

Steps for Peace and Security in Yemen

Thank you to all our briefers today.

First, I'd like to welcome Special Envoy Grundberg. You will bring a depth of knowledge to the role and we look forward to working with you and supporting your efforts. Your appointment comes at a critical time. Indeed the resumption of inclusive political talks that represent all of Yemeni society – including minorities and women – is essential for ending the war. Your approach of listening first is right and I welcome your plans to travel throughout Yemen and the region. Now is the opportunity for the Yemeni parties to demonstrate their commitment to real peace and move beyond their existing positions: they must regularly meet with you, without pre-conditions, and facilitate your travel into Yemen.

Second, I'd like to thank Entesar Al-Qadhi for her poignant briefing. The bleak picture she painted today for women and girls in Yemen, particularly in Marib, underlines the necessity of peace. As this Council has said repeatedly, the Houthi offensive on Marib must end. And we condemn the reckless cross-border attacks by the Houthis, facilitated by Iran. They have resorted again to launching missiles and explosive laden UAVs. Most worryingly is the indiscriminate nature of these actions: on 31 August shrapnel wounded eight civilians and damaged a commercial aircraft in Abha airport, and on 4 September another two civilians – just children – were wounded by more shrapnel.

Third, we continue to express concern at the situation in the South. The Riyadh Agreement – facilitated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – needs to be implemented so that stability returns to the South. The Government of Yemen and the southern groups must work together to this end. In addition, the Southern Transitional Council must facilitate the return of the entire Cabinet of the Government of Yemen back to Aden.

Finally, we remain alarmed by the deteriorating economy and increasing risk of famine. This must remain a key priority for the UN-led peace process. Last month, the Yemeni Riyal passed the symbolic mark of 1000 Riyals to the dollar for the first time, making food and basic services increasingly unaffordable to millions. The Government of Yemen must therefore implement reforms to open up the possibility of greater external financial assistance, with support from the international community and International Financial Institutions.