

Top envoy to Yemen praises 'flexibility' of chief negotiators as new UN mission chief is named

The [UN Special Envoy for Yemen](#) said on Thursday that the main negotiators for the warring sides were continuing to show the "necessary flexibility and good faith" to move forward, despite delays in implementing [the agreement](#) marking the first steps towards a lasting peace deal, brokered in Sweden last December.

Martin Griffiths, has been talking with the Houthi rebel leadership in the capital Sana'a "to discuss the rapid and effective implementation of the Stockholm Agreement" the UN said in a briefing [note to correspondents](#) based in New York.

He also discussed the deployment of UN staff in support of cementing the fragile ceasefire, and withdrawal of Houthi and pro-Government coalition forces in and around the crucial port city of Hudaydah.

"The Special Envoy is encouraged by the responsiveness demonstrated by the leadership of Ansar Aallah (the official name of the Houthi movement) in that regard. The Special Envoy also discussed the resumption of political consultations, stressing the importance of achieving substantial progress in implementing the Stockholm Agreement, as we move towards convening the next round of consultations."

During his visit to the Saudi capital Riyadh this week, Mr. Griffiths said he had gained assurances from Yemeni President Adrabbuh Mansur Hadi and the Saudi-led coalition of their continued commitment to respect and fully implement the agreement.

The envoy said leaders of both parties had "demonstrated the necessary flexibility and good faith regarding the timelines for implementation and the technical challenges that need to be resolved on the ground.

The parties also recognize the political and humanitarian importance of the full implementation of the Stockholm agreement. The Special Envoy reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to continue working with the parties to overcome any challenges in this regard."



UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Michael Lollesgaard has been appointed the new head of the UN observer mission in Yemen. In this photo from 2015, he is briefing the Security Council in his former capacity as commander of the UN peacekeeping force in Mali.

Danish General appointed new head of UN Mission in Hudaydah

Also on Thursday, [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) announced the appointment of Danish Lieutenant General Michael Anker Lollesgaard, to succeed retired Major General Patrick Cammaert, of the Netherlands, as the new head of the UN Mission in support of the ceasefire and troop withdrawal agreement for Hudaydah, known as [UNMHA](#).

The mission was mandated by the UN Security Council in the wake of the Stockholm Agreement, for an initial period of six months, to lead and support the Redeployment Coordination Committee – which includes representatives from both sides to the conflict – monitor ceasefire compliance across the Governorate, and demilitarization of the key city, which is a vital conduit for nearly all aid and commercial goods into Yemen.

It will also oversee the withdrawal of fighting forces in the ports of Saleef and Ras Isa.

Responding to journalists' questions on Thursday in New York, over whether or not General Cammaert had resigned from his post in response to pressure, UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric denied the charge, reiterating that he was always on "a temporary assignment" heading up the advance mission, and team of UN observers.

"He will now stay, obviously, to do a handover, so he will leave very soon, in the early days of February, as soon as we can get his Danish replacement online," said the UN Spokeperson. "The most important thing for us is that

there is continuity in the work of the RCC and the person who heads it.”

Mr. Dujarric said that Lt. Gen. Lollesgaard “brings to this position 30 years of national and international military experience”, having previously been appointed by the Organization as Force Commander of the UN Mission in Mali, [MINUSMA](#), from 2015-16.