



# Security Council

Eightieth year

**9873**<sup>rd</sup> meeting

Thursday, 6 March 2025, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Ms. Lassen. . . . .	(Denmark)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria. . . . .	Mr. Bendjama
	China. . . . .	Mr. Fu Cong
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
	Greece . . . . .	Mr. Sekeris
	Guyana . . . . .	Ms. Benn
	Pakistan. . . . .	Mr. Akram
	Panama . . . . .	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone . . . . .	Mr. Kanu
	Slovenia. . . . .	Mr. Ponikvar
	Somalia . . . . .	Mr. Osman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America. . . . .	Ms. Shea

## 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. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Nesmah Mansoor Ali, of Peace Track Initiative.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

**Mr. Grundberg:** May I begin by wishing all Yemenis and Muslims around the world Ramadan Kareem as they start this period of reflection and coming together for the holy month.

While Muslims around the world are celebrating the holy month of Ramadan, unfortunately this celebration will not be complete for the families of many of our colleagues held in arbitrary detention by Ansar Allah. The absence of their family members will be deeply felt during a month that should be one of gathering and connecting with loved ones. Some will even be grieving, as the family of our World Food Programme colleague Ahmed. Some colleagues' parents have also passed away while they have been in detention, without knowing the fate of their children. I once again call for the immediate and unconditional release of the detainees, and I am grateful for the Council's continued support on the issue.

In the now over 10 years of this unresolved conflict, the grinding hardship that Yemenis are suffering only deepens. Since its onset, per capita gross domestic product has more than halved. Civil servants in Ansar Allah-controlled areas have not been regularly paid, on time or in full, since 2018, while those in Government of Yemen-controlled areas also face some delays to their salary payments. Moreover, the Yemeni riyal in Government of Yemen-controlled areas has fallen by 50 per cent in the past year, driving up prices of basic commodities. As a consequence, poverty has surged across the country.

In past months, I have cautioned repeatedly against escalatory actions. Recently, we have seen a rise in rhetoric from the parties to the conflict, prepositioning themselves publicly for military confrontation. We must not allow that to happen. Words matter. Intent matters. Signals matter. Mixed messaging and escalatory discourse can have real consequences, deepening mistrust and fuelling tensions at a time when de-escalation is crucial.

While a resumption of large-scale ground operations in Yemen has not occurred since the United Nations-mediated truce of April 2022, military activity continues. I remain concerned by recent reports of shelling, drone attacks, infiltration attempts and mobilization campaigns, more recently witnessed in Ma'rib as well as in other areas such as Al-Jawf, Shabwa and Taiz. I therefore also reiterate my call on the parties to refrain from military posturing and retaliatory measures that could risk plunging Yemen back into widespread conflict, whereby civilians will again pay the price.

As members know by now, my team and I remain undeterred by the challenges we are faced with. We continue relentlessly our frank and important engagement with both Yemeni and international stakeholders, actively gathering perspectives and insights on the path forward amid enormous challenges. Last week, I engaged with Government of Yemen senior officials and regional actors, urging concerted support to a Yemeni-led, inclusive peace process. I maintain that, to settle the conflict in Yemen, one will need to address a set of three particular challenges. The parties will have to agree on a nationwide ceasefire and a mechanism on how to implement it. They will also have to make difficult but necessary concessions and agree on compromises, notably on the difficult economic situation in the country. Finally, let me be clear here: there will have to be a political process that includes a broad spectrum of Yemenis that will allow this conflict to be settled once and for all, enabling Yemenis to live their lives in peace.

While that is possible to achieve, the environment for it to happen must be conducive. During the past month, we have seen the continued cessation of attacks by Ansar Allah on vessels in the Red Sea and targets in Israel. That is positive. But as the Council knows all too well, enabling environments for peace can be fragile and fleeting. Positive developments must be put on a more permanent footing. The international community must not waste any opportunity to make progress. And we must be agile in our approach in supporting Yemeni-led efforts.

The implementation of the United States designation of Ansar Allah as a foreign terrorist organization is now unfolding. While the full ramifications of that measure are yet to be determined, I reiterate the importance of protecting our efforts to advance a peaceful settlement in Yemen. In order to reach a just and inclusive peace in Yemen, it is essential that the mediation space for the Yemenis under the auspices of the United Nations be preserved. I remain committed to continuing to carry out my duties in accordance with the mandate given to the Secretary-General by the Council, including convening meetings on a number of pressing issues, including for the exchange of conflict-related detainees.

I see and hear the deep frustration of the Yemeni people, who continue to bear the heavy burden of a decade of war, and I remain grounded in my conviction that principled and impartial resolution of conflict is the only way forward. As such, the elements of the road map continue to represent a viable path. In that regard, I am deeply grateful to the Council for its unity and support to the United Nations work to support Yemen at this difficult time.

In two days' time, we will celebrate International Women's Day. This month, and every month, we observe the disproportionate impact of the conflict on women in Yemen, and we work towards enabling their full, equal and meaningful participation in the peace process. Recently, a delegation of extraordinary women and representatives from women-led organizations across Yemen met with my Office. They shared their powerful stories, perspectives and unwavering advocacy for their rights. The transformative work they lead — advancing women's roles, strengthening their communities and ensuring women's inclusion in decision-making — is critical.

Those women represent just a few of the many determined Yemeni women tirelessly working to advance peace. Their efforts reinforce our commitment to continue working with and supporting local women peacebuilders and human rights defenders. I therefore also look forward to listening to the statement from Nesmah Ali Mansoor, from Peace Track Initiative, who will be bringing to our attention the intersection between the climate crisis, conflict and the deterioration of human rights in Yemen.

In conclusion, let me be clear: Yemen's current trajectory is deeply concerning. We are at a point in time where the fear of a return to full conflict is palpable. No

matter how the next weeks and months evolve, my Office remains determined to convene the parties at any opportunity to bring an end to this decade-long conflict. We owe it to the millions of Yemenis not to waver or falter in our determination on that.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Fletcher:** I thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his tireless efforts.

When I previously briefed the Council on Yemen (see S/PV.9858), I shared details on the gravity of the crisis, and we discussed the growing constraints on our humanitarian work. Since then, both have gotten worse. And now severe funding cuts have been a body-blow to our work to save lives. It is of course for individual countries to decide how to spend their money, but it is the pace at which so much vital work has been shut down that adds to the perfect storm that we face. I have asked our Humanitarian Coordinators, in Yemen and elsewhere, to report by the end of next week on where we will need to cut back most dramatically and the implications of the tough choices we are making on which lives not to save.

I will not repeat the list of humanitarian numbers in my previous briefing. It is more incumbent upon the Council to focus on how to use its collective weight to deal with the causes of those numbers.

My three asks of the Council have not changed: first, please back our effort to get access to those civilians at greatest risk; secondly, please ensure that we have the funding to as many lives as we can; and thirdly, a request for the Council's public and private pressure to release humanitarians who have been arbitrarily detained while working to deliver the Council's instructions.

As Special Envoy Grundberg underlined, we are approaching International Women's Day, on 8 March. After decades of progress on women's rights — too slow, but still progress — we are now seeing a sustained and deliberate pushback globally against equality. We must recognize that danger, and we must respond. I therefore want to focus today on the humanitarian situation faced by women and girls in Yemen and on the impact of funding cuts on their lives. I am afraid that it is a grim picture.

The crisis has a disproportionate and devastating impact on women and girls. They have suffered from systematic discrimination and exclusion for decades. In 2021, Yemen ranked second-to-last in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index. And in 2023, Yemen ranked second-to-last in the Georgetown Institute's Women, Peace and Security Index. And there is no sign of progress for them.

I do not know whether the numbers really convey the challenge. But here are some to think about: 9.6 million women and girls are in severe need of life-saving humanitarian assistance, facing hunger, violence and a collapsing healthcare system; 1.3 million pregnant women and new mothers are malnourished, putting their own health at risk and exposing their children to disease and long-term developmental issues. Yemen's maternal mortality rate is the highest in the Middle East — more than 10 times that of Saudi Arabia or Oman. More than 6 million women and girls face heightened risks of abuse and exploitation; while 1.5 million girls in Yemen remain out of school, denying them their right to education and preventing them from breaking the cycles of discrimination and violence facing them. Nearly one third of all girls in Yemen are married before the age of 18, stripping them of their childhood, education and future. As funding for Yemen evaporates, the numbers in my next briefing will be worse.

But what does that mean for the women and girls who are the humans behind those numbers? More will die. More will be left with no choice but to adopt dangerous coping mechanisms — survival sex, begging, coerced prostitution, human trafficking and selling their children. And yet, despite bearing the greatest burdens of the war, of displacement and of deprivation, women remain on the front lines of survival and recovery, raising kids, pushing day to day for a better future, rebuilding communities and pushing for peace, often with little recognition or support. Those are acts of quiet heroism, dignity and resilience. And we will do all we can to support them with the dwindling resources we have.

That includes a doctor in Aden, one of only two women fistula surgeons in the country and performing 30 surgeries a month, who received United Nations-funded training to specialize in that critical field. It includes a midwife, the first to work in Hadramout governorate and whose work, and the work of her colleagues, has been critical to the decline in maternal mortality. And it includes the widowed mother in Al-Hudaydah governorate who cares for her three children, one with a disability and one in need of ongoing medical treatment, and for whom the support of humanitarian partners is essential to her ability to do so. Those are just three examples among thousands that I hope resonate through the noise, distraction and attacks on humanitarian work. I am not here to defend programmes, spreadsheets and institutions, but people.

I also want to recognize the women and girls who are on the front line of the humanitarian response. They lead half of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in our humanitarian country team. And 40 per cent of the Yemen Humanitarian Fund goes to women-led organizations, the vast majority local NGOs. Those funds ensured that pregnant and breastfeeding women got safe and dignified healthcare, that survivors of violence accessed life-saving services and that communal spaces and sanitation facilities were safe for women to use.

As the humanitarian response in Yemen faces severe funding cuts, those programmes are all at risk, and along with them vital lifelines for women and girls across the country. Funding suspensions have already forced 22 safe spaces to close, denying services and support to more than 11,000 women and girls in high-risk areas. Survivors of gender-based violence no longer have access to life-saving healthcare, psychosocial support and legal aid. Child protection programmes have been halted, leading to even greater risk of child labour, recruitment into armed groups and child marriage. Those are choices that we make when we cut funding.

On a separate issue, earlier this week, the United States designation of the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization was completed. From the United Nations humanitarian perspective, our job remains the same — to save lives. We need to continue that work and ensure that civilians in Yemen have access to essential food and medicine, whether through commercial or humanitarian channels. If that is not possible, it will have a serious impact on communities already on the precipice of disaster. Women and children, I am afraid, will again bear the brunt. This is a tough time to be a humanitarian, but it is much tougher for the people whom we serve. And right now, it is getting even tougher for the women and girls of Yemen. The decisions that the Council takes will determine whether it gets worse.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Fletcher for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mansoor Ali.

**Ms. Mansoor Ali:** I thank Denmark for giving me the opportunity to brief the Council.

My name is Nesmah Mansoor Ali. I am the Senior Policy and Communications Officer, representing the Peace Track Initiative and Women Solidarity Network. Our

work focuses on climate justice, inclusive peacebuilding and protecting women's rights in Yemen. Today I will highlight the urgent threats posed by Yemen's protracted conflict, climate change and the deterioration in human rights.

Yemen has been ravaged for more than a decade by armed conflict, coupled with environmental degradation and climate crises. Those realities have weakened State institutions and led to a collapse in social protection systems, creating multidimensional insecurities that have left vulnerable populations, in particular rural and marginalized women, on the brink, struggling for survival. I am a migrant as a result of conflict and climate change. I was forced to leave my home town, Aden, and parted from my family in 2020. Life in Aden was — and continues to be — unbearable, with scorching temperatures, chronic water shortages and relentless power cuts, which, at the time, were coupled the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic. Every day was a struggle to manage the brief two-hour window of electricity, entailing deciding whether to run the pump to fill the water tanks, do laundry, charge our devices or at least snatch a few moments of sleep under the relief of air conditioning. Leaving Aden was a necessity for survival and a painful testament of how conflict and climate change can uproot lives and tear families apart.

The war has devastated Yemen's environment and ecosystem. Attacks on oil refineries and ports, the indiscriminate laying of landmines on agricultural land and in coastal areas, oil and toxin spills and the destruction of critical infrastructure, such as power stations and water systems, have left Yemen in ruins. I will never forget the towering plume of smoke that covered the city when the Houthis attacked Aden's refinery in 2015. A dark cloud choked the air and left the city in despair. That scenario was repeated as Israel attacked more than two dozen oil storage tanks last year in Al-Hudaydah port. Marine systems are being destroyed. Oil spills, unregulated fishing and untreated sewage water have polluted the coastal waters, destroyed fish populations and endangered public health. Landmines are making it dangerous to grow food and to access water, worsening food insecurity. Climate change is deepening the crisis in Yemen. Floods are displacing landmines and complicating demining efforts. They are exacerbating the pre-war intertribal conflicts over resources, which claim almost 4,000 lives annually.

Women, especially those who lead households, are being disproportionately affected by climate change. A survey by our partners at South24 found that 88 per cent of women in Aden, Hadhramaut and Al-Mahrah have reported that climate change is damaging their income-generation activities, such as salt extraction, fish drying and handicrafts. In addition, cultural norms further hinder women's resilience, as they are often discouraged from learning to swim and left vulnerable during floods and cyclones.

In consulting women across Yemen, I heard heartbreaking stories of how the intersection between climate change and armed conflict is upending their lives. Aisha, a fisherwoman from Aden, said: "The fish are vanishing. We are forced to venture into the dangerous water just to survive." Aisha's words show the desperation of coastal communities as pollution, overfishing and climate change deplete their livelihoods. Fatima, a woman from Al-Mahrah, shared how she survived Cyclone Tej in 2023, which destroyed her family's agricultural land — its only source of income. Meanwhile, Sumya, a young entrepreneur and a friend of mine, had to abandon her dream of opening a chocolate business because of rising temperatures, increasing costs of raw materials and endless power cuts.

Women's stories of determination amid vanishing fish, ruined crops and deferred dreams highlight their unwavering strength as they confront the harsh realities of climate change. As we approach International Women's Day and mark the anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, it is imperative that we prioritize the impact of climate change and conflict on achieving gender equality.

In conclusion, I call on the Security Council to act decisively before challenges push an already suffering population past the point of no return and to take into consideration the following recommendations.

First, climate-responsive peacebuilding must be prioritized by integrating climate change into peace negotiations, ensuring that climate adaptation and environmental restoration are central to any peace agreement and political settlement in Yemen.

Secondly, the Council must demand that the Sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) investigate environmental destruction, including attacks on critical infrastructure such as oil refineries, ports and water systems, as a potential war crime, and for accountability for environmental destruction.

Thirdly, it is necessary to ensure the full inclusion of women in all peace and political processes and support and fund local peace initiatives, including those that address intertribal conflicts over water and land.

Fourthly, environmental rehabilitation must be promoted by supporting programmes aimed at cleaning up oil and toxin spills, removing landmines from agricultural and coastal areas and restoring damaged ecosystems, in particular in fishing zones and farming communities.

Fifthly, the enforcement of environmental regulations must be supported by working with national and local teams and international partners to strengthen environmental governance and regulate private sector activities that contribute to pollution and resource depletion.

Lastly, targeted support must be provided for women-led households, by expanding social protection programmes, such as cash transfers and livelihood support.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Mansoor Ali 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 thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Ms. Mansoor Ali for briefing us today. In particular, I want to fully endorse the attention they have brought to the plight of women and girls in Yemen's crisis. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in our meeting.

I will make three additional points.

First, the United Kingdom welcomes the Security Council's strong and united condemnation last month (see SC/15995) of the ongoing detentions by the Houthis and the tragic death of a World Food Programme member of staff in Houthi captivity. Continued Council unity sends a clear and unequivocal message to the Houthis that they must unconditionally and immediately release those detained. We fully support the decision taken by the United Nations to pause humanitarian operations in Saada. The pause is a direct consequence of the Houthi threat undermining the security and safety of aid workers. Ms. Mansoor Ali and this morning's press stake-out have again highlighted how the already dire humanitarian situation is exacerbated by climate change, intensifying existing threats, such as water and food insecurity.

Secondly, the Yemeni Coast Guard's announcement of its interdiction of a dhow containing advanced weapon components, reportedly destined for Al-Hudaydah port, is more evidence of a clear violation of the arms embargo set out in resolution 2216 (2015). We reiterate our call for all Member States to ensure full compliance with the arms embargo. In particular, we call for the Iranian Government to cease its destabilizing activity in the region. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) remains critical to preventing the smuggling of illicit arms.

The United Kingdom calls on the international community to give unwavering support to UNVIM and to ensure that it has the funding necessary to fulfil its obligations. We also continue to support the Yemeni Coast Guard as it looks to strengthen its capacity to protect maritime borders. In partnership with the Government of Yemen and international partners, we look forward to the launch of the Yemen maritime security partnership later this year.

Finally, the United Kingdom remains committed to achieving lasting peace in Yemen and the broader region. Ultimately, long-term stability and security in Yemen can be achieved only through a United Nations-led inclusive political settlement. We will continue to give our full support to Special Envoy Grundberg in that effort.

**Ms. Shea** (United States of America): We wish you success, Madam President, in your tenure as President of the Council this month. I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher and Ms. Nesmah Mansoor Ali, of Peace Track Initiative. I thank them for their briefings and in particular for underscoring the continued Houthi threats to international peace and security and how the Houthis' creation of an untenable environment for continued aid provision in areas under Houthi control directly led the United Nations to pause all activities in Yemen's Saada governorate.

The Security Council spoke with one voice last month by issuing a press statement (see SC/15995) condemning the tragic death of a World Food Programme employee in Houthi captivity and demanding the immediate release of all those — including United Nations, non-governmental organizations and diplomatic staff — unjustly detained by the Houthis.

In line with President Trump's executive order on redesignating the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization, the United States is taking concrete steps to eliminate the Houthis' capabilities and has designated the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization, which was announced this week. The United States is also using targeted sanctions to deprive the Houthis of illicit revenues. Our sanctions seek to preserve space for legitimate activities that support Yemenis living in Houthi-controlled territory, who bear no responsibility for the Houthis' malign actions. We will also take steps to stop Iran's support for Houthi terrorism, in accordance with President Trump's National Security Presidential Memorandum, which reimposes maximum pressure on Iran. We will take action against the Houthis should they resume their reckless attacks in the Red Sea and surrounding waterways and on Israel.

Every Member State has a responsibility to abide by its obligations under the resolutions adopted by the Council, including concerning the prohibition on providing arms or related materiel, training or financial assistance to the Houthis. As a Council, we must respond to Iran's flagrant violations of our resolutions through its continued arming of the Houthis. We reiterate our call for the Council to take steps to strengthen the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) and for Member States to do their part by increasing funding for UNVIM's long-term planning, recruitment of staff and critical infrastructure needs for enhanced capacity to inspect 100 per cent of covered containers.

The Houthis continue to attempt to hold the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and global commerce hostage. The Houthis have shown little willingness or ability to distinguish among their targets, and their claims that their attacks have any legitimate basis should never be accepted. We have also already seen Hamas — another Iran-enabled terrorist group — advise the Houthis to keep their hand on the trigger for renewed attacks on regional States and international commerce.

Member States must stop making excuses for the Houthis and cease propagating a false moral equivalence on regional issues. Houthi actions have done nothing for the Palestinian people. They have only endangered the lives of the innocent,



and they have brought more suffering to Yemenis. The Houthis' obstruction of aid exacerbated the spread of cholera last year, and the so-called Houthi authorities continue to routinely harass civilians and shake down small business owners. Now they are forcing Yemeni money exchangers to buy shares in a Houthi-controlled network for transfers, imposing their mafia-like control on the Yemeni private sector. The Yemeni people continue to suffer from that economic repression and Houthi round-ups. Unlawful detentions and sham trials are an affront to the international community. The Houthis have had many opportunities to de-escalate and set free the detainees — they have refused them all.

In recent meetings, many Council members expressed particular concern about the Houthis' sham so-called judicial proceedings involving a significant number of detainees. We categorically reject the unlawful process and strongly warn of any potential use of it as cover for politically motivated killings. We are closely monitoring those sham proceedings, especially if they move to the stage of handing out purported sentences in the Houthis' so-called State security court. If the Houthis do that, all donors must stand ready to respond with further concrete steps to reduce the exposure of their field staff and programmes to Houthi abuses. To reiterate, the United States will continue to oppose the destabilizing actions of the Houthis and will not abide by any attacks on our interests.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We congratulate Denmark on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and we wish you every success, Madam President. We would like to thank our Chinese friends for their excellent presidency in the month of February. We also thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher for their briefings. We listened very closely to Ms. Mansoor Ali.

The situation in Yemen remains challenging. The recent increase in armed clashes along the line of contact could upset the balance of forces and eventually spiral into uncontrolled escalation, which could be fraught with a full-scale resumption of hostilities. We do not rule out that such a trend could result, inter alia, from the accumulated fatigue of the warring parties caused by the stalled Yemeni settlement process. In addition, there is further deterioration in the socioeconomic sphere in the country, which is compounded by power cuts, inflation and rising prices for basic necessities. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating rapidly, and food security is increasingly under threat. As usual, that turmoil hits hardest the most vulnerable segments of society — women and children. Despite the efforts undertaken by the official Yemeni authorities, they have so far been unable to significantly improve the situation. The waters near Yemen have been largely peaceful so far. The Ansar Allah movement, as promised by its leadership, is currently refraining from striking commercial vessels passing through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. However, it would be a mistake to speak of final stabilization there. The situation in the Middle East is highly explosive, which gives little scope for optimism. Given the fact that the fragile ceasefire in the Gaza Strip has not yet moved to the second stage, which would provide for a permanent cessation of hostilities, there are serious risks regarding the situation in the Red Sea.

In the current conditions, Yemen still has a chance to overcome its internal differences and embark on the path to sustainable peace. International mediators, represented by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, must now make every effort to promptly resume the negotiating process on the road map for a Yemeni settlement, finalizing the agreements contained therein and launching a full-fledged political process. Success in that area can be achieved only through dialogue and with due regard for the legitimate interests of all the major political forces in the country, including Ansar Allah. In the absence of visible prospects for overcoming the crisis, backsliding into civil war could become inevitable. For our part, we reiterate our

full support for the relevant efforts made by Special Envoy Grundberg. We will continue to help him as much as we can through our regular contacts with all Yemeni protagonists and key regional actors. We would also like to recall that there is a need to eventually update the legal basis for the settlement so that it realistically reflects the current situation on the ground.

Unfortunately, our approach is not shared by everyone. Instead of pushing the Yemeni sides towards compromise, some countries are still guided by the mindset of maximum pressure, which has long since proved ineffective in Yemeni realities. We were disappointed to learn that the decision by the United States Administration to designate Ansar Allah as a terrorist organization came into effect two days ago. We warned our American colleagues that openly antagonizing one of the key parties to the Yemeni conflict would lead to no good. A similar move undertaken by Washington in 2021 only exacerbated the confrontation and made the search for a peaceful settlement in Yemen even more difficult. It is also rather easy to predict how that move will affect humanitarian assistance in the country. Humanitarians are already voicing their concerns, saying that it will narrow their possibilities for humanitarian action and create logistical and financial problems for humanitarian operations. In the interests of all Yemeni people, we once again call on the White House to reconsider its decision.

The difficulties for humanitarians in Yemen unfortunately do not end there. The United Nations was compelled to halt its humanitarian operations in Saada governorate following the mass detentions of United Nations local staff by the Houthis at the end of January, and that forced suspension is still in effect. Many United Nations and humanitarian workers detained earlier also remain in detention. We note the tireless efforts by the United Nations leadership to release them. Last month, the members of the Security Council agreed on a statement that conveyed a very strong message in support of those efforts (see SC/15995). For our part, we are also working on that, and we hope that the situation will be resolved in the near future.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that ensuring a political settlement in Yemen could become an important contribution to de-escalation in the entire region. Against that backdrop, we believe that there is a need for joint work to find mutually acceptable solutions aimed at reducing tension and settling crises by political and diplomatic means on the basis of international law. Russia's collective security concept for the Persian Gulf remains relevant in that regard. It envisages incremental steps towards unblocking conflict situations, developing confidence-building and verification measures and ultimately shaping integral architecture of collective security and cooperation, which could subsequently be applied to all countries in the Middle East.

**Mr. Kanu** (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Algeria, Somalia and my own country, Sierra Leone, plus Guyana (A3+).

We thank the briefers — Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Nesmah Mansoor Ali — for their insightful and comprehensive briefings. We also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

At the outset, the A3+ reiterates and fully supports the Secretary-General's call for the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations humanitarian personnel, diplomatic staff and civil society actors currently detained by the Houthis. The arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions of those individuals represent serious violations of international humanitarian law. We are also deeply concerned about the

ongoing targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure and the continued erosion of civic space in Yemen. As the Council remains committed to a Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-led political process that will ultimately bring lasting peace to Yemen, we emphasize the need to preserve the hard-won gains to date and underscore the importance of sustained mediation efforts under the auspices of the United Nations. In that regard, we would like to highlight the following points.

First, in the light of Yemen's multifaceted political, security and humanitarian challenges, we stress the importance of a balanced and inclusive process that ensures the safe and meaningful participation of all Yemenis in building the foundation for lasting peace. The A3+ fully supports the concerted efforts of the United Nations and regional actors, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman, in facilitating dialogue among national actors towards a political settlement, based on agreed references. We commend the efforts of the Special Envoy in facilitating the de-escalation of tensions and conflict. In that regard, we urge the full implementation of the recommendations from the recent third Yemen International Forum as part of ongoing community- and national-level engagement.

Secondly, the A3+ is profoundly concerned about the worsening levels of food insecurity in Yemen, exacerbated by the ongoing hostilities, economic decline and climate-related events. The humanitarian situation remains dire, as communities continue to suffer from the widespread damage and displacement caused by recent floods, including the catastrophic 2024 floods that destroyed homes, farms and livelihoods. The A3+ calls for increased support for the 2025 humanitarian response plan, which aims to provide life-saving assistance to 19.5 million people, in particular women, girls and children, who have been disproportionately affected by the conflict. Despite shrinking aid budgets, we recognize the tireless efforts of humanitarian organizations and their personnel to meet the urgent needs of the Yemeni people. We echo the call from Under-Secretary-General Fletcher, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme and other agencies in urging States with influence and means to support those efforts, including finding innovative solutions to mitigate the risks faced by humanitarian workers owing to targeted attacks.

Thirdly, the risk of military escalation within Yemen is growing, threatening to undermine the peace process and exacerbate the suffering of the Yemeni people. Stability in the Middle East is at a critical juncture, particularly with the ongoing negotiations to maintain the ceasefire in Gaza and the peace process in Syria, both of which are at critical transition points.

We note that, in its two most recent monthly reports, the International Maritime Organization indicated that no new incidents had occurred since the previous report covering the period through 7 February. We hope that that positive trend will continue, ultimately leading to a permanent cessation of attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea. The Council must remain resolute in its support for an inclusive political process to address Yemen's political and security challenges. Lasting peace and stability are essential for establishing the necessary national governance systems and for restarting oil and gas production and exports to revitalize the Yemeni economy.

In conclusion, the A3+ remains committed to supporting the Special Envoy's diplomatic efforts in facilitating a Yemeni-led, Yemeni-owned political process, under the auspices of the United Nations, to ultimately bring lasting peace to Yemen.

**Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General; Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Tom Fletcher; and Ms. Nesmah

Mansoor Ali for their briefings. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in the Chamber.

The Security Council has denounced with one voice the systematic Houthi violations of international humanitarian law, the most recent of which was the death last month of a World Food Programme aid worker detained in inhuman conditions.

France reiterates its strongest condemnation of the arbitrary detention by the Houthis of dozens of local and international United Nations and humanitarian personnel, members of Yemeni civil society and diplomatic missions. It calls for their immediate and unconditional release. We urge the Houthis to guarantee safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas and populations under their control and to put an end to all threats and disinformation campaigns against humanitarian actors.

France commends the unfailing commitment of the United Nations and humanitarian agencies that remain present on the ground. It calls on the Houthis to create the conditions necessary for the resumption of United Nations activities in the Sa'ada governorate. Through their actions, the Houthis are undermining the distribution of the aid needed by the Yemeni population and contributing to the worsening of the humanitarian crisis in the country. On the eve of International Women's Day, France reiterates its commitment in this area and stresses that conflicts and humanitarian crises disproportionately affect women, particularly in Yemen. Together with the Special Envoy's teams, France organized a workshop on the women and peace and security agenda, on the sidelines of the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit, held in Paris in early February, to discuss the challenges and opportunities posed by digital technologies.

France denounces the provocative statements made by the Houthis concerning their attacks in the Red Sea, which must cease. We renew our commitment, within the framework of the European Union's defensive security and defence policy operation — the European Union Naval Force Operation Aspides— in order to protect maritime safety and freedom of navigation, in accordance with international law and in liaison with our partners.

As the Special Envoy said, only a political solution can put an end to the conflict. France reiterates its full support of the Special Envoy in his efforts to bring about the necessary resumption of the peace process. France also reaffirms its commitment to the stability of Yemen and to regional security. It reiterates the need to avoid any further escalation in the region and calls on Iran to cease its support for destabilizing actions in the Middle East.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): It is good to see Denmark leading the Council. Pakistan thanks Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General; and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs; for their informative and comprehensive briefings. We also welcome the remarks by Ms. Nesmah Mansoor Ali, of Peace Track Initiative, and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in this meeting.

Yemen continues to face a deepening crisis, with severe humanitarian, political, economic and environmental dimensions. The risk of renewed military escalation threatens to worsen human suffering and undermine efforts for peace. Political divisions persist, and economic collapse and environmental degradation continue to take a devastating toll on the civilian population. It is imperative to reinvigorate political dialogue and take decisive steps to address these underlying challenges while laying the foundation for a sustainable resolution of the crisis in Yemen.

In that regard, I would like to make four points.

First, Pakistan emphasizes the critical role of dialogue in achieving lasting peace in Yemen. We reaffirm our full support for the United Nations-led peace process

and stress the need for an inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable resolution of the conflict. Regional initiatives, particularly those led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman, remain critical in advancing those negotiations. The road map outlined in December 2023 provides a viable framework for peace. We urge all parties to honour their commitments and fully implement the agreements reached.

Secondly, Yemen faces a multidimensional crisis. The humanitarian situation in Yemen is tragic. As we observe the holy month of Ramadan, millions in Yemen continue to endure extreme hardship — 19.5 million require urgent humanitarian assistance, including 9.6 million women. In addition, 4.5 million are internally displaced, and 12 million children lack access to basic necessities, such as food, water, shelter and healthcare.

Given the situation, we deeply regret the sudden cut-off of funding for humanitarian operations in Yemen. That gap must be filled by the international community and donor countries, and we hope that all will step up their contributions to the 2025 humanitarian response plan for Yemen, as urged by Mr. Tom Fletcher in today's meeting.

Thirdly, we strongly condemn the arbitrary detention of United Nations personnel, staff of international and national non-governmental organizations and members of diplomatic missions by Ansar Allah, that is, the Houthis. That action not only obstructs humanitarian efforts, but it also constitutes a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. The safety and security of United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers must be guaranteed. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained individuals. That will also ensure the uninterrupted flow of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

Fourthly, Pakistan denounces the Houthi attacks on international shipping. We take note that there have been no new attacks on commercial shipping since the onset of the ceasefire in Gaza. While we unequivocally condemn any such attacks, it is crucial to recognize that the absence of these attacks coincides with the maintenance of the ceasefire in Gaza. That underscores the urgent need to fully implement and preserve the Gaza ceasefire agreement in all of its phases. A permanent ceasefire will not only serve the cause of peace in Palestine and with Israel, but also contribute to regional stability, including in Yemen.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to supporting a Yemeni-led and -owned political process facilitated by the United Nations and the Special Envoy. We stand in solidarity with the people of Yemen in their pursuit of peace, security and prosperity. The international community must act with urgency in order to prevent the further deterioration of the crisis and to pave the way for a future of stability and hope for Yemen.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I congratulate you, Madam, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings. I listened carefully to the statement delivered by the civil society representative. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen at today's meeting.

Since mid-January, following the ceasefire in Gaza, the situation in the Red Sea has shown signs of easing. China calls on all parties concerned to continue to exercise restraint, work for further de-escalation of the situation and seize the opportunity to redouble efforts towards a political settlement in Yemen. A political solution is the fundamental way to resolve the Yemeni issue. All parties in Yemen should demonstrate a willingness to work towards the same goals and must uphold the Yemeni-led and -owned principle in the pursuit of a comprehensive solution. China commends the active mediation efforts by Special Envoy Grundberg. The top priority right now is to rebuild trust among parties and create conditions for the

resumption of dialogue and communication. All relevant parties in the international community should play a constructive role in that regard and avoid any action that may aggravate confrontation and escalate the situation.

The economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen is worrisome. The international community should continue to lend a helping hand and increase, instead of decrease, the provision of humanitarian assistance, as well as prioritize food security. China is concerned about the continued detention of United Nations personnel and urges the Houthis to immediately release all detained United Nations personnel. We call on all parties in Yemen to respect and fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, facilitate humanitarian operations and ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access, as well as the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

The Yemeni issue and the situation in the Red Sea are closely linked to the regional context. There are enormous challenges to the maintenance of the ceasefire in Gaza and to the realization of the transitions of the three phases of the ceasefire. China supports the efforts of Egypt and other Arab countries to promote the ongoing and effective implementation of the ceasefire agreement, advance humanitarian relief and restore security and stability in Gaza. We call on the international community to make concerted efforts to resolve the question of Palestine, restore peace and stability in Yemen and the Red Sea and achieve long-term peace and stability in the region.

**Mr. Ponikvar** (Slovenia): We too express our appreciation to Special Envoy Grundberg, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Ms. Mansoor Ali for their briefings today. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting and wish Yemenis and all those who celebrate around the world a blessed Ramadan.

The path to peace in Yemen has never been easy. That remains the case today. The path is paved with challenges, is vulnerable to regional dynamics and deteriorates when parties fail to put the Yemeni people first. Those challenges are mounting. Soaring needs and a shrinking humanitarian space have left humanitarian workers in fear for their safety, limiting their life-saving work.

Last month, the Council unanimously condemned the death in custody of one World Food Programme worker and called for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained by the Houthis (see SC/15995). Slovenia repeats that call today.

We also fear that uncertainty around moves to introduce terrorist designations in the Yemeni context, regardless of merit, could have unintended consequences and further compound humanitarian needs. We sincerely hope that this can be avoided.

As illustrated powerfully today by Ms. Mansoor Ali, Yemen is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, ravaged by droughts and flooding. Moreover, it is a clear example of how the effects of climate change and conflict together exacerbate food and water insecurity.

Slovenia, as a founding member of the Global Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflicts, calls for the protection and development of water resources and water infrastructure in Yemen. We strongly believe that water issues can actually be an entry point for grass-roots dialogue and mutual understanding between parties, as well as for empowering women.

We cannot discuss Yemen's challenges without touching on the economy. We remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating currency and soaring costs. Recent blackouts in Aden and resulting protests demonstrate that Yemenis yearn for a stable economy and a functioning Government. We welcomed the deal struck in July on issues relating to the banking sector. We urge the parties to recommit to economic

de-escalation and to build upon that agreement. We also stress the importance of unity and coordination within the Presidential Leadership Council.

From a security perspective, Slovenia calls for strict compliance with the United Nations arms embargo, as well as for full freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. Persisting hostilities along the front lines continue to threaten the lives, safety and security of civilians. All parties must de-escalate and adhere to international humanitarian law. The fragile calm in the entire region must prevail.

We thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for the important emphasis they placed today on Yemeni women. It is worth repeating that, when it comes to the challenges facing Yemen, women and girls often bear the brunt, although they are the least responsible for this war. Slovenia reiterates its commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and to the protection and promotion of human rights for all in Yemen. That will be possible only through accountability and with independent and impartial human rights monitoring across the country. That, in turn, should enable Yemen's vibrant civil society and private sector to help lay the foundations for the future of Yemen.

The path to peace in Yemen has never been easy. But we do hold on to hope in the Special Envoy's conviction that a sustainable resolution to this conflict remains possible. By addressing root causes and through political will and courageous leadership from the parties, peace should be achievable. We reiterate our full support to the whole United Nations system in that effort. A return to all-out war must be avoided at all costs.

**Mr. Alfaro de Alba** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama thanks the President of the Council for convening this meeting and assures her of our support for her mandate and its success. We also thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their valuable contributions. We also recognize the valuable input of Ms. Nesmah Mansoor Ali and the representative of Yemen in today's meeting, and we warmly welcome their participation.

We are concerned about the lack of progress since the most recent meeting on that issue (see S/PV.9858), in connection with the illegal and unjustified detention by the Houthis of the 23 United Nations workers. We therefore reiterate with equal urgency what was previously stated with regard to the need for the immediate and unconditional release of all personnel of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and diplomatic corps and for strict compliance with the fundamental human rights of all humanitarian workers, who play a crucial role in promoting peace, stability and development.

The internal conflict in Yemen has triggered a devastating humanitarian crisis, considered one of the most severe in the world. Economic collapse, climate disasters and regional escalation have exacerbated assistance needs and increased protection risks. The *Global Humanitarian Overview 2025* reports that Yemen is the third country most vulnerable to climate change, with its semi-arid climate and extreme events such as droughts and floods, which exacerbate its vulnerabilities. Environmental degradation, humanitarian crisis and protracted conflict increase food insecurity, water scarcity and population displacement. In that context, it is crucial to integrate environmental mitigation into peacebuilding initiatives to reduce risks, bolster stability and promote community resilience.

Panama recognizes the nexus between climate, peace and security and understands that they are interrelated factors that directly impact the well-being of nations. In that regard, we advocate a holistic approach that combines sustainable

development, resilience and the reduction of vulnerabilities as fundamental foundations for achieving lasting peace.

In addition, Yemen remains severely contaminated by landmines, sea mines, improvised explosive devices and other explosive remnants of war, the consequences of which have an impact on both the people and the environment. We support the work of United Nations entities in their efforts to eliminate the risks associated with those devices, protect civilians and humanitarian workers and make progress on the demining of the region.

Furthermore, the suffering of Yemeni women, as a result of limited humanitarian access and limited access to health services, as well as prejudice and youth marriage, must not go unnoticed. What we have heard from Tom Fletcher in his dramatic briefing is a scandal, and the suspensions of funds for humanitarian aid is another scandal.

At this critical juncture, it is essential that the Council take decisive action to ensure unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to those who need it most. It is our responsibility to ensure that the resources, support and assistance arrive effectively and without delays or reductions, always prioritizing the well-being of the Yemeni people. Strengthening international financing and cooperation is critical to achieve a more secure Yemen and facilitate the sustainable rebuilding of the country.

**Mr. Sekeris** (Greece): I would like to start by thanking Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher for their informative briefings. I would also like to welcome the presence here today of Ms. Ali, representative of the civil society of Yemen, as well as the Permanent Representative of Yemen, and to wish all who celebrate today Ramadan Mubarak.

The situation on the ground remains fragile and the risk of military escalation has not eclipsed, while the efforts to agree on a new national ceasefire have not succeeded. At the same time, the humanitarian situation remains dire, and many members of humanitarian agencies remain under custody and face unjustified charges.

We call on the Houthis to immediately release all diplomatic staff, United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel and humanitarian workers who are arbitrarily under detention and to hold accountable all those responsible for the recent death of a member of the World Food Programme under Houthi custody.

I would like to briefly highlight three points.

First, Greece unequivocally supports the work of the Special Envoy, Hans Grundberg, and his tireless efforts to reinvigorate the dialogue between the parties, with the aim of achieving a new national ceasefire. That will create fertile terrain for negotiating a Yemeni-led, Yemeni-owned political process that will end the long-standing instability and uncertainty in the country and ensure the conditions for economic prosperity and welfare for the Yemeni people.

Secondly, as a historic seafaring nation, Greece firmly supports the freedom of navigation and the full applicability of the international law of the sea, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Moreover, my country remains committed to safeguarding maritime security in the region of the Red Sea and will continue to do its part in order to protect one of the world's most important maritime routes. That is why Greece participates in the European Union's Operation Aspides in the Red Sea and will continue to provide valuable support to that mission.

Thirdly, we would like to echo calls to all parties to refrain from any escalatory action that could pose risks for environmental disasters especially in the Red Sea. The cases of the *FSO SAFER* and the Greek-flagged *MV Sounion* clearly demonstrated how serious the potential environmental and humanitarian consequences of the



conflict can be. We are thankful to all those that contributed to the prevention of a grave environmental disaster in both cases.

In addition, we fully support all initiatives by the international community to manage the effects of adverse climate conditions and their impact on accessible resources, especially in war-torn countries such as Yemen.

We also remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation of women and girls in the country, commend their resilience and courage, and will support all efforts to alleviate their suffering and safeguard their rights.

In conclusion, the Council and the countries of the region must send a clear message of unity and commitment to the need for de-escalation and dialogue between the opposing sides of the Yemeni conflict and especially the Houthis. We also call for unity within the Presidential Leadership Council. At the same time, the Council and all relevant actors of the international community must do their utmost to support the Presidential Leadership Council and the legitimate, recognized Government of Yemen in its colossal task to support Yemeni society and strengthen public institutions amid a complex economic situation.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I join my colleagues in congratulating Denmark on assuming the presidency of the Council in March. My gratitude also goes to today's insightful briefers, and I welcome the participation of representative of Yemen in today's briefing.

Today I would like to make the following points.

First, we demand that the Houthis permanently cease all hostile activities, including those against merchant vessels, which jeopardize maritime security and free navigation in the region. While we welcome the pause in attacks in the Red Sea and on Israel, the Houthis have also repeatedly declared their readiness to resume such attacks if the ceasefire and hostage deal in Gaza breaks down. That is unacceptable. A recent report reveals a 50 per cent decline in Red Sea shipping traffic since 2023, disrupting vital global trade routes and a critical lifeline for humanitarian assistance in Yemen, as well as compounding Yemen's economic hardships.

Secondly, we reiterate our call for the release of all detainees, including United Nations, non-governmental organization (NGO), civil society and diplomatic personnel, without delay. Despite the Security Council's press statement on 13 February (SC/15995), demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees and strongly condemning ongoing detentions, the Houthis persistently refuse to heed the international community's unified call. In that regard, we remind the Houthis of the 1 March letter from United Nations agencies and NGOs on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. We also remind the Houthis of the Secretary-General's appeal for a thorough, immediate and transparent investigation to hold those responsible accountable.

Thirdly, we emphasize once again the need for faithful implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, especially the targeted arms embargo. Indeed, abiding by the arms embargo is the fundamental prerequisite for the stability of both Yemen and the wider region. On that point, we believe that the international community should pay elevated attention to the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen and the Yemeni Government's maritime security efforts, including its coast guard capacity-building, to ensure stronger adherence to the arms embargo.

Fourthly, as Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher and civil society briefer Ms. Ali clearly illustrated today, Yemen's humanitarian crisis is worsening. The Republic of Korea remains committed to addressing the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people, including women and children, particularly in climate-linked

food insecurity and malnutrition. As part of our efforts to that end, 23,000 tons of rice will be delivered to the people of Yemen in cooperation with the World Food Programme this year. We hope that assistance will support refugees and internally displaced persons who are suffering from nutritional deficiency. We are also supporting an International Organization for Migration project to empower women in water-related conflict resolution and climate adaptation. There are 14.5 million Yemeni people who lack access to safe drinking water, making it one of the world's most water-scarce nations. Surging temperatures and erratic rainfall exacerbate already dire water shortages, directly endangering the livelihoods of Yemenis and the country's stability.

Lastly, as Special Envoy Grundberg recently emphasized, the international community, including key regional countries, must not lose sight of Yemen amid a fluid international security environment. Indeed, our continued diplomatic, financial and humanitarian support for Yemen is now more vital than ever. As broader shifts in the situation in the Middle East transpire, we strongly hope for the creation of an atmosphere that fosters forward-momentum in the political process in Yemen.

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to an inclusive, Yemeni-led political transition under United Nations auspices and remains steadfast in alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people.

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

Like others, I want to start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings. I would like to express special thanks to our civil society briefer, Nesmah Mansoor Ali, for bringing new perspectives to the Council today on the need to address the often-overlooked effects of climate change in Yemen and its impact on insecurity and conflict. I also welcome the representative of Yemen to our meeting today.

I would like to make three points.

First, as we have heard from Under-Secretary-General Fletcher this morning, the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen is deeply concerning and has staggering consequences for women and girls in particular. With an economy on the brink of collapse, persistent electricity cuts, severe food insecurity and acute water scarcity, for too many Yemenis it is hard to maintain hope. The humanitarian needs are further compounded by the exacerbating impacts of climate change. As the third most vulnerable country to climate change in the world, Yemen is highly affected by climate-induced disasters, including droughts and floods. The convergence of prolonged conflict, environmental degradation and climate change has created a perfect storm of crises with competition over scarce resources, threatening Yemen's short and long-term peace and stability. As Council members, we must do more to make sure that climate considerations are integrated into peacebuilding strategies, local mediation efforts and a future peace settlement process. We urge the international community to support the Yemeni Government in addressing those challenges.

Secondly, the Houthis continue to unlawfully detain United Nations staff and humanitarian personnel, many of whom have spent years delivering assistance to the people the Houthis claim to serve. The tragic death of a World Food Programme staff member held in Houthi detention last month underscores the urgency of ensuring the release of all those arbitrarily detained. We call on the Houthis to do so immediately and without preconditions, and we demand that their rights be respected in line with international humanitarian law. We appreciate the Council speaking in one voice in condemning that by adopting a press statement (SC/15995) last month. As in all

other conflicts on the Council's agenda, safe, rapid and unimpeded access for all humanitarian actors are non-negotiable requirements.

Thirdly and finally, the Houthis' threats to further escalate attacks in the Red Sea will not make Yemenis lives easier or more secure, rather they risk drawing Yemen further into the regional turmoil and an endless spiral of retaliatory violence. Attacks against international merchant vessels, regardless of their origin or destination, have no justification. Freedom of navigation must be respected in line with international law. Denmark will continue to defend that as part of the European Union's Operation Aspides. We further underscore the need to reinforce the targeted arms embargo on the Houthis.

In conclusion, the Houthis must refocus their efforts on addressing the needs of the millions of Yemenis, who have suffered over a decade of war, by engaging in the United Nations-led political process towards a lasting solution to the conflict.

Denmark expresses its full support for the efforts led by Special Envoy Hans Grundberg. We encourage all stakeholders to engage actively with his Office to pave the way for a resumption of the political process.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

**Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen)** (*spoke in Arabic*): We express our happiness at seeing you, Ambassador Christina Lassen, presiding over the Council for this month. We wish you and your friendly delegation every success in your duties. I also thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, for his successful presidency last month. I also thank Mr. Grundberg, Mr. Fletcher and Ms. Nesmah Mansoor Ali for their briefings.

As the ongoing conflict enters its eleventh year, Yemen stands at a critical juncture in which the patient Yemeni people have aspired to peace and an end to their long suffering. However, their hopes and aspirations have not been realized owing to the destructive approach of the Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist militias and their rejection of all regional and international efforts to achieve peace and their ongoing evasion of their obligation to peace through their escalation and military mobilization on various fronts, their violations of all commitments and their plans to return to a full-scale war, plunging Yemen into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

In that context, the Presidential Leadership Council and the Yemeni Government reaffirm their keen interest in positively engaging with all regional and international initiatives and efforts, as well as the efforts of the United Nations through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, to reach a political settlement of the Yemeni crisis and end that destructive war based on the terms of reference of the agreed political solution, foremost of which is resolution 2216 (2015), which represents a key pillar and a road map to address the crisis in Yemen.

Achieving just, comprehensive and sustainable peace in Yemen requires international support and the creation of a strategic partnership that translates into practical steps to support the efforts of the Yemeni Government, end the coup, restore State institutions and extend control over the entire Yemeni territory, ensure the security of the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait and transform it from a source of threat to a bridge for peace, as it has been throughout history, and implement the resolutions banning the flow of weapons from the Iranian regime to the Houthi militias, as that is a threat to regional and international peace and security, prolongs the conflict and exacerbates the humanitarian crisis for Yemenis.

The Government of Yemen welcomes the United States Department of State's announcement that the designation of the Houthi militias as a foreign terrorist

organization has entered into force. That decision is an important step in confronting the threats posed by those militias, supported by the Iranian regime, whose terrorist actions have targeted civilians and infrastructure in Yemen and neighbouring countries, as well as commercial vessels in the Red Sea, in an ongoing threat to the security and safety of navigation and international trade routes. The Yemeni Government reiterates its full support for that designation as an effective tool to stem the material and financial support for those militias and renews its call to the international community to take similar steps to dry up the sources of financing and weapons for the Houthis and strengthen efforts to restore stability and peace in Yemen. The Government of Yemen affirms its full commitment and readiness to work with partners in the international community to ensure that the decision is implemented in a way that serves the interests of the Yemeni people and promotes peace and security in the region and to take the necessary measures to channel the requirements of the designation towards its main objectives of dismantling the infrastructure of the terrorist Houthi militias without harming the interests of the citizens, humanitarian assistance, food imports and commercial activities while mitigating any negative effects of the designation on the humanitarian situation.

Yemen is facing enormous economic, humanitarian, social and institutional challenges owing to the war launched by the Houthi militias, which led to Yemen's loss of more than half of its national revenue — equivalent to \$250 billion, the depreciation of the national currency, the rise in cumulative inflation rates and the rise in the unemployment rate, which has now reached 80 per cent. The Yemeni Government is making tremendous efforts to address those challenges and is urgently prioritizing measures aimed at achieving economic stability and resilience. Short-term plans have been developed to stop the deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situations, laying the foundations for economic development and strengthening governance and the resilience of the private sector. In that context, we look forward to a doubling of the support provided by the international community and Yemen's development partners and its redirecting in accordance with those priorities in the economic, development, humanitarian and service sectors.

It is important to build on the outcomes of the high-level ministerial meeting held earlier this year to support the efforts of the Yemeni Government and the messages of economic and political support to the Yemeni Government and its reforms and vision for economic recovery and the five main pathways, according to that vision, to address the current challenges. In that context, we also highly appreciate the support provided by our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the people and Government of Yemen in various fields in these exceptional and difficult circumstances and the support of all brothers and friends to alleviate the human suffering of the Yemeni people.

We welcome the unity shown by the Security Council through its strong condemnation of the ongoing arbitrary detention of the staff of United Nations agencies, international organizations, civil society organizations and diplomatic missions operating in the Yemen and its call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees. However, we stress the importance of exerting greater pressure on the Houthi militias and taking strict measures to end the violations and immediately and unconditionally release all abductees and detainees. We reiterate the Yemeni Government's warning that the militias will not stop blackmailing the international community and will carry out more arrests and violations against civilians and humanitarian workers and will not stop mistreating the forcibly detained in their prisons.

In that context, the Yemeni Government once again calls for the headquarters of United Nations agencies and international organizations operating in Yemen to be relocated to the temporary capital of Aden to ensure a safe and stable environment in

which to conduct humanitarian and relief work without obstacles and stop the looting of aid by the Houthi militias to serve the so-called war effort and expand the war against the Yemeni people.

As United Nations Member States prepare to review next week the progress made on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action during the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and as we approach International Women's Day, the Houthi militias are working to destroy all the achievements made on behalf of Yemeni women. The militias continue their serious violations, kidnapping and detention of hundreds of Yemeni women, depriving them of their political, economic and social rights and their right to education. They continue to detain them, throwing them in secret prisons, fabricating charges, practicing various forms of blackmail, psychological and physical torture and subjecting them to sexual harassment and assault in connection with their political, media and human rights activities and preventing them from political participation to contribute to building and enlightening Yemeni society.

An example of those crimes is the tragedy that befell Mrs. Rabab Al-Madhwhi, who was kidnapped by the Houthi militias nine months ago and whose mother died a few days ago in grief over the detention and enforced disappearance of her daughter. That tragedy is an extension of the criminal practices against innocent civilians in the areas controlled by those militias. That crime is not only an individual tragedy, but is also a systematic policy and a glaring example of the crimes perpetrated by those militias through kidnapping, torture and the terrorizing of families, which have led to the death of many of detainees mothers out of anguish and grief over the fate of their children in the prisons of the militias and under inhumane conditions, in flagrant violation of human rights law and international humanitarian law.

*The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.*