

**United Nations**

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



**الأمم المتحدة**

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

**Statement to the UN Security Council  
Mr. Martin Griffiths – UN Special Envoy for Yemen  
16 November 2018**

Mr. President,

Yemen has long been referred to as the forgotten war. I am grateful that this is no longer the case. Never has so much international attention and energy been given to this crisis, and rightly so. Yemen remains the largest humanitarian disaster in the world as we will hear from Mark Lowcock and David Beasley. The fight against famine is ongoing. Women, children and men are dying from preventable diseases. The economy remains on the verge of collapse.

This requires urgent action from all of us.

Public opinion and leaders have called urgently to remove the prospect of famine. This is a clear example of the international conscience. For this reason, I personally encourage the Council to support the five requests presented by Mark Lowcock in this very Chamber late October. It provides a very clear roadmap that we must all support.

Mr. President,

# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

The conflict continues, and rages on. We see Hodeidah as the center of gravity of the war. And for this reason, we deeply welcome recent reports of the reduction of violence on Hodeidah fronts.

And we need it to last.

I am extremely grateful to all leaders and others who have called for a cessation of hostilities. There must be no temptation to restart that battle. As the mediator in this conflict, I strongly believe that nothing should be allowed to impede the chance of dialogue and negotiation.

This Council has consistently called on all the parties to avoid any humanitarian catastrophe. And Secretary-General *Guterres* recently reminded us of our fears in that regard, the other day. But the situation in Hodeidah is fragile and unstable. We need to take urgent action. As you recall, we made some progress over the summer to reach a negotiated handover of the port of Hodeidah to the United Nations. I plan to visit Hodeidah next week along with my colleague Lise Grande, not least to revisit a UN supervisory role for the port and to draw attention to the continued need for a pause.

# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

I am encouraged by the recent calls from all parties, the Government of Yemen in particular, and Ansar Allah, in addition to the Coalition, for the UN to step forward at this time on this issue. Let us build on this rather than retreat.

Mr. President,

With increased international attention has come a renewed commitment from the Yemeni parties to work on a political solution. I welcome President Hadi's announcement to move swiftly to a political solution. And I know from my contacts in Sana'a that Ansar Allah is also committed to this. And with this in mind, I intend to reconvene the parties shortly – and to do so in Sweden. I thank the Swedish government, through the representative of Sweden present here, for their offer to host the consultations. I believe we are close to resolving the preparatory issues that will allow to make this happen. I am grateful to the Coalition for agreeing our proposed logistical arrangements, and to the Coalition and Oman for their agreement to facilitate the medical evacuation of some injured Yemenis out of Sana'a.

This is a crucial moment for Yemen. I have received firm assurances from the leadership of the Yemeni parties; the government of Yemen and Ansar Allah, that they are committed

# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

to attending these consultations. I believe they are genuine and I expect them to continue in that way, and to appear for these consultations, and indeed so do the Yemeni people, who are desperate for a political solution to a war in which they are the main victims.

Mr. President,

I have spent the last two months seeking support from the parties for an updated version of the Framework for Negotiations that I briefed you in this Council on 18 June, where I briefed you orally on the elements of such a framework. The Framework is based upon the three references, SCR 2216, as well as the progress made particularly in Kuwait, and I repeat again, as I have done in previous meetings of this council, gratitude to the Government of Kuwait for hosting those talks in 2016. After careful listening to the parties over the last few months, I am confident that this framework is in line with both the requirements of this Council, and the new realities of the conflict in Yemen. The Framework, however, is my vision. But its ideas are not mine alone. Every conversation, every negotiation which has gone before has, I hope, become the basis for this document. I have, as you would imagine, shared it with the parties, for their views, and ultimately, I hope, their acceptance, just as a basis for negotiation, and not to negotiate the text itself. That would be the matter that would bring the parties together in the coming weeks and months. And when the parties have had the opportunity to brief me on their views on that

# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

Framework, I would like to put it in front of this Council, and seek your endorsement, so that we can use it as a basis for the upcoming consultations on substance, and to agree a roadmap, ideally in the next round of consultations, towards a Transitional Agreement.

This Framework establishes the principles and parameters for UN-led, inclusive Yemeni negotiations to end the war, and restart a political transition process. It includes a set of interim security and political arrangements, including mechanisms, sequencing and guarantees for implementation. It is a very broad document, as it only intends to be a basis for detailed negotiations. But I do believe that the arrangements outlined and referred to, will allow for an end to the fighting inside of Yemen, the return of Yemen's friendly relations with neighboring states and the restoring of state institutions.

And I believe that this Framework reflects, in fact and in words, the resolutions of this Council, and in no way derogates from them. My task is to fashion a road towards principled compromise, which allows the people of Yemen to live again in peace, and to set out a political solution that is available, and as I said before, it is there for taking.

Mr. President,

# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

A mediator's principal task is to bring the parties together to resolve their differences through dialogue and compromise rather than combat and conflict. This is what I hope we will soon, as we move forward.

We are doing all that we can to achieve these goals. But as I said, in April, in this chamber: events of war can always take peace off the table. We must not let that happen now.

We are working very hard to finalize the logistical arrangements. I will go to Sana'a next week for this purpose. I shall meet the Ansar Allah leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, with whom I have had detailed discussions in previous months, about the need for engagement, consultations, and ultimately negotiations. It will be useful for me to hear again his leadership on these matters. I will also be happy to travel myself, if necessary, with their delegation to the consultations, if that is needed.

Mr. President,

For a political settlement to be sustainable it must be inclusive, and it is a requirement of the resolutions affecting this conflict. And it must enjoy the support of the Yemeni people.

I am fortunate to have the support of the Yemeni women advisory group, which not only

# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

came with us to Geneva, but is providing specific ideas on tactics and strategies as we move forward towards consultations.

We are also looking at using technology to strengthen inclusivity to provide an interactive platform for these voices which cannot travel, for the voices of those in Yemen, to be heard as we gather the parties around the table. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, physical presence is not the only way to strengthen inclusion.

The Southern question is always on our minds. We are currently enjoying a period of calm, but the threat of violence, destabilization and instability is ever present. I have spent a lot of time listening to southern groups and exploring ways to address their concerns. Ultimately, the just resolution of the southern issue should be achieved, in my view, during the transitional period. It should meet the legitimate aspirations of the people of Yemen, and ensure that they enjoy the benefits of good governance.

Southern actors will clearly have a crucial role in safeguarding the outcomes of the peace process we are working on now and it is vital to secure their buy-in. It is my responsibility however to alert you that that there is unfinished business in the south of Yemen.

Mr. President,

# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

I would like to take the opportunity to announce to members of this Council that we are about to conclude an agreement between the parties on the exchange of prisoners and detainees, it may well be the first signed agreement between the parties in this conflict. We made great progress. President Hadi was the first to urge us to focus on this, and I also had the support of Abdel Malek Al Houthi when I first met him. I welcome the commitment of all parties who have engaged in good faith; the Coalition, the Government of Yemen, and Ansar Allah. It is an important humanitarian gesture and a timely message of hope to the Yemeni people. I had hoped that we would have been able to announce the formalization of this agreement today, but I am sure it will happen in the coming days.

I strongly believe that the parties need to get together without condition, under our auspices, to jointly address the dire economic situation in Yemen including the rapid deterioration of the Yemeni Rial – a key contributing aspect of famine. It is useful to note, and important to give credit to the Government of Yemen, that the depreciation of the Rial which was alarming, has now flattened out. This should not be a matter subject to political consideration when the victims are the Yemeni people. This is not indeed a confidence-building measures. It is a moral responsibility and obligation of the parties to the Yemeni



# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

people. I am planning to convene soon a meeting of the Central Bank of Yemen, to be facilitated by the IMF, to agree on an action plan which would allow the Central Bank of Yemen to discharge its responsibilities across the country and for all the people of Yemen.

Finally, Mr. President,

We must seize this positive international momentum on Yemen. Attention to Yemen is a great asset, as is the unity of this Council.

I strongly believe that this is an opportunity at a crucial moment to pursue a comprehensive and inclusive political settlement to the conflict.

Indeed, Yemen can no longer afford to be referred as a forgotten war.

What I would ask you to consider, Mr. President, is that all our efforts should be directed towards at least two things. Firstly; the humanitarian priority, that Marc and David will refer to in a minute, which is the most important priority to the people of Yemen. And secondly; let us hope that there will be no acts which prevent the convening of the parties for consultations, in Sweden, in the coming weeks. This is an opportunity which has long been awaited by the people of Yemen. It is an opportunity which this council has long

# United Nations

Office of the Special Envoy  
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

asked of the parties. I think we are almost there. We need to focus to make sure that nothing disrupts the path to that meeting.