



Security Council

Eighty-first year

10208th meeting

Thursday, 13 August 2026, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Lassen	(Denmark)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Ms. Alalaiwat
	China	Mr. Sun Lei
	Colombia	Mr. Sánchez Niño
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Greece	Mr. Stamatekos
	Latvia	Mr. Ilgis
	Liberia	Mr. Sillah
	Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Russian Federation	Mrs. Gilmutdinova
	Somalia	Mr. Ibrahim
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Foster
	United States of America	Ms. Locetta

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0928 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: Yemen today faces a more serious risk of return to large-scale conflict than at any point since the 2022 United Nations-mediated truce. There has been an intensification of military activity along front lines, with recent attacks by Ansar Allah in Ma'rib, Hadramawt, Mukha' and beyond causing casualties among both military personnel and civilians. With regional trade and energy flows already under intense pressure from the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz, Ansar Allah's renewed attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which the Council condemned in its recent statement, risk deepening Yemen's entanglement with the wider regional confrontation. These attacks also put seafarers' lives at risk; two days ago, a missile attack on a vessel killed several crew members. Tension had already been mounting prior to these developments. In July, an unauthorized flight from Tehran towards Sana'a was followed by air strikes on Sana'a airport and missile attacks on Abha airport and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia.

I want to be clear about what Yemen stands to lose on this trajectory. For four years and well beyond its formal expiry, the truce kept Yemen's front lines relatively quiet. Remarkably, even through the regional turmoil since 2023, this calm mostly held inside Yemen, giving civilians the most sustained respite since the start of the conflict. But, as I have repeatedly emphasized, the truce was designed as a means, not an end. Its primary objective was to open the way to negotiations on a comprehensive settlement of the conflict. The parties did engage on a road map to that end, but that effort stalled following the regional escalation in 2023 and, ultimately, did not mature into a political process. Absent progress on the political process, the calm ushered in by the truce cannot hold indefinitely.

A return to large-scale fighting in Yemen now would come at an unforgiving moment: with Yemen's State institutions fragmented by over a decade of conflict, its economy left with little margin to absorb another shock and the wider region engulfed by war. For Yemenis, renewed war would once again place every ordinary ambition — to study, to work, to build a life — at the mercy of the fighting. It would mean a new generation sent to the front lines, instead of having the chance to reimagine and remake their country's future. For the Council and the wider international community, it would mean one more conflict reignited in a region already aflame.

Perilous as this moment is, I am convinced that a negotiated off-ramp remains possible. In recent weeks, I have been engaging intensively with the Yemeni parties, with the support of regional actors, including on several trips to Riyadh and Muscat. I have been proposing ways to reverse the escalation and forge a credible path to a political solution. The Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah have already identified

many of the required elements, and these are also familiar to the Council. My Office also regularly consults diverse Yemenis, including civil society and women's groups; any way forward must address their priorities and those of the wider Yemeni public.

First, the parties must immediately de-escalate and work towards a robust ceasefire. The calm along Yemen's front lines must be restored. Attacks and threats against shipping must stop, and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden must be upheld. Cross-border attacks must stop. A mechanism for managing incidents and de-escalation already exists. Military representatives from the Government and Ansar Allah, together with the Saudi-led joint forces command, have previously met under United Nations auspices through the Military Coordination Committee. I urge them to make full use of this channel. I also repeat my call for the parties to respect their obligations to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. The parties must also protect Yemen from being drawn further into the vortex of the already complex regional dynamics. Through de-escalation, they need to prioritize Yemen's own national interests. I have stressed this imperative in all my engagements.

The second requirement is economic de-escalation. Yemen's economy has itself become a front line, with salaries, currency, trade, revenues, transport and essential services increasingly politicized. Addressing these issues will require the parties to negotiate arrangements in which they have more to gain from cooperation than confrontation. Resuming oil exports with appropriate security guarantees for production and export infrastructure would provide a critical source of income and would also support the country's recovery. Yemenis must be able to move freely across the country, and the parties should agree on measures to resume commercial flights to and from Sana'a airport. This was possible under the 2022 truce, and it can and should be possible again. Commercial vessels must continue to reach Yemeni ports, delivering the food and other essential goods on which Yemenis depend. The parties will also need to negotiate durable arrangements on the economic issues that touch Yemenis' daily lives more directly, including the payment of civil servants' salaries and the restoration of essential services.

The third requirement is sustained engagement with the United Nations to consolidate these gains and relaunch an inclusive, Yemeni-owned political process. This remains the only credible path to comprehensively ending the conflict, ensuring that differences are resolved through dialogue rather than force and establishing legitimate and accountable institutions that reflect Yemen's political and social diversity.

We can turn this plan into reality, but mediation cannot substitute for political will. The Yemeni parties must choose dialogue, and they have every reason to do so. No party controls where escalation leads. The only certainty is that the Yemeni people will pay the price. Negotiations demand compromise, but the parties can shape their course, and it is the Yemeni people who stand to gain.

Before closing, I would like to update the Council on two other matters.

First, Council members will recall that in May, the parties agreed under United Nations auspices to release more than 1,600 conflict-related detainees. Preparations to implement the releases are progressing, albeit slowly, and I am concerned that the wider escalation could stall this process further. The parties have reaffirmed their commitment to me, and I welcome these assurances. Yet, commitment needs to translate into implementation. I urge the parties to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross to complete the remaining technical and operational preparations as swiftly as possible.

Secondly, for far too long, 73 United Nations personnel, alongside colleagues from non-governmental organizations, civil society and diplomatic missions, have been arbitrarily detained by Ansar Allah. Despite sustained United Nations efforts to find a

solution, we have yet to see progress towards their releases. I urge the Council to maintain its attention on this and use every available avenue of influence to help to secure their immediate and unconditional release.

Four years of calm can be lost in a few weeks of escalation. I am not asking the Council today merely for statements of support. I am asking every member with influence over the parties to use it to steer Yemen away from the battlefield and back to the negotiation table.

The President: I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fletcher.

Mr. Fletcher: I thank the Special Envoy for his sobering briefing and his tireless efforts to advance a political path for Yemen.

This is the sixth briefing by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to the Council this year on Yemen. I wish I could report a positive shift, but the trajectory of the humanitarian crisis, I am afraid, remains unchanged. Hunger is rising, health services are crumbling, families have exhausted their last coping mechanisms, and now, the convergence of climate shocks and renewed regional tensions threatens to deepen this catastrophe. More than a decade into this conflict, millions of Yemenis face impossible daily choices: food or medicine, education or work, survival or displacement.

And I am afraid that the toll on women and girls is particularly alarming. Nearly 11 million women and girls require humanitarian support, and that includes 5.5 million women of reproductive age and more than 750,000 pregnant women. Essential care for them is out of reach. Four out of every five women lack access to life-saving reproductive health services. With only one in five health facilities providing maternal care, the cost is lethal: three women die every day from preventable pregnancy-related complications.

The health system is at a breaking point. Facilities lack basic supplies and personnel, and disease outbreaks are surging. In Ma'rib alone, authorities have declared a health emergency due to a measles outbreak — the second-highest case count globally this year.

Food insecurity is worsening. More than half the population is experiencing acute food insecurity. Six million people — the highest number globally — face emergency levels of deprivation, bordering on famine. In June, more than 60 per cent of households reported inadequate food consumption, a trend affecting every single governorate. While these statistics are staggering, they must not numb us. This unacceptable severity cannot become the new norm. The drivers are clear: regional tensions inflating prices, economic decline eroding livelihoods and a critical shortfall in humanitarian funding.

Meanwhile, I am afraid that a new threat is emerging. El Niño conditions forecast a 40 per cent reduction in rainfall across key agricultural areas. This will devastate crops, water availability and rural livelihoods, compounding the impacts of extreme heat and water stress in a country that is already one of the most vulnerable to climate change.

Access remains a significant hurdle. As Council members have heard, 73 United Nations colleagues remain detained by the Houthi de facto authorities, along with workers and former workers from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and diplomatic missions. Their families live with uncertainty every day. Their release is more than an institutional demand. It is an appeal to our shared humanity: let them return safely to their families, and let us create the environment in which support and services can be accessed by those most in need, safely, independently and impartially.

Between July 2025 and July 2026, more than 200 humanitarian access incidents were recorded across the country. Interference, violence against staff and movement restrictions continue to impede, delay or constrain relief operations. Ahead of the General Assembly, I will be laying out critical access asks for crises across the world and the specific areas and people that we can reach if we remove these barriers.

We know that aid saves lives. In 2025, we reached an average of 5.3 million people monthly in Yemen. However, funding shortages, fuelled by uncertainty and a lack of confidence, have now crippled our operations. With the humanitarian appeal barely 20 per cent funded, the calculation is simple: when funding drops, rations are cut, clinics close and protection services disappear.

I thank our largest donors — the European Commission, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Germany and the Republic of Korea — and those supporting the Yemen humanitarian fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). I have just allocated \$10 million in initial CERF funding for food security, but this is just a stopgap. It is not a solution.

My three asks of the Council today are the following.

First, I ask donors to provide flexible, predictable funding now. We have the capacity to deliver. We need the resources to bridge this chasm between desperate need and the current support that we are getting.

Secondly, I ask all parties to protect civilians and ensure principled humanitarian action. Specifically, I call again for the immediate, safe release of the 73 United Nations colleagues and the NGO and civil society workers currently detained by the Houthi de facto authorities. Their families — and our shared humanity — demand their return.

Thirdly and finally, I ask the Council to please maintain its focus on Yemen. The Council's unity and advocacy are essential to prevent further suffering and to secure space for genuine progress.

The people of Yemen have shown extraordinary resilience, but resilience can never be an excuse for the world to demand that they simply endure more. They deserve — and we must ensure that they get — dignity, opportunity and hope.

The President: I thank Mr. Fletcher for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Foster (United Kingdom): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher.

In recent weeks we have seen a serious escalation in violence in Yemen and the wider region as a result of reckless Houthi actions. This includes drone and missile strikes against Saudi Arabia, attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea and violations of Yemeni airspace by Iranian aircraft. Iran must cease its long-standing support for the Houthis, which threatens Yemen's stability.

We express our condolences to those who have been killed or injured as a result of these actions, including Yemeni, Pakistani and Indonesian nationals. Last week, the Council delivered a clear message of condemnation of Houthi actions and a call for de-escalation. We urge the Houthis to focus on efforts to achieve peace and alleviate the suffering of Yemenis, rather than seeking to embroil Yemen in a wider regional conflict. The United Kingdom reiterates its unwavering commitment to the sovereignty and security of Yemen and Saudi Arabia and to broader regional stability.

Secondly, the recent escalation is compounding an already dire humanitarian situation. More than 22 million people require humanitarian assistance. Over 18 million

face food insecurity. More than 2.2 million children under 5 are acutely malnourished. As a country heavily dependent on food and fuel imports, Yemen remains particularly vulnerable to further shocks. With humanitarian funding under strain and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warning of drought risks and greater food insecurity, a return to large-scale conflict would turn an already dire situation into a catastrophe.

The United Kingdom will continue to work with partners to support the humanitarian response, building upon more than \$180 million of United Kingdom funding last year for life-saving humanitarian assistance. We also remain deeply concerned by the Houthis' continued detention of 73 United Nations staff and non-governmental organization and civil society personnel, many of whom have been held for over two years. The Houthis must immediately and unconditionally release all those detained and allow humanitarian actors to operate safely and without obstruction.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom welcomes the appointment of Ms. Afrah Alzouba as Yemen's first female Foreign Minister. We look forward to working with her and the wider Government of Yemen to support their efforts to deliver much-needed reforms and strengthen security and stability, including through the new Yemen national development strategy.

The choices made now will determine whether Yemen moves closer to peace or slips back towards deeper conflict and humanitarian crisis. The United Kingdom remains steadfast in its support for the role of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and an intra-Yemeni peace process under United Nations auspices to help build the peaceful future that Yemenis deserve.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Tom Fletcher, for their valuable briefings and their tireless efforts in carrying out their respective mandates. We also warmly welcome the representative of Yemen who is joining us at this meeting.

The humanitarian situation, which Tom Fletcher has so vividly described, is particularly critical in terms of the current reality and is even bleaker as we look towards the future.

We note with deep concern and strongly condemn the recent escalation of violence perpetrated by the Houthis, which has included acts against the Yemeni armed forces in Ma'rib and Hadramawt and the use of drones against civilian property and infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, as well as attacks on civilian objects and internally displaced persons camps in Ma'rib and in the areas of Mukha' and Hudaydah, where, regrettably, there have been fatalities and injuries. It is particularly concerning that energy supply facilities and port areas are being targeted by these actions, a practice that, regrettably, appears to be becoming the norm in recent conflicts and whose consequences extend beyond the local level. At the same time, this escalation jeopardizes the truce negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations in 2022 and threatens to plunge Yemen back into a full-scale conflict. A further escalation of violence is something that Yemen, the region and the international community cannot afford.

The resumption of attacks on commercial ships and vessels in the Red Sea, as well as actions affecting navigation in and around the Strait of Hormuz, are utterly unacceptable that — as the most recent of these incidents tragically demonstrates — have already claimed innocent lives and laid bare the grave human cost of these actions. These acts not only endanger the lives of seafarers and the freedom of maritime navigation but also extend beyond the maritime sphere by jeopardizing global supply chains, international trade and energy security, with direct repercussions on the

economies and daily lives of people in all countries. These repercussions are particularly severe and disproportionate for the global South and the most vulnerable economies.

In the light of this situation and recognizing that the measures adopted by the Council have not been sufficient to prevent these actions from continuing, we reiterate our call for full compliance with the relevant Council resolutions and with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We also demand the immediate cessation of any act, threat or attack on commercial vessels that disrupts, endangers or restricts the freedom and safety of maritime navigation.

Regrettably, all of this has a direct impact on the Yemeni people, who for more than a decade have seen their living conditions deteriorate and a protracted conflict leave deep humanitarian, economic and social scars. More than 53 per cent of the population — approximately 18 million people — faces severe food insecurity. Among them, 2.2 million children under the age of five and 1.3 million pregnant and breastfeeding women are suffering from acute malnutrition. We are not just talking about numbers. We are talking about millions of lives that are paying the price for a crisis that shows no sign of ending. Since we assumed our role as an elected member of the Council, the figures reported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have continued to rise, with increasingly alarming projections. Every new piece of data serves as a reminder that the civilian population is bearing the brunt of a crisis that drags on with no end in sight and, seemingly, without hope.

We cannot allow Yemen to continue on its spiral downward. We cannot normalize millions of people going hungry while the violence continues. This crisis therefore demands a response commensurate with its severity. The Security Council's strong support is not enough. We need the commitment of the entire international community, reflected in adequate humanitarian funding and joint, coordinated measures to address the most urgent needs, protect the civilian population and lay the foundation for a lasting peace.

Mr. Sillah (Liberia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African members of the Council (A3), namely the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and my own country, Liberia.

We thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher for their briefings. We welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting.

The A3 is deeply alarmed by the severe deterioration of Yemen's security landscape. Developments over recent weeks demonstrate once again that Yemen faces a greater risk of renewed large-scale conflict today than at any point since the April 2022 truce. The renewed escalation risks reversing years of relative calm, undermining the United Nations-led political process and inflicting further suffering on the Yemeni people. Yemen must not become a theatre for broader regional confrontation.

In that regard, the A3 highlights the following points.

First, the A3 reiterates its unwavering support for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen. We also note the Council's press statement reaffirming Yemen's sovereignty over its airspace and stating that all flights must be pre-approved by the Government of Yemen (SC/16429). The future of Yemen must be written by Yemeni hands through an inclusive, United Nations-led process. In that regard, we reaffirm our strong support for the efforts of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and the United Nations-led political process. We urge all parties to move beyond mere conflict management and commit to addressing the root causes. Peace cannot simply be managed; it must be built on the bedrock of genuine dialogue.

Secondly, we are deeply concerned about the renewed escalation in Yemen. The fighting across Ma'rib and Hadramawt shows how rapidly hard-won gains can vanish. We are alarmed by reports of attacks since early August, including the shelling of civilian areas and a large displacement camp in Ma'rib city that shelters more than 2 million displaced persons, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries. When military force replaces diplomacy, it is always innocent civilians who bear the cost. We demand full compliance with international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. Cross-border strikes against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, attacks on energy infrastructure and declared maritime blockades threaten to internationalize the conflict. Regional actors must exercise their influence responsibly. Internally, we encourage all actors in Aden and the southern governorates to resolve political tensions through dialogue to preserve institutional cohesion.

Thirdly, as we continue to be told, the humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen remains extremely grave, with a devastating impact on women and girls. In Yemen, nearly 11 million women and girls require humanitarian assistance, including 5.5 million women of reproductive age and 750,000 pregnant women. Four in five lacking reproductive care face dire risks, contributing to three preventable maternal deaths every day. Meanwhile, the collapse of the health care system has fuelled outbreaks, such as the measles surge in Ma'rib, with more than 1,600 cases and 12 deaths. Strikes on the port of Mukha' on 9, 10 and 11 August damaged piers, commercial goods and food supplies, directly choking off vital imports. Humanitarian aid is a lifeline for millions, not a bargaining chip in war.

We call for full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, flexible funding and economic stabilization. Crucially, the A3 remains deeply concerned about the continued detention by the Houthis of United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers, staff of non-governmental organizations, civil society representatives and personnel associated with diplomatic missions. This month marks two years since the initial wave of mass detentions that affected personnel working in support of humanitarian, development and diplomatic efforts across Yemen. We demand the immediate, unconditional release of all detainees. The A3 welcomes the recent United Nations-brokered agreement to release more than 1,600 conflict-related detainees as a positive step towards building trust when confidence is scarce.

We call on all parties to ensure full, safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access and to protect humanitarian personnel and assets, while facilitating the safe movement of workers and supplies. Humanitarian assistance must not be politicized, diverted or obstructed. We further urge the international community to provide adequate, predictable and flexible funding for humanitarian operations, alongside support for early recovery, livelihoods, essential services and economic stabilization. Humanitarian assistance alone cannot resolve Yemen's crisis. Sustainable peace will require practical arrangements for economic recovery, institutional stabilization and the restoration of essential public services.

Lastly, attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab strait and the Gulf of Aden threaten freedom of navigation, disrupt supply chains and inflate global commodity costs. The strikes on the port of Mukha' and the interception of an unmanned explosive vessel approaching its commercial berth prove that the threat now directly affects and targets port infrastructure vital to Yemeni survival. Given the strategic importance of the Bab al-Mandab strait to Africa and global commerce, maritime security and Yemen's political stability are inseparable and must be addressed together.

There is no military solution to this conflict. The Yemeni people deserve peace, functioning institutions and economic opportunity. The A3 calls on all parties to step back from escalation, return to dialogue and engage constructively with the United

Nations-led process. We stand ready to work with all members of the Council to ensure that it responds to this moment with unity and urgency.

Ms. Locetta (United States of America): I thank the briefers.

On 13 July, the Security Council convened to address a blatant violation of Yemeni sovereignty: an Iranian flight into Sana'a was conducted without the consent of the internationally recognized Yemeni Government (see S/PV.10193). Under the pretext of ferrying Houthi officials to the funeral of Iran's late Supreme Leader's, that flight instead delivered personnel of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, including drone and missile experts, directly to the Houthi terrorists. Those recent Houthi escalations reflect a systematic campaign to project regional power and disrupt critical corridors.

Since declaring navigation restrictions, Houthi forces have systematically targeted more than seven Saudi-linked commercial vessels in the Red Sea, along with vital energy infrastructure in Yanbu', Jazan and Abqaiq. Those attacks, together with Houthi drone strikes on some of Saudi Arabia's airports that injured civilians, demonstrate a coordinated effort to enforce a self-declared maritime embargo and dictate security dynamics around the Bab al-Mandab strait. In addition, the Houthis fired ballistic missiles and drones at territory held by Yemen's internationally recognized Government, resulting in dozens of additional casualties over the past week.

The link is crystal clear. The Houthis demonstrate active cooperation and alignment with Tehran. They engage in terrorist actions that increase instability in the region and threaten global commerce.

The United States stands with the Government of the Republic of Yemen against the Iran-supported Houthi terrorist threat. The United States also stands firmly with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the face of the Houthi threat. We remain committed to regional stability and the free flow of commerce that underpins the global economy. We demand that the Houthis cease their attacks against countries in the region and all actions that undermine freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. This includes attacks and threats against commercial vessels. Houthi activities risk drawing Yemen into a regional conflict that does not serve the interests of the Yemeni people. The path to stability in Yemen depends on depriving the Houthis of the resources for their terrorist activities. Resolution 2817 (2026) represented the international community's consensus that we cannot sit idly by, as the Iranian regime and its proxies and partners undermine regional and international stability. The impact of Iran's failure to adhere to that resolution is all too clear today.

Lastly, the Houthis continue to unjustly detain more than 70 United Nations staff along with humanitarian workers and other employees of civil society organizations and diplomatic missions, including the United States mission. We reiterate our demand for their immediate and unconditional release. We also urge the United Nations to maintain any and all operations in Yemen outside of Houthi-controlled territory until the release of those who are unjustly detained.

Mr. Ilgis (Latvia): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher for their informative briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

Latvia remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating security environment in and around Yemen, which has become an increasingly significant dimension of the broader regional escalation. We strongly condemn the Houthis' renewed threats and attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea and attacks directed at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We condemn Iran for its continued support for the Houthis, which enables and fuels these destabilizing actions. Moreover, violence is once again intensifying inside Yemen, with Houthi attacks targeting areas under Yemeni Government control, resulting in further casualties. Such actions come at a high cost.

They erode the already fragile prospects for peace in Yemen, fuel regional instability and jeopardize global freedom of navigation and maritime security. They also inflict a profound additional humanitarian and economic burden on Yemen and the wider region. We call on the Houthis to immediately halt all attacks and exercise maximum restraint. At this critical moment, every effort must be made to prevent Yemen from being pulled further into the widening regional conflict and to safeguard the narrow window for peace in Yemen.

At a time when escalating tensions risk further shrinking the space for diplomacy, steps that foster dialogue and confidence become all the more essential. The agreement on conflict-related detainees reached in May represented a rare opportunity to rebuild confidence between the parties and generate renewed momentum for the broader peace process. However, the process has yet to yield results, and the regional security situation risks further complicating implementation of the agreement. We urge the parties to honour the commitments they have made and implement the agreed exchange without further delay. The continued arbitrary detention of United Nations, humanitarian, civil society and diplomatic personnel by the Houthis remains deeply concerning, with many individuals having been held for several years already. These prolonged and unjust detentions inflict unacceptable suffering on the individuals detained and their families, while further impeding international humanitarian efforts. Latvia reiterates its steadfast call for the immediate and unconditional release of all those who remain arbitrarily detained.

Yemen remains gripped by one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. As in many crises around the world, women and girls are disproportionately affected. Millions of women and girls face hunger, malnutrition, displacement, preventable maternal deaths and heightened risks of gender-based violence, while access to even the most basic health services continues to erode. As needs continue to outpace resources, the cost of underfunding is measured in lives. The international community must step up its support, while all parties must guarantee humanitarian actors safe, independent and unimpeded access to people in need across Yemen.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Latvia's unwavering commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen. A lasting and sustainable peace can emerge only from an inclusive, Yemeni-led and United Nations-facilitated political process — one that brings together all relevant stakeholders and guarantees the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. We welcome the historic appointment of Afrah Alzouba as Yemen's first female Minister for Foreign Affairs as an important step towards this goal. I would also like to express our strong support for the tireless efforts of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg in advancing a peaceful resolution of the conflict — an endeavour that is all the more critical amid the current escalation and heightened risks. We call on all parties to turn away from further escalation and take a decisive step towards a different path — one that places the Yemeni people's security, dignity and needs at the forefront.

Ms. Alalawat (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their valuable briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the brotherly Republic of Yemen, Ambassador Al-Saadi.

The situation in sisterly Yemen today clearly reflects our warnings in recent months about the widening scope of the regional conflict and its extension into Yemen, driven by the Iran-backed Houthi terrorist militia's pursuit of foreign agendas at the expense of the lives, security, livelihoods and future of the Yemeni people and the security and stability of the region. The Kingdom of Bahrain condemns the militia's continued violation of the truce and its undermining of peace efforts in Yemen, while

condemning the terrorist attacks launched on Thursday, 6 August, in Ma'rib and Hadhramawt. These attacks killed and injured civilians, including women and children, following the targeting of the Jaw al-Nasim camp for displaced persons in Ma'rib Governorate. We also condemn the repeated terrorist attacks that the militia has been carrying out since 13 July using ballistic missiles and drones to target civilian facilities and infrastructure in the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, injuring a number of civilians.

We likewise condemn the militia's continued threats to the security and safety of maritime navigation and freedom of international trade in the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Red Sea, including its attacks on Saudi vessels. In this context, my country extends its sincere condolences and sympathies to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Indonesia and the families of the victims of the Houthi attack that targeted the commercial vessel *Tihamah* in the Red Sea. The Kingdom of Bahrain affirms its full solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the face of these attacks, which not only target its security and interests but also pose a direct threat to the security and safety of maritime navigation and freedom of international trade. These acts represent a dangerous escalation that undermines de-escalation and peace efforts and initiatives.

The Kingdom of Bahrain recalls the press statement issued by the Council on 7 August (SC/16429), which condemned the operation of unauthorized Iranian flights into Yemen, viewing them as a violation of the Republic of Yemen's sovereignty, while also condemning the attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Bahrain underscores the need for the Council to adopt a clear and firm stance in order to protect the security and safety of maritime navigation and to hold accountable those responsible for attacks targeting vessels and shipping traffic. We stress that freedom of navigation in vital waterways such as the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Strait of Hormuz is a fundamental principle of international law that must not be compromised. We warn that turning a blind eye to these attacks will embolden the perpetrators to continue their actions and threats, thereby exacerbating instability and further jeopardizing regional security and international trade.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also expresses its deep concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen and calls for humanitarian aid to be allowed to reach all those in need without hindrance. It once again condemns the detention of United Nations staff and the staff of international and humanitarian organizations and calls for their immediate release. The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its support for the Presidential Leadership Council, presided over by Mr. Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, and the legitimate Yemeni State institutions in their efforts to achieve economic stability and meet the needs of citizens.

The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its solidarity with the fraternal Republic of Yemen and the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its full support for the measures that both are taking to preserve their sovereignty, security and stability. It also calls for a firm international stance to hold the Houthi terrorist militia to account and to cut off its sources of funding and arms, thereby contributing to the protection of civilians and the preservation of the region's security and stability.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and emphasizes the importance of serious and constructive engagement in the political process, leading to a comprehensive and sustainable political solution to the Yemeni crisis, in accordance with the three terms of reference — namely, the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the All-Inclusive National Dialogue Conference and resolution 2216 (2015) — in a manner that preserves the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and independence of the Republic

of Yemen and meets the aspirations of the brotherly Yemeni people for security, stability, peace and prosperity.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher for their briefings.

Pakistan is deeply concerned about the recent developments in Yemen. The country today faces a serious risk of sliding back into widespread conflict that could reverse the relative calm that has prevailed since the United Nations-brokered truce of April 2022. The gains made since the truce, howsoever fragile, must not be allowed to unravel.

We are particularly concerned about the recent Houthi attacks and reported civilian casualties in Hudaydah, Ma'rib, Hadramawt and elsewhere. Escalation would only inflict more suffering on the Yemeni people and further narrow the space for diplomacy.

Pakistan condemns in the strongest terms the Houthi missile and drone attacks and the threats against the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Such provocative actions pose a grave threat to regional peace and stability. Pakistan stands in solidarity with Saudi Arabia and reaffirms its unwavering support for the Kingdom's sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace and prosperity.

We also strongly condemn the Houthi attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and Bab al-Mandab, including the 11 August attack on the commercial vessel *MV Tihamah*, which tragically resulted in the deaths of three Pakistani crew members and one Indonesian crew member and injuries to seven others. Such actions threaten regional security, undermine freedom of navigation and jeopardize the uninterrupted flow of global commerce. The safety and security of international maritime shipping and the protection of seafarers must be respected, in accordance with international law.

Pakistan reiterates its strong condemnation of the continued arbitrary detention of United Nations, humanitarian and diplomatic personnel by the Houthis and calls for their immediate and unconditional release. Yemen's acute humanitarian needs must also remain at the forefront of the Council's attention. Renewed fighting, economic disruption and food insecurity would further aggravate the humanitarian situation. The international community must urgently address funding shortfalls.

Looking at the current trajectory, de-escalation and resumption of a credible political process have assumed greater urgency. De-escalation was the key word in the two briefings that we received this morning. The Special Envoy called for security and economic de-escalation, while Under-Secretary-General Fletcher drew attention to the urgency of de-escalation and proactive action on the humanitarian side. We appreciate the efforts of the Special Envoy to engage with Yemeni parties, regional actors and international partners and to explore practical avenues for de-escalation. Pakistan echoes the Special Envoy's call for maximum restraints and urges all parties to halt actions that could trigger further military escalation and to engage in good-faith negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations.

A Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process, facilitated by the United Nations and grounded in full respect for Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, remains the only viable path towards a comprehensive and sustainable settlement.

The people of Yemen have endured years of conflict and immense suffering. They should not be made to bear the consequences of another cycle of regional and domestic escalation. At this critical juncture, every effort must be aimed at restoring conditions conducive to a political process — and for that, we need the political will that was also

highlighted by the Special Envoy — for a durable and peaceful settlement. Pakistan will continue to support all sincere efforts aimed at achieving that objective.

Mr. Sánchez Niño (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia thanks Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher for the information that they have provided. I would also like to welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

Colombia continues to follow with deep concern the developments in Yemen, where the ongoing violence continues to have a devastating impact on the civilian population. The combination of a prolonged economic crisis, deteriorating living conditions, food insecurity and a lack of access to basic services has left millions of people dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their most basic needs. Against this backdrop, it is essential to guarantee safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access and to mobilize the necessary resources to respond to a crisis that continues to grow in scale. The growing volatility of the regional situation is an additional cause for concern.

Yemen cannot continue to be affected by external dynamics that threaten to reverse the limited progress made towards reducing violence. Further escalation would render efforts to bring about a Yemeni-led political solution even more difficult, while also exacerbating the humanitarian situation and jeopardizing the safety of navigation in the Red Sea.

Colombia calls for full compliance with previously undertaken commitments, including those arising from the Stockholm Agreement. In this context, we reiterate the need to bring about the release of all those arbitrarily detained, in particular United Nations personnel, whose deprivation of liberty hinders the conduct of humanitarian operations and contravenes obligations under international law.

Finally, progress must be made on developing concrete confidence-building measures that contribute to improving humanitarian access, reducing tensions and creating an environment conducive to resuming a sustainable political process that fulfils the legitimate aspirations of the Yemeni people.

Mr. Stamatekos (Greece): I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

Greece remains deeply concerned by the recent military escalation in and around Yemen, including continued attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea and the increasing use of military force by the Houthis against Yemeni forces and neighbouring States. Recent Houthi missile and drone attacks risk further destabilizing Yemen and threaten to draw the country further into broader regional confrontation and to undermine efforts towards a political settlement. We condemn in the strongest terms the continued attacks against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including those targeting its territory and critical civilian and energy infrastructure. Such attacks are unacceptable and pose a serious threat to regional peace and security. We call on the Houthis to cease all attacks, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring States and comply fully with international law and relevant Security Council resolutions.

Freedom of navigation is a fundamental principle of international law and must be respected by all. Greece strongly condemns the continued Houthi attacks against international shipping and the grave risks they pose to seafarers, commercial vessels and global maritime trade. The security of navigation in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab strait and the Gulf of Aden is a matter of critical international importance. Developments in the Red Sea cannot be viewed in isolation from the wider challenges to maritime security across the region, including in the Strait of Hormuz.

Greece reiterates that freedom of navigation and the right of passage through international straits, including the right of transit passage, where applicable, must be fully respected in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. International straits must remain open and accessible to international shipping, without discrimination, unlawful restrictions or interference with the exercise of navigational rights. At the same time, maritime security cannot be separated from the broader political and humanitarian situation in Yemen. Further military escalation will not resolve the underlying conflict. On the contrary, it risks reversing the progress achieved since the 2022 truce and further aggravating an already dire humanitarian situation. Greece remains firmly committed to safeguarding freedom of navigation, including through its active support for the European Union Naval Force Operation ASPIDES, in accordance with its defensive mandate and international law.

Greece strongly supports the efforts of the Special Envoy towards a comprehensive and sustainable political settlement through an inclusive, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned process under United Nations auspices, with full respect for Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We call on all parties to engage constructively and in good faith with the Special Envoy. There can be no military solution to this conflict. We also welcome the appointment of Yemen's first woman Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Afrah Alzouba. This represents an important milestone for women's participation in Yemen's political and public life. The full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in the political process, is indispensable to sustainable peace.

The humanitarian situation remains deeply alarming. The international community must ensure that assistance reaches those most in need. We therefore echo the call on donors to provide adequate, timely, flexible and predictable humanitarian funding to address urgent needs and prevent further deterioration. Humanitarian personnel must be able to operate safely and without obstruction. We reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations, humanitarian and civil society personnel detained by the Houthis. Their safety, security and freedom of movement must be respected, and humanitarian access must remain unhindered.

In conclusion, the message of the international community must remain clear and united. Freedom of navigation and international shipping must be respected and must never be held hostage to political or military objectives. The Houthis must not jeopardize maritime security in the Red Sea, must not drag Yemen into a wider regional conflict and must not undermine efforts towards a sustainable political settlement. Greece will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations and the international community towards a peaceful, stable and prosperous Yemen. A durable solution can only be political.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings, and I welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to today's meeting.

Over the past month or so, the situation in Yemen has escalated sharply, with the intensity of the conflict reaching its highest level since the signing of the April 2022 ceasefire agreement. Large-scale exchanges of fire have occurred in areas such as Hudaydah, Ma'rib, Hadramawt and other areas, resulting in significant casualties. At the same time, security risks in the Red Sea shipping routes have been increasing, causing widespread concern within the international community. The most urgent priority is to de-escalate the situation and prevent the conflict from continuing to expand. All parties involved should remain calm and exercise restraint to avoid repeated escalation.

The current escalation of tensions in Yemen is occurring against the backdrop of increasing instability in the Middle East as a whole and is the result of the spillover effects of regional conflicts. Over the past three years, a series of crises have erupted in the Middle East, and these are by no means isolated incidents. To effectively resolve the Yemeni issue, we must consider it within the context of the overall situation in the Middle East, adopt comprehensive solutions and work to de-escalate tensions across the region as a whole.

To this end, I would like to make four points.

First, we must promote peaceful coexistence among all countries. The countries of the Middle East are inextricably linked and are permanent neighbours. Conflict and turmoil are not in the interest of any country in the region. Israel and all relevant parties should fully implement the ceasefire agreement to achieve a genuine and lasting ceasefire in Gaza. The international community should intensify its mediation efforts, urge the United States and Iran to resume the implementation of the consensus reached in the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding and create conditions for resolving the region's hotspot issues. We must support the countries of the region in engaging in dialogue, improving mutual relations and building a new regional security architecture that is suited to the evolving circumstances.

Secondly, we must fully respect the sovereignty of all countries. Sovereign equality is a fundamental principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. All countries in the region are equal members of the international community, and their respective sovereignty, independence, security and territorial integrity must be fully respected. The safety of personnel, facilities and institutions of all countries must be effectively safeguarded. The Yemeni issue should be resolved through a Yemeni-led and -owned process. China supports dialogue and negotiations among all Yemeni parties to resume and steadily advance the comprehensive political process, so as to achieve internal reconciliation at an early date. China supports Special Envoy Grundberg in continuing to play a mediating role.

Thirdly, we must resolutely uphold the international rule of law. The authority of international law stems from its consistent application. It cannot be applied when convenient and discarded when inconvenient, nor can the law of the jungle be allowed to dictate the fate of countries of the region. The international community must jointly oppose the use of force without Security Council authorization. When addressing hotspot issues, the Security Council must uphold a factual, objective, balanced and impartial stance and play a constructive role. The issue of freedom of navigation through international straits concerns the common well-being of all nations, and safe and unimpeded passage through the Strait of Hormuz must be ensured. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must not be targeted. This fundamental principle of international humanitarian law must be observed.

Fourthly, we must advance development and security in a coordinated manner. Development underpins security. Without sustainable development, there can be no sustainable security. Yemen is experiencing one of the world's largest, most protracted and most severe humanitarian crises. The international community must take urgent action. China commends Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for his work in that regard.

China recently provided Yemen with a new consignment of food assistance. We call on all parties to increase humanitarian assistance and development support for Yemen so as to prevent a large-scale famine in the country. The Houthis must immediately and unconditionally release the detained United Nations personnel and create favourable conditions for the United Nations to resume its humanitarian assistance operations.

China is a true friend of the Yemeni people. It firmly supports Yemen in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and supports its pursuit of peace and development. Together with the international community, we will continue our unrelenting efforts to promote a political settlement of the question of Yemen and restore lasting peace in the region.

Mrs. Gilmutdinova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Tom Fletcher, for their briefings.

We are following developments in Yemen with growing concern, as the country is experiencing its most acute military and political crisis since the conclusion of the internal truce in April 2022. It all began with the landings of civilian aircraft in Sana'a on 3 July and in Hudaydah on 13 July, which, in and of themselves, resulted in neither casualties nor material damage. Those flights should certainly have been coordinated in advance with the official Yemeni authorities. Nevertheless, the exceptionally harsh response of the Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, in the form of air strikes on the runway at Sana'a International Airport, appears disproportionate, particularly given the airport's great civilian and humanitarian significance for the Yemeni people.

Following those events, the Ansar Allah movement resorted to further military action, including missile strikes against the territory of Saudi Arabia. The Arab Coalition, in turn, responded with air strikes on Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen, including Sana'a, Dali' and Sa'dah. Against that backdrop, the military situation along the line of contact has also deteriorated, with clashes occurring in the governorates of Ma'rib, Ta'izz and Hadramawt. We hope that the opposing sides will nevertheless demonstrate wisdom and refrain from scaling up their military activities, as a continuation of the current trend could have far-reaching consequences for the entire region. We call on them to return promptly to the negotiating table and begin addressing their differences through diplomatic means.

After more than six months of relative calm, tensions have also resumed in the Red Sea, with Ansar Allah attempting to block the navigation of commercial and military vessels and describing its actions as a mirror response to the long-standing blockade of Yemen's northern regions. Regrettably, those developments have caused human casualties. We share the view that freedom of navigation must be unconditionally safeguarded and strongly condemn any action that endangers commercial shipping.

The developments surrounding Yemen clearly demonstrate the dangers emanating from the protracted failure to resolve the conflict. We have witnessed how the prolonged stagnation of the Yemeni peace process has forced the Houthis to become embroiled in a regional confrontation initiated by the United States and Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the same time, we remain convinced that, even under those circumstances, the Yemeni parties still have an opportunity to overcome their internal divisions.

International mediation, represented by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, must now make every effort to immediately resume negotiations on the road map for a Yemeni settlement, formalize the agreements it contains and launch a full-fledged political process. Success on that track can be achieved only through dialogue that takes into account the legitimate interests of all the principal political forces in the country, including Ansar Allah. At the same time, it is important to steadily overcome the antagonism among the parties and curb their bellicose rhetoric. The policy of maximum pressure against any of the parties has long since proved ineffective in the Yemeni context.

For our part, we will continue to provide feasible assistance through our contacts with all Yemeni protagonists and key regional actors. We call on responsible world Powers to assist the Yemenis in the same spirit, rather than burdening the launch of the political process in the country with additional conditions. We also recall the need for an eventual update of the legal and normative framework underpinning the Yemeni settlement.

We emphasize the need for coordinated efforts by the international community in the humanitarian sphere in Yemen. As the briefers informed us today, against the backdrop of the escalating conflict and growing needs among vulnerable segments of the population, humanitarian operations are, in contrast, shrinking. Critical sectors such as ensuring food security and providing healthcare services remain underfunded. We call on the international community and donors to prioritize those areas, without making distinctions based on geography.

We also call for the complete lifting of the maritime, air and land blockade of Yemen, as well as the removal of all restrictions on the delivery of food, medicines and other essential goods to the country. We also recall our support for the efforts of the leadership of the United Nations to secure the release of detained United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher for their briefings. I would also like to welcome the presence among us of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

Yemen is experiencing its most serious escalation of tensions since the 2022 truce, as has been stated. Full responsibility lies with the Houthis, who have intensified their attacks against the Government of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, causing numerous casualties and destroying civilian infrastructure.

We condemn the resumption of Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, as documented in the letter dated 10 August from the Secretary-General addressed to the Security Council. Further attacks have since occurred. As recently as the day before yesterday, 11 August, their strike against the cargo ship *Tihamah* claimed the lives of several crew members who were nationals of Pakistan and Indonesia. We extend our condolences to their families and to Pakistan and Indonesia.

France condemns those attacks in the strongest possible terms and expresses its support for and solidarity with Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Those attacks seriously undermine regional security, freedom of navigation and maritime security, respect for which the Council demanded in resolution 2722 (2024). The Houthis must cease those attacks immediately and unconditionally.

France will remain committed to ensuring the security of that maritime route through the European Union Naval Force Operation ASPIDES, in accordance with international law, with a strictly defensive posture and in coordination with its European and international partners.

The escalation in Yemen began on 3 July, when an Iranian aircraft landed in Sana'a without the consent of the legitimate authorities, violating Yemen's sovereignty. That reflects Iran's destabilizing conduct in the region. Such actions must cease immediately and permanently.

By supporting the Houthis, Tehran is fuelling the crisis and failing to comply with its obligations under the arms embargo established by resolution 2216 (2015). France expects Iran to comply with its international obligations and end all transfers of military equipment to the Houthis, as we demanded at the Council's emergency meeting on 13 July (see S/PV.10193).

The Houthis' persistent and deliberate obstruction of humanitarian action further compounds the situation. France demands the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations personnel, non-governmental organization staff and diplomatic mission personnel arbitrarily detained by the Houthis. Those detentions, like the attacks against humanitarian personnel, violate international humanitarian law, resolution 2730 (2024) and international human rights law. They also impede the delivery of assistance that the civilian population urgently needs.

There is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. France fully supports the legitimate Government and its efforts to ensure the security of the country. It fully supports the efforts of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg. Only an inclusive political process under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of women and all sectors of Yemeni society, can bring the crisis to an end. France calls on all stakeholders to engage in that process in good faith.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Denmark.

Let me start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings.

I will make four points.

First, Denmark is deeply alarmed by the recent escalation in and around Yemen. We condemn in the strongest terms the Houthi attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea and those against Saudi Arabia and several Yemeni provinces. These are unprovoked attacks. The Houthis' actions undermine efforts to secure peace in Yemen and risk further destabilizing the wider region. Denmark also condemns Iran's support for proxies, including the Houthis. As mentioned by Special Envoy Grundberg, further hostilities also bring serious economic and humanitarian consequences for the people of Yemen and across the region. We call for de-escalation and the use of all existing channels of dialogue to reduce tensions.

Secondly, we deplore the resumption of Houthi attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea and denounce the attack that caused the deaths of several seafarers earlier this week. Maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea must be fully restored in line with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Denmark remains committed to protecting the freedom of navigation in one of the world's most critical waterways for the benefit of global trade and development.

Thirdly, this military escalation is deepening the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people. Food insecurity is acute, as Under-Secretary-General Fletcher has highlighted, with more than 53 per cent of Yemenis experiencing severe food insecurity. Families are forced to make impossible choices, as hunger deepens and resilience erodes. We call for urgent steps to address humanitarian needs and help to close the funding gap in Yemen's humanitarian response plan. Beyond funding concerns, continued restrictions on movement and safety concerns have left many Yemeni districts not covered by active humanitarian programming. Denmark reiterates its urgent call for safe and unhindered humanitarian access. We reiterate our condemnation of Houthi detentions of staff from the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and diplomatic missions and call for their immediate and unconditional release.

Fourthly and lastly, Denmark believes that peaceful and prosperous societies require genuine inclusion, and Yemen is no exception. Broad representation from diverse Yemeni factions, including civil society, women, youth and all political constituencies, is essential to achieve sustainable peace. We call for a Yemeni-led and truly inclusive peace process that must build on the meaningful participation of all

Yemenis, as also highlighted by Special Envoy Grundberg, and we express our full support for his efforts.

We therefore deeply regret and are generally surprised to have experienced strong opposition today to a civil society briefer, Tawakkol Karman, who we are certain would have offered a valuable perspective on how to advance the prospects of an inclusive political settlement. This requires revitalizing the peace process, justice and accountability for crimes committed during the conflict and empowering women and youth as core decision makers.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Council this month. I also extend my thanks to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the friendly Democratic Republic of the Congo, for his successful presidency last month. We have taken note of the briefing by Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Hans Grundberg, and we thank Mr. Tom Fletcher for his briefing.

I would also like to express Yemen's solidarity with the friendly Government and people of Colombia, following the earthquake that struck Colombia in recent days. Our heartfelt condolences go to the families of the victims, and we wish the injured a speedy recovery.

We meet today at a critical juncture in Yemen's history, after weeks of rapid and dangerous escalation by the terrorist Houthi militias, who are threatening to plunge Yemen back into a cycle of violence and undermine the opportunities for peace in which the Yemeni Government, the United Nations, the Council and brotherly nations have invested for years.

For more than a decade, the Yemeni people have paid a heavy price for this war waged by the Houthi militias against the Yemeni State and people. Without a shadow of a doubt, the events proved that this tragic situation was not fateful. Rather, it is the direct outcome of the coup staged by the Houthi militias, who have chosen chaos and war over the stability of the State, sectarianism over equal citizenship and subservience to the Iranian regime's agenda over the Yemeni people's interests and aspirations for security, stability and dignity. These militias have brought nothing but destruction and division, while undermining State institutions, targeting the national economy, recruiting thousands of children, plundering resources and humanitarian aid, imposing arbitrary detention and engaging in grave human rights violations.

What we are now witnessing is an escalation of the Houthi militias' hostile actions. It began with their bid to impose an air bridge between Sana'a and Tehran for the purpose of transporting experts and weapons through the Iranian Revolutionary Guard-affiliated Mahan Air, which is designated on the sanctions list. The escalation has continued with strikes on commercial ships in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait and civilian targets in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, ballistic missile and drone attacks against armed forces' positions, civilian targets, camps for displaced persons, the port of Mukha' and vital civilian infrastructure and attempts to intercept ships. These actions culminated in Tuesday's terrorist attack on the Yemeni merchant vessel *Tihamah*, which is used to transport food supplies for the Yemeni people. The attack claimed the lives of four crew members, three from the brotherly Republic of Pakistan and one from Indonesia, and injured four others. A fire started on board, damaging the vessel. As rescue teams arrived to evacuate the crew and the injured, the Houthi militias then struck the ship again with another missile, injuring a rescue worker in a deliberate attack on a rescue operation. These actions betray the group's contempt for the lives of seafarers

and rescue workers and the rules and conventions governing maritime safety. All of this confirms that the Houthi militias are systematically waging war against the resources of the Yemeni people, their livelihoods and their economic lifelines. It also underscores the danger of missile capabilities, drones and sophisticated weapons remaining outside the control of the State and its institutions.

A clear paradox that cannot be ignored thus emerges. The militias who, for years, have been peddling claims about a blockade in an attempt to shirk their responsibility for the deterioration of living conditions are the very same forces that are today targeting Yemen's ports, vital facilities and infrastructure, threatening commercial vessels, food and fuel supplies and disrupting commercial activity, thereby exacerbating the suffering of Yemenis. These same forces have turned Yemen's land and waters into a platform to serve the agenda of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, to blackmail the international community and to threaten the security of international navigation and trade. These are the very forces who have persistently obstructed peace efforts and have prolonged this conflict, plunging Yemen and the region into yet more destruction, tension and instability.

The Government of the Republic of Yemen welcomes the Security Council's statement on Yemen (SC/16429), which included a condemnation of the violation of Yemeni sovereignty in the form of Iranian flights landing at Sana'a and Hudaydah airports without Government authorization and a condemnation of Houthi attacks on civilian targets in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and commercial ships. We also welcome the Council's reaffirmation of its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Yemen. In addition, we appreciate the fact that the Council emphasized that all flights to Yemeni airports must be coordinated with the Government of the Republic of Yemen and must receive prior authorization from it and that the Council underlined the importance of acting in accordance with international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015).

However, subsequent developments after the release of that statement now confront us with a fundamental question: how can the international community and the Council translate these principles into a reality that safeguards peace efforts and prevents the recurrence of these violations?

We therefore call on the Security Council and the international community to build upon this position, for condemnation, while important, must be accompanied by the effective implementation of the Council's resolutions, foremost among them resolutions 2140 (2014) and 2216 (2015), strengthening mechanisms to prevent the smuggling of arms, military technology and expertise to the Houthi militias; holding those who violate the sanctions regime to account; and bolstering the capacity of Yemeni State institutions to protect the country's sovereignty, coasts and territorial waters.

The continued possession and flow of these weapons, technology and military expertise to the Houthi militias is incompatible with the requirements of sustainable peace and constitutes a persistent threat to Yemen, neighbouring countries and international maritime corridors. This requires a shift from merely condemning the threat to addressing its sources and means.

An analysis of the Houthi militias' behaviour over the past years of their war reveals a consistent pattern based on evading the obligations of peace by fabricating external crises and confrontations and attempting to shift the focus of the conflict away from the essence of the Yemeni issue. Today, this approach is no longer confined to evading national obligations. Rather, it has become a regular means of blackmailing the regional and international community and creating successive crises with the aim of buying time and imposing new realities on the ground by force. However, these attempts will not alter the fact that peace in Yemen requires addressing the root causes of the

conflict, ending the coup, restoring State institutions and complying with the will of the Yemeni people and the agreed terms of reference for a political solution to end this conflict.

The State will remain open to any sincere endeavour that leads to a genuine, just and sustainable peace, puts an end to the coup, restores State institutions, safeguards the dignity of all Yemenis and brings about the security, stability and peace that the Yemeni people deserve. In this context, the Presidential Leadership Council and the Yemeni Government reaffirm their commitment to choosing peace and engaging constructively with all regional and international initiatives and efforts aimed at ending the war and alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people.

At the same time, we emphasize that the peace that we seek is one that addresses the root causes of the crisis; eliminates the causes of the war; restores the prestige of the Yemeni State and its institutions; protects rights, freedoms, equal citizenship and the rule of law; guarantees that the State alone has a monopoly on arms and legitimate means of force; and respects the sovereignty of the Republic of Yemen, the security of neighbouring States and international maritime corridors. We do not seek a peace that grants the militias a new opportunity to re-establish themselves and prepare for a fresh cycle of conflict.

We reaffirm that the Houthis' intransigence and their repeated rejection of all calls and initiatives to address the Yemeni crisis reveal that they are not serious about reaching a comprehensive political settlement and that they are determined to keep waging war, continue shedding Yemeni blood and perpetuate the Yemeni people's suffering. We also affirm that the State will no longer tolerate the continued use of blackmail, threats and intimidation and will not allow the right to decide on matters of war and peace to be usurped, nor will it permit the imposition of a particular course of events on the Yemeni people or on regional and international security and peace.

Stability in Yemen would be fundamental to guaranteeing security and stability in the region and the world, the safety of international shipping and global trade, the protection of supply chains, the curbing of terrorism and organized crime, the reduction of waves of irregular migration and the protection of the principles of international law, which are based on respect for the sovereignty of States. This will not be achieved without a peace process based on bold political steps that affirm that there is no future for any group that challenges the exclusive authority of the Yemeni State, retains arms outside State institutions or claims for itself a political, divine, religious or dynastic right that supersedes the will of the Yemeni people and the rule of law.

The Government continues to implement its programme of economic, financial and administrative reforms and is working to improve the efficiency of public institutions, enhance transparency, develop resources, address imbalances, strengthen the independence of regulatory bodies and improve the investment climate, while simultaneously unifying security and military decision-making and enabling State institutions to fulfil their responsibilities across the various governorates. Such actions are the true guarantee of sustainable security and stability.

The Government is also working to resume oil exports, recover the State's sovereign resources and channel them towards serving the Yemeni people. Foremost among the Government's duties in that regard are fulfilling the core obligations of the State, paying salaries, improving services and supporting economic stability, thereby ensuring that Yemen's wealth benefits all Yemenis, rather than continuing to be held hostage by the militias' threats and blackmail.

State institutions would not have been able to maintain their resilience and capacity to fulfil their essential obligations were it not for the sincere fraternal stance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its continued political, economic and humanitarian

support, which has helped to preserve the cohesion of State institutions, alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people, implement and finance vital projects and promote opportunities for recovery at all levels. In this context, we once again call on Yemen's development partners, organizations and donor funds to provide urgent and sustainable support to help the Government achieve economic stability, enhance opportunities for recovery and alleviate humanitarian suffering, while reaffirming the Government's commitment to continuing close coordination with donors and international partners to develop support mechanisms and enhance their effectiveness.

In the humanitarian context, the Yemeni Government has been earnestly willing to cooperate to guarantee the success of the agreement reached under United Nations auspices for the release of more than 1,600 prisoners and detainees. This important humanitarian step and confidence-building measure would have alleviated the suffering of thousands of Yemeni families and opened a window for progress towards peace. However, the Houthi militias reneged on their commitments and thwarted the implementation of this agreement, continuing their practice of politicizing humanitarian issues and using them as a tool for bargaining and blackmail. At the same time, they have persisted in their arbitrary detention of the staff of the United Nations, humanitarian organizations, civil society organizations and diplomatic missions, in continued defiance of the demands of the Council and the international community.

The Yemeni Government condemns these practices and calls on the Security Council to exert genuine pressure in order to ensure the implementation of the agreement on the release of prisoners and detainees, to bring about the immediate, safe and unconditional release of all United Nations staff, humanitarian workers and others who are being arbitrarily detained and to end the use of humanitarian issues as bargaining chips in political negotiations.

In conclusion, allow me to quote from the remarks made by His Excellency Mr. Rashad Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council:

“Over the past few years, our friends have continued to urge us to give peace a chance, and we have done so with the utmost responsibility — perhaps even more than expected — out of our concern for the lives of Yemenis. Today, we ask our friends and this Council to give the State a chance too.”

We are not merely asking the Council to show solidarity with the Yemeni Government. Rather, we are asking it to defend principles that concern the entire international system: the protection of civilians, respect for State sovereignty, the inviolability of civilian infrastructure and commercial ports, the protection of freedom of navigation and the rejection of the use of missiles and drones to impose political and economic gains by force. Our choice will remain a just and sustainable peace that restores State institutions, upholds the dignity of the Yemeni people and brings security and stability to Yemen and the region.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.