

News story: Yemen needs inclusive peace talks, UK says as conflict enters its fourth year

The Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, and International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, have issued a statement on Yemen:

Today, as the Saudi-led Coalition's intervention in Yemen enters its fourth year, we call on all parties to return to the negotiating table to find an inclusive political solution that delivers the peaceful future the people of Yemen deserve.

The humanitarian crisis triggered by the conflict has left over 22 million people in need of assistance. In the last eight months alone, an additional one million people found themselves without the necessities such as food and medicines that they need to survive.

With the rainy season fast approaching, the crisis could be made even worse if there is another surge in the cholera outbreak – the number of suspected cases reported over the last year is already well over one million.

The UK has been at the forefront of the international response and is the third largest humanitarian donor to Yemen. We are delivering life-saving interventions including food for 3.4 million people, nutrition support to 1.7 million people, and clean water and sanitation for an expected 1.2 million people. UK aid is also funding a new cholera response programme that aims to vaccinate 1.1 million people against the preventable disease.

But without de-escalation and a political settlement millions of civilians risk starvation. Saudi Arabia has the right to defend itself against security threats including missiles launched from Yemen, and we support the Saudi-led Coalition's efforts to restore legitimacy in Yemen, as accepted by the UN Security Council. We have worked hard with Saudi Arabia and other international partners to strengthen the UN shipping inspection mechanism to ensure that all ports can remain open to all commercial and humanitarian supplies. All sides must redouble their support for the UN's efforts to reach an inclusive political settlement which addresses the root causes of the conflict. We welcome the appointment of the new UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, who brings with him extensive experience in conflict resolution.

A UN Panel of Experts has concluded that Iran is in non-compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions for failing to take measures

to prevent the supply of Iranian-made ballistic missiles to the Houthis. If Iran is genuinely committed to supporting a political solution in Yemen – as it has publicly stated – then it should stop sending in weapons which prolong the conflict, fuel regional tensions, and pose threats to international peace and security. We question why Iran is spending significant revenue in a country with which it has no real historical ties or interests, rather than using its influence to end the conflict for the good of the Yemeni people.

We call upon countries of the region and the international community to redouble their efforts in support of this goal, and for parties to the conflict to allow unhindered commercial and humanitarian access throughout Yemen, including for fuel, and for the Government of Yemen to pay public sector salaries across the country. We will continue to play our part in restoring the peace and security needed for Yemenis to resume normal lives.

Penny Mordaunt, International Development Secretary

Boris Johnson, Foreign Secretary