

Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on military action in Hodeidah

Following the start of military action by Coalition-backed forces to take Hodeidah port back from Houthi militia, I call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and prioritise the protection of civilians.

We are in regular contact with the Coalition about the need to ensure that any military operations in and around Hodeidah are conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law, including on the protection of civilians, and do not disrupt commercial and humanitarian flows through the port. The Coalition have assured us that they are incorporating humanitarian concerns into their operational plans. It is vital to maintain the flow of food, fuel and medical supplies into Yemen. For their part the Houthis must not compromise port facilities or hinder the humanitarian response.

The ongoing Coalition intervention in Yemen came at the request of the legitimate Government of Yemen after Houthi rebels took the Yemeni capital by force in 2014. Houthi forces have consistently failed to adhere to UN Security Council Resolutions, including by launching missile attacks against Saudi Arabia and shipping in the Red Sea. They have obstructed access for humanitarian supplies leading to significant suffering among civilians.

It remains imperative to resume work towards a comprehensive political settlement. Lasting peace and stability in Yemen will require dialogue and negotiation. UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths is due to update the Security Council soon on his proposals for a negotiated settlement. We call upon all parties to throw their weight behind his efforts, for the sake of the Yemeni people and the security of Yemen's neighbours.

The UK is working with the UN, NGOs and the Coalition to respond to the humanitarian situation. The UK has committed £170 million to the UN's Yemen Humanitarian Appeal for the financial year 2018/2019, making the UK the 4th largest donor.