



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

**SE Grundberg's Briefing to the UN Security Council
6 March 2025
Open Session**

Madam President, 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 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 connection 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 this Council's continued support on this issue.

Madam President, in the now over ten years of this unresolved conflict, the grinding hardship that Yemenis are suffering only deepens. Since its onset, GDP per capita has more than halved. Civil servants in Ansar Allah controlled areas have not been regularly paid on time or in full since 2018, whilst 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 fifty per cent in the last year, driving up prices of basic commodities. As a consequence, poverty has surged across the country.

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

While a resumption of large-scale ground operations in Yemen has not occurred since the UN-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 Ta'iz. I therefore also reiterate my calls on the parties to refrain from military posturing and retaliatory measures that could risk plunging Yemen back into widespread conflict where civilians will again pay the price.

Madam President, as you 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 amidst 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 you will need to address a set of three particular challenges. The parties will have to agree on a nationwide cease fire, 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 settle once and for all enabling Yemenis to live their life in peace.

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

Madam President, the implementation of the US designation of Ansar Allah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization is now unfolding. While the full ramifications of this 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 Yemenis under the auspices of the UN is preserved. I remain committed to continuing to carry out my duties in accordance with the mandate given to the Secretary-General by this 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 roadmap continue to represent a viable path. In this regard I am deeply grateful to this Council for its unity and support to the UN's work to support Yemen in this difficult time.

Madam President, in two days 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.

These 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 am therefore also looking forward to listening to the statement from Nesmah Ali Mansoor from the 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.

Madam President, 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 or 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 this. Thank you very much.