

Yemen: UN chief hails 'signs of hope' in world's worst man-made humanitarian disaster

Welcoming recent indications that peace talks could resume soon to end Yemen's brutal civil conflict, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said on Friday there is "no room for complacency," and called on the warring parties and the international community to "halt the senseless cycle of violence" and "reach a political settlement".

Conflict in the country has its roots in 2011, but the situation escalated dramatically in 2015, when a Saudi-led coalition was invited by the internationally-recognized Government to intervene, uprooting millions and destroying civilian infrastructure across the country. "International humanitarian law has been flouted repeatedly," Mr. Guterres told reporters at UN Headquarters in New York.

Since 2015, access to basic services and sources of income has become increasingly challenging and, today, three quarters of the entire Yemeni population – 22 million women, children and men – find themselves dependent on some form of humanitarian assistance to survive.

"This is not a natural disaster. It is man-made. Yemen today stands on a precipice," said the UN chief.

[According to humanitarian agencies](#) working on the ground, the massive scale of humanitarian need has turned Yemen into the world's worst crisis in decades. Cholera is endemic, and famine is looming.

"On the humanitarian side, the situation is desperate," said Mr. Guterres, but "on the political side," he noted, "there are signs of hope".

"The international community has a real opportunity to halt the senseless cycle of violence and to prevent an imminent catastrophe," he stated.

The Secretary-General called for several steps to be taken urgently: an immediate cessation of hostilities, especially in densely populated areas; clearance without restrictions for essential imports such as food and fuel; and ensuring humanitarian access to civilians. He said efforts to kick-start the economy by stabilising the exchange rate of the Yemeni Rial; and paying the salaries and pensions of public servants were also essential; alongside additional funding from the international community for the humanitarian response.

"I welcome the strong, constructive engagement from many Member States in recent days joining their voices to the UN's repeated appeals for a cessation of hostilities and supporting my [Special Envoy](#)'s efforts," said the UN chief, who also welcomed the warring parties' expression of readiness to engage in

peace consultations.

“There is now an opportunity for peace in Yemen,” he concluded, urging the parties to “overcome obstacles and resolve differences through dialogue at UN-facilitated consultations” in November.