

# Ending hostilities and averting famine in Yemen

Remarks by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council briefing on Yemen

My thanks to Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock, and Ambassador King for their briefings.

For Yemen, 2021 started much as 2020 left off: an intractable conflict with what threatens to be the worst famine in decades. But as we have heard, there is an opportunity. Increased US engagement on Yemen, including the reversal of designation, is a welcome milestone. And we fully support UN efforts to broker a deal that ends hostilities, eases economic restrictions, and leads to a comprehensive political process.

However, the Houthis have responded to this push for peace by escalating their attacks against Saudi Arabia and by launching a new offensive on Marib – a city where one million Yemenis have sought refuge.

It will take the collective efforts of this Council to persuade the Houthis to cease this offensive. This conflict will not end without a comprehensive deal involving all of Yemen's key political groups, including the Houthis. In this regard, I welcome the supportive statements that Martin Griffiths received during his recent visits to Tehran and Riyadh, and hope that the Houthis will now receive Martin in Sana'a to discuss the way forward.

While the war rages, as we've heard, millions of Yemenis risk starvation. To prevent famine, the international community and Yemen's key partners must step up at the Pledging Conference on 1 March – or, as Mark said, before that. History – and the Yemeni people – will not look kindly on us if we fail.

UNSC Resolution 2417 makes clear that humanitarian access must not be impeded. In addition, Government of Yemen restrictions on fuel imports are sharply increasing prices, as we've heard, threatening the delivery of basic services, and the lives of Yemenis. Significant external financial assistance to the Central Bank of Yemen is also urgently needed.

Finally, further Houthi delays to the UN mission to assess the SAFER oil tanker are unacceptable. With another vessel potentially identified, I hope the UN can outline in greater detail what more they need from the Houthis for this mission to deploy.