challenges, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable.

Yemen's economy must be depoliticized. We call on all parties to engage in dialogue and collaborate on the economic front in order to strengthen the country's currency and economy. We urge parties to return to the negotiating table to engage on commitments made to the United Nations road map. They need to focus on agreeing to a nationwide ceasefire and the resumption of an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under United Nations auspices. We reiterate that any inclusive political process requires the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women. We urge the United Nations and Member States facilitating talks to put in place enhanced and targeted measures

to achieve the 30 per cent quota agreed in the National Dialogue Conference.

We condemn the Houthis' missile and drone attacks against Israel and their continued attacks against vessels in the Red Sea. We are also very concerned by Israel's retaliatory attacks in Yemen, which have led to loss of life and damaged critical infrastructure. We call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint, as further escalation of conflict will only exacerbate and prolong the suffering of the most vulnerable.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): My appreciation goes to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Ms. Najat Jumaan for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

The Middle East is facing a grave escalation of conflicts. The situation in Yemen is also deteriorating and compounding the pain of the Yemeni people. Indeed, the region is ablaze with multiple crises that could further escalate into a wider regional war, particularly if those multi-front fires are ignited simultaneously. The Houthis' ongoing attacks against vessels in the Red Sea and their missile and drone strikes targeting Israel, along with their cooperation with the so-called axis of resistance, risk pouring more fuel on the regional fire.

At this pivotal moment, I wish to make the following points.

First, we urge all States Members of the United Nations, including neighbouring countries, to fully implement all relevant Security Council resolutions, including the resolution imposing the targeted arms embargo (resolution 2216 (2015)). The final report of the Panel of Experts shows the unprecedented scale and nature of military materiel transfers, including financial support and training, in violation of resolution 2216 (2015). It serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for stricter compliance with Security Council resolutions.

Secondly, we express our deep concerns about the recent alarming developments regarding the Houthis' referral to criminal prosecution of those arbitrarily detained in Yemen, including three United Nations personnel. Those measures are all the more astonishing given that they further undermine the international assistance that is so critical for the long-suffering Yemeni

people. We strongly support the press release issued by the principals of the affected United Nations entities and international non-governmental organizations last weekend, and we unequivocally call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees.

Thirdly, the worsening economic crisis caused by flooding and financial sector disorder undercuts efforts to foster meaningful dialogue. Arbitrary economic measures and tit-for-tat countermeasures between the Houthis and the Government of Yemen will only aggravate humanitarian crises for Yemenis. It is regrettable that there have been no new positive developments based on the economic de-escalation agreement reached in July. We call on the Houthis to refrain from additional hostile economic measures and to engage with the Yemeni Government in order to move forward on tackling economic challenges.

The Republic of Korea is fully committed to supporting Yemen's path to durable peace, and it reaffirms its unwavering support for the efforts of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, humanitarian workers and OCHA. Kick-starting the stalled political process under the auspices of the United Nations is long overdue. In order to do so, parties must prioritize ending the violence and conflict to turn a new leaf for Yemen's future. And in particular, the Houthis should not utilize the Gaza crisis as an excuse for their belligerent actions.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for their briefings. I have also listened attentively to Ms. Jumaan's statement. I welcome the presence of the representative of Yemen at today's meeting.

In the past few weeks, the protracted conflict in Gaza and the rapidly deteriorating situation between Lebanon and Israel have further intensified the negative spillover effects. The Houthis launched attacks on Israel, while Israel launched air strikes on the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Ras Isa. China is deeply worried about the current situation and its future trajectory. We believe that the top priority is to push for the de-escalation of the situation and to prevent the widening of the conflict. We call on all parties concerned to keep calm, remain restrained and refrain from any action that will further escalate tensions.

Dialogue and consultation are the only correct choice to resolve the issue of Yemen. We call on all the concerned parties to stay committed to the general

direction of political settlement, resolve differences through dialogue and consultation and jointly promote a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned comprehensive political process. All parties should act in good faith, jointly advance the implementation of the agreements on banking and aviation issues and gradually enhance mutual trust. Special Envoy Grundberg has made positive mediation efforts to resolve the Yemeni issue. China appreciates that and calls on all parties to support the work of the Special Envoy in order to make tangible progress on the political settlement of the Yemeni issue as soon as possible.

The continuing tension in the Red Sea does not serve the common interests of the international community. China once again calls on the Houthis to respect the right of navigation of commercial ships of all countries in the Red Sea in accordance with international law, and to cease their attacks in order to maintain the safety of Red Sea waterways. All the parties concerned should remain calm, exercise restraint and refrain from any actions that exacerbate tensions.

China is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Yemen and calls on the international community to increase its humanitarian and development contributions in Yemen and to strengthen its support for the Yemeni Government in improving people's livelihoods. We are gravely concerned about the detention of United Nations personnel in Yemen. We note that the Houthis have allowed some of the detainees to make contact with the outside. We encourage all parties to strengthen communication in order to facilitate the unconditional release of all United Nations personnel as soon as possible.

The situation in Yemen is closely linked to the situation in the Middle East. The year-long conflict in Gaza has already created an unprecedented humanitarian disaster and is increasingly dragging the entire region into a quagmire of war and conflict. At this critical point the situation must not be allowed to deteriorate further and go down a road of no return. The Security Council must remain united and must take measures to stop the reckless military adventurism that is expanding the conflict. We should push for a lasting ceasefire in Gaza and the de-escalation of the tensions between Lebanon and Israel if we are to avoid a greater catastrophe in the Middle East.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that China is ready to work with the international community to continue

its unremitting efforts towards a political solution to the Yemeni issue and the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya for their briefings. We also listened carefully to the statement by Ms. Jumaan.

The level of the tensions in Yemen continues unabated. Moreover, the situation is likely to worsen, because Yemen is increasingly being dragged into a wider regional conflict amid the ongoing violence in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and other areas of the Middle East. We underscore Russia's unchanged position in support of the safety of international navigation in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and other waters. We believe that Ansar Allah should cease any action that impedes freedom of navigation or poses a danger to commercial vessels, including fuel tankers. We call for the immediate release of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew.

However, we firmly believe that in order to truly stabilize the situation in the seas off the coast of Yemen, equal pressure should be put on the members of the so-called coalition led by the United States and the United Kingdom, which continue to attack the territory of this sovereign country rather indiscriminately and on a weekly basis, in violation of the norms of international law. Such subversive activity is indicative of their real motives, which clearly have very little to do with achieving a genuine settlement in Yemen within the existing parameters. However, our Western partners have used a similar playbook in other countries of the region as well, and we emphasize that strikes against Yemen are unacceptable, while destroying its port infrastructure could have disastrous humanitarian consequences. At the same time, it is obvious to anyone following developments in the region that the first step towards normalizing the situation in the Red Sea would be to end Israel's aggressive military campaign in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria.

Whatever the prospects are for resolving the situation in the Middle East as a whole, we consider it important to continue active political and diplomatic efforts with Yemeni political forces. Along with reinforcing recent achievements in resolving Yemen's internal contradictions on the economic front, we must continue to gradually advance the finalization of the

road map for the political process in the country. We note the importance of harmonizing the international efforts with those of regional actors aimed at facilitating a rapprochement between the positions of the parties to the conflict. In addition, there is still a need to update the legal and regulatory framework for a Yemeni settlement so that it better reflects the situation on the ground. To resolve those and other issues, we intend to continue closely coordinating our approaches with all Yemeni stakeholders, including Ansar Allah, urging them to find mutually acceptable solutions and to build trust. We also stand ready to continue to provide the necessary support to Special Envoy Grundberg, with whom we had consultations in Moscow last week.

Unfortunately, the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation in the country remains dire. Two thirds of the population of Yemen are in need of humanitarian assistance, and more than 3 million people are food insecure. We believe that the international community and donors should prioritize finding a solution to this problem. We welcome the mediation work being done by regional actors, who are already assisting the Yemenis on the financial and humanitarian fronts. The people of this long-suffering country should have unimpeded access to food, medicine and other essential goods, regardless of where they live. Any restrictions on humanitarian supplies or obstacles to the humanitarian work are unacceptable. We would like to express our concern about the Ansar Allah movement's detention of locally recruited United Nations staff in Yemen. In that context, we want to remind the parties of the privileges and immunities that the staff of the United Nations enjoy. Such actions have a negative impact on the work of the United Nations and humanitarian personnel there and as usual affect ordinary people first and foremost.

At the same time, it is important to avoid double standards. The desire of certain Western countries to sound an alarm about the problems of United Nations personnel in Yemen is in stark contrast to their reaction, or rather the almost complete absence of a reaction, to the deaths of dozens of United Nations staff in Gaza as a result of Israeli strikes, and to the Israel Defense Forces regular attacks on the peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, who nonetheless continue to do their duty. It is crucial that our Western colleagues extend their principled approach to the situation around the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which the Israeli authorities are seeking to

pressure into leaving the Palestinian territory. We call on Council members not to allow such egregious and blatant double standards.

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

Like my colleagues, I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya and economist Najat Jumaan for their contributions. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

Peace may be priceless, but war has a cost. In Yemen, gross domestic product has plummeted by half in 10 years of conflict. As Ms. Jumaan pointed out, the repercussions that the conflict has inflicted on the economy take many forms — the destruction of infrastructure, brain drains and the flight of capital, the impact on the movement of people and goods, the division of economic institutions, the establishment of a war economy and economic retaliation measures. One thing is clear, which is that the civilian population is paying the price. Today Yemenis are facing an extremely difficult economic and humanitarian situation. Four of five of them are living in poverty. More than 18 million people need humanitarian aid to meet basic needs such as access to health care or food. The prolonged conflict in the economic sphere is disrupting the supply and transport of goods, generating an artificial inflationary dynamic. That situation is exacerbating food insecurity, which is already at an alarming level, and 64 per cent of the population cannot access sufficient food.

Despite those acute needs, the humanitarian actors in Yemen have to operate in a difficult environment. We remain very concerned about the arbitrary detention of some humanitarian and United Nations personnel. The initiation of criminal proceedings against them, as mentioned in some reports, is a worrisome development. Switzerland echoes the United Nations appeal, which we have already heard several times today and consistently in the past few months, for the immediate and unconditional release of the detained humanitarian and United Nations personnel. In addition, safe and unhindered humanitarian access must be guaranteed throughout the country.

As Ms. Jumaan rightly pointed out, in this already precarious situation, Yemen cannot afford to be dragged into a regional war. In that respect, we are

deeply concerned about the various strikes reported in recent weeks. We condemn the escalation of violence. International law, including international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution, must be respected by all parties. Civilian infrastructure must not be targeted. In that respect, we wish to recall the importance of the port of Al-Hudaydah, which remains the main point of entry for humanitarian aid for a large part of Yemen. We urge all parties to refrain from any escalation. Dialogue is the only option.

We have heard that only a political solution will relieve the Yemeni population of the economic and humanitarian impact of the conflict. Switzerland calls on all parties with influence, including on the Security Council, to commit themselves to such a solution and to respect for human rights in Yemen. In that respect, Switzerland acknowledges the tireless work of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and his team. We reiterate our full support to him. We also welcome his efforts to implement the understanding on the economic sector reached last July, and we call for it to be fully respected.

Switzerland welcomes the unity of the Council in favour of a peace process in Yemen under the aegis of the Special Envoy, which has prevailed since the beginning of the conflict. We must continue our unwavering commitment in that direction. After all, nothing is more precious than peace.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank the Permanent Representative of the friendly country of Slovenia for his successful presidency last month. I also thank the briefers.

The Yemeni Government reaffirms its commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. It has called and continues to call for peace to achieve security, stability, development and a normal life for the Yemeni people. The Government continues to make tireless efforts to reach a political solution to the conflict, in accordance with the agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant

Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

My country's Government reiterates its support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and all regional and international efforts to end the conflict and achieve peace in Yemen. I especially thank our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman for their efforts aimed at reaching a political solution and addressing the Yemeni crisis.

Since its coup against constitutional legitimacy and national consensus, the Houthi militia have been waging wars and spurring crises, tragedies and division; committing the worst human rights violations; destroying children's lives by recruiting them and pushing them onto the battlefield; planting millions of mines; pursuing a policy of systematic impoverishment and starvation to humiliate and subjugate Yemenis in the areas under their control; destroying the national economy and creating a parallel economy to finance their war; robbing Yemenis of their lives, security, stability, food, their present and their future; ripping apart the cohesive social fabric; hollowing out the education system; destroying healthcare facilities and cultural centres; and spreading ignorance in every way possible to alter the national identity.

The terrorist Houthi militia have repeatedly demonstrated that they are not committed to peace or the interests of Yemen and its people. Given the lax international response to the militia and their supporters, the Iranian regime, they continue to evade their responsibilities in achieving peace and to pursue their military escalation; continue to commit flagrant violations of international law, international humanitarian law and national legislation; and continue to threaten international navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, with disastrous consequences for the marine environment and the economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen and countries bordering the Red Sea.

In that context, we reiterate what His Excellency President Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council, stated in his address to the General Assembly:

“To avoid an expansion and continuation of this escalation, there is an urgent need for a collective approach to support the Yemeni Government and strengthen its institutional capacities to protect its territorial waters and secure all its national

territory. Without addressing those needs, the militia will not engage with any efforts to achieve peace and will not cease their blackmail tactics and stop threatening international and regional peace and security.”

The Yemeni Government reiterates its call on the international community and the Council to fulfil its role and responsibilities and implement its resolutions related to the Yemeni crisis, including banning the flow of Iranian weapons, drying up funding sources and exerting pressure on the Houthi militia to embrace peace and engage positively with peace efforts and end the prolonged humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni Government is continuing its efforts aimed at achieving economic, financial and administrative reforms; addressing issues related to the lives and livelihoods of its citizens and alleviating their suffering within the existing resources. The Government has continued to implement strict measures to enhance accountability and transparency, combat corruption, increase economic resources and optimize the use of foreign aid in accordance with the Government's needs and priorities. It seeks to maintain economic stability and the stability of the national currency, despite the real pressures on the economy and the decline in resources due to the Houthi militia's targeting of oil export facilities since October 2022 and their continuous and systematic war against aspects of its military and economy.

The Yemeni Government reiterates its call on the international community to provide support to address the deteriorated economic and humanitarian situation and lay the foundations for long-term economic recovery, including not only immediate humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering and realize stronger accountability mechanisms, especially in the areas controlled by the Houthi militia, but also greater investments in infrastructure, healthcare, education, sustainable development and strengthening national capacities to mitigate the effects of climate change, which have left hundreds of victims and displaced thousands more within the past two months.

The Houthi militia continue to obstruct, loot and divert humanitarian aid to those who do not deserve it and are committing the most heinous violations against humanitarian and relief workers in the areas under their control, the most recent of which was the kidnapping

of dozens of employees of local and international organizations and United Nations agencies operating in Yemen. That was followed by a series of obstacles, arbitrary measures and blackmail against those agencies and their staff.

Four months have passed, and those who were kidnapped and detained are still forcibly disappeared. Their families have no information about their whereabouts or their health conditions in the dungeons of the Houthi militia. Four months have passed, and those kidnapped individuals are in secret militia prisons, subjected to torture and cruel, degrading and inhumane treatment. Four months have passed, and the families of the victims and the humanitarian community as a whole are looking to the Security Council and the United Nations to take measures and decisive action to protect those employees and save their lives, especially in the light of their recent referral to the so-called criminal prosecution of the Houthi militia, in preparation for issuing unjust verdicts against them, by which they would join the dozens of others who have faced the same fate, which is something we have consistently warned against.

It is urgent to intensify international efforts and pressure to ensure the immediate and unconditional

release of the kidnapped and ensure that those responsible for those crimes are held accountable. The Yemeni Government reiterates its call to relocate the headquarters of the United Nations agencies and international organizations operating in Yemen to the temporary capital, Aden, in order to ensure an environment conducive to carrying out their humanitarian work in a more effective way and serving those in need and to ensure the security and safety of humanitarian and relief workers.

In conclusion, our patient Yemeni people seek a sustainable peace that fulfils their aspirations and leads to a State that guarantees their rights and freedoms and promotes justice, equality, national partnership and democracy, as opposed to acquisition, exclusion, injustice and divine selectivity. Peace in Yemen will inevitably prevail, and the hopes of the Yemeni people to regain their State and establish security, stability and development will be realized.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.