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New York

President:	Mrs. Balta	(Greece)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Alrowaiei
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Colombia	Mr. Gaona
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Latvia	Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes
	Liberia	Mr. Sackie
	Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama	Mrs. Petrocelli Rojas
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Somalia	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Foster
	United States of America	Mr. Bartos

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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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 representatives of Saudi Arabia and 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; Mr. Mohamed Yahya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Inger Ashing, Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children International.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: In the past few weeks, Yemen has slid back into full-scale war, with the hostilities spreading across multiple front lines. Following Ansar Allah's earlier advances on Mukha' and the coast along the Bab al-Mandab strait, intense fighting has continued in the highlands west and south of Ta'izz city and across into Lahij. Earlier this week, the Government launched a large-scale counteroffensive and has since reported retaking areas around the Bab al-Mandab strait. Fighting has also intensified in Ma'rib, Jawf and Hajjah. The humanitarian situation in Ta'izz, Yemen's most populous governorate, is rapidly deteriorating, and throughout, aerial attacks, including air strikes, have continued across the country. Ansar Allah has also carried out attacks against civilian and energy infrastructure in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including recent attacks against Abha International Airport and King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, which killed and injured civilians. I echo the Secretary-General's condemnation and repeat my call on Ansar Allah to cease these attacks.

While the situation in Yemen remains highly fluid, one fact is clear: civilians, especially women and children, are once again bearing the brunt of escalating violence, at a time when Yemen has been ranked by the International Monetary Fund as the world's poorest country. I remind all parties that the obligations of international humanitarian law are not optional. They must distinguish between civilians and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives, avoid disproportionate harm and take every feasible precaution to spare civilians. Children are entitled to special protection, and their recruitment and use in armed conflict is prohibited. Parties must also respect and protect medical facilities, humanitarian personnel and operations and persons who are no longer taking part in hostilities.

Over the past month, I have been engaging intensively with the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah and with regional and international stakeholders, including in Riyadh, Muscat, Cairo and Washington, D.C. There is broad recognition that this is a defining moment, not only for Yemenis, but also for the region. I have heard different perspectives on the dimensions of the conflict, all of which have become intertwined. Ongoing instability in the Middle East continues to have an impact on dynamics in Yemen, while developments in Yemen, in turn, reverberate across the region. Ansar Allah's threats against Saudi-linked commercial ships in the Red Sea undermine the freedom of navigation of every country. These threats are becoming enmeshed with the broader confrontation over control of maritime trade routes and the stresses on the

international energy market. And in parallel, the grievances around the internal Yemeni conflict have deepened even more.

Regional security, freedom of navigation and the protection of international trade are legitimate concerns that must be addressed. International engagement on Yemen must also be grounded in the realities of Yemen and the needs and aspirations of its people. A credible political process that addresses the fundamental causes underpinning the Yemen conflict, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and building on past negotiations, will contribute to regional stability. Preserving that path is in the interests of the Yemeni people, every member of the Council and the wider international community.

At this juncture, evolving military calculations are affecting how the parties assess the value, timing and terms of potential political engagement. I understand the prevailing battlefield motivations. I want to stress, however, that while military pressure can strengthen political leverage, war and diplomacy are not mutually exclusive. Ultimately, gains on the battlefield cannot substitute for the negotiations that will be required to settle the conflict.

As a mediator, I must offer a political horizon. My role is to find space, to create space, for a Yemeni-owned political settlement and to impress upon the parties that a political process is a responsibility they owe to the 40 million Yemenis who have endured more than a decade of conflict. The shape and timing of that settlement are for the Yemenis to determine. But unless war is to become Yemen's permanent reality, the time to consider political strategies is now.

Before closing, I would like to remind the Council of the continuing plight of our arbitrarily detained colleagues and the detained personnel from non-governmental organizations, civil society and diplomatic missions. We welcome the release by Ansar Allah of one United Nations detainee as a positive step. However, 72 of our colleagues remain detained, and meaningful progress towards their release has yet to be made. The United Nations continues to engage actively with Ansar Allah in pursuit of the unconditional release of all remaining detained personnel. Many face serious health problems. Their release is especially urgent, and the Council's continued support is vital.

As I have outlined, if recent developments demonstrate anything, it is that Yemen's conflict cannot be contained. Without a credible political process that sustainably resolves the conflict, it will continue to resurface, deepen regional tensions and threaten broader stability. The Council's continued unity, sustained attention and collective support for mediation are therefore indispensable.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Yahya.

Mr. Yahya: I thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his briefing and his continued efforts to advance a political solution for Yemen.

Today, I must warn the Security Council that Yemen's humanitarian crisis has sharply worsened, and further inaction will cost lives. Over the past two months, escalating fighting has brought renewed suffering to civilians already exhausted by more than a decade of conflict. Families are once again fleeing their homes, with depleted savings, disrupted livelihoods and few options for safety. More than 200,000 people have been displaced across Yemen since the beginning of August. This is the highest level of new displacement since the 2022 truce. In addition, nearly 4,000 people have fled across the Bab al-Mandab strait to seek safety in Djibouti and Somalia.

Behind every displacement figure is a family facing an impossible choice: stay and risk their lives or leave and lose everything again. Women and children are paying the highest price. Since the start of August, the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights has reported that at least 46 civilians have been killed and more than 130 injured. More than half of those killed and nearly a third of those injured were children. These figures capture only verified incidents. The full civilian toll is likely higher. Even before this escalation, 2.2 million children under 5 were acutely malnourished, and more than half a million were suffering from severe acute malnutrition. At the same time, nearly 250 schools have closed, and more than 137,000 students are out of the classroom, without access to school feeding programmes.

The fighting is also pushing Yemen's health system closer to collapse. The World Health Organization (WHO) and health partners report that only three in five assessed health facilities across the country are fully functioning, with few providing trauma care. Conflict-related casualties are placing severe pressure on the health system and limiting other services, including emergency care for women giving birth. The risk of disease is also rising. This year, WHO advises that more than 7,800 suspected cholera cases and more than 22,000 suspected measles cases have been reported across Yemen. Overcrowded displacement sites, unsafe water and inadequate sanitation are now creating conditions for further outbreaks. All this is unfolding amid food insecurity, economic decline, climate shocks and prolonged vulnerability.

Despite these challenges, humanitarian organizations continue to deliver. Since the beginning of August, the United Nations and our partners have provided emergency assistance to more than 131,000 people affected by the recent escalation. This includes food, shelter and health and protection services. Health partners have deployed mobile medical teams, activated rapid mechanisms and delivered urgent medical supplies. I pay tribute to all our humanitarian partners, our Yemeni staff and front-line responders. They continue to serve communities under immense pressure.

But the reality is that the humanitarian response in Yemen is falling behind not because of a lack of effort on the part of those working on the ground, but because of a simple lack of funding. In direct response to the recent escalation, close to $20 million have been mobilized, nearly $11 million through the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) and another $9 million through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support newly displaced families and the communities hosting them. On top of this, the Emergency Relief Coordinator has allocated an additional $18 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support life-saving assistance across Yemen.

But the CERF and YHF funding alone cannot fill the gap. The humanitarian appeal is only 22 per cent funded. The gap between needs and resources is widening precisely as the crisis grows. Aid organizations are already making difficult decisions: which needs to cover and which communities to drop. The immediate cost of underfunding is clear: fewer clinics operating, fewer children receiving nutrition treatment, fewer families receiving food, fewer women accessing maternal healthcare and, ultimately, more preventable deaths. Without an adequate response, the crisis will deepen, and recovery will be harder and more costly. The ability of families to withstand even small future shocks is eroded, their security is under greater threat, and their chances of building a future become even more remote.

In addition to the lack of funding, humanitarian operations face other obstacles. This month sees the continued arbitrary detention of 72 United Nations colleagues and ongoing concerns about the safety of our staff. The consequences of this are profound. Needs are acute in many areas, while the unsafe operating environment along with funding shortages have sharply reduced humanitarian reach. I welcome the release of one United Nations staff member last week. I join the Secretary-General in calling for the release of all detained United Nations personnel and other humanitarian workers in Yemen.

My appeals are straightforward.

First, all parties must protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, including health facilities and schools. Ambulances and medics must be able to reach and care for the injured and sick without impediment or harm. There must be adherence to international humanitarian law.

Secondly, humanitarian access must be safe, rapid and unimpeded. The limited emergency supplies available on the ground must not be delayed or prevented from reaching people in need. We must open the roads, let humanitarians do their job and let people receive much-needed relief.

Thirdly, donors must urgently unlock flexible and predictable funding. We must respond to new displacement while sustaining life-saving services elsewhere, including through the Yemen Humanitarian Fund.

Finally, efforts on political solutions will be important. Further fighting will cause further humanitarian consequences. It will displace more people and further restrict humanitarian access.

The people of Yemen need more than our concern and our outrage. They need our collective action, our concrete support and our unwavering commitment to deliver.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Ashing.

Ms. Ashing: This past July, in Yemen, I sat opposite Mohammed, a teenage boy in a temporary learning centre run by Save the Children. Every day he travelled miles to be there. School is a place where he sees his friends, learns and plays. Mohammed is articulate and engaging. He quizzes me about books on leadership. He even recommends some books on his own. Yet every year, Mohammed told me, he fails his exams, deliberately. He does this because if he passes, he will have to leave school, and outside school he fears an uncertain future: to be caught up in conflict or undertake dangerous work. For many girls, it can mean child marriage. For too many children in Yemen, conflict has turned education from a pathway to opportunity into a refuge from danger.

Yemen is a country of tremendous vibrancy and hope. This latest escalation risks reversing its fragile recovery. The country faces a deadly convergence of conflict, displacement, economic decline and a surge in infectious and water-borne diseases — including measles, acute watery diarrhoea and cholera — made worse by heavy rains and flash floods. And, as always, children are paying the highest price.

Children are at disproportionate risk from explosive weapons. They are seven times more likely to die from blast injuries than adults. In Yemen, I met Othman, who is 16. Conflict displaced his family and, from the age of 12, he left school to collect scrap metal to support them. One day, an unexploded ordnance, hidden in the scrap, detonated. Othman woke up in the hospital seven days later, with his leg amputated. Today, he is learning to walk with a prosthetic limb and receives psychosocial support from Save the Children. His experience is a reminder that the consequences of conflict endure long after the headlines fade.

While the world focuses on the recent escalation, we must not forget, nor neglect, the legacy of many years of conflict in Yemen. What we are witnessing today is not a new crisis replacing an old one. It is another layer of suffering being added to one of the world's longest and most complex humanitarian crises. The danger is that the latest escalation pushes already exhausted families and services beyond their capacity to cope. Years of humanitarian investment and fragile recovery gains can be lost far more quickly than they were built.

The protection of children is not a humanitarian aspiration. It is a legal obligation. Whether children are protected from attack, recruitment, displacement and deprivation

will be dependent on the actions taken by parties and on the influence exercised by Member States represented around this table.

Displacements are not occurring neatly into organized sites. Families are moving into communities already struggling with food insecurity, weak basic services and limited livelihood opportunities. Health facilities and schools have been damaged, destroyed or forced to close. Families have been separated. As conflict and repeated displacements disrupt family life, education and continuity of care, children face increasingly complex protection risks and deep psychological distress. Amid bombings, violence and displacement, children bear witness to events they struggle to process. This loss to a child's learning, or sense of safety in the world, will have lifelong effects for many.

Every additional shock creates new emergency needs while further eroding the ability of households, communities and public services to recover from the previous ones. This latest escalation comes on top of years of humanitarian crises. For many families there are no remaining coping mechanisms to absorb another shock. Even before this escalation, 2.2 million children aged under 5 were acutely malnourished in Yemen, including 500,000 children suffering from life-threatening severe acute malnutrition. These children require urgent nutrition support, care in their communities or hospitalization.

Our teams now take calls every day from injured children and their families who need help. Children are being hit as they flee to find safety. Save the Children has been among the first to provide medical care for children with blast injuries sustained since the escalation, including shrapnel wounds to the eyes, abdominal wounds, broken limbs and head injuries. Some have not survived.

Parents tell us that they are terrified of what comes next, without food, clean water, healthcare, or the certainty of a safe place to sleep. While aid organizations are working to provide life-saving support, insecurity and access constraints are making it harder for civilians to reach desperately needed aid. My own colleagues are displaced with their families yet continue working.

Disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz will have driven up food and fuel prices in a country that imports most of what its population eats. Global humanitarian supply chains have been disrupted. Additional effects on Red Sea maritime insecurity are already posing more risks to supply chains and fuel availability.

So many of the children I met in July were already stretched to the brink, and we fear that the latest escalation will leave them with nothing in reserve. Without urgent action, more children will be pushed deeper into hardship, with lasting consequences for their survival, learning and protection. The scale of need is immense, but the priorities are clear. Children in Yemen require the following.

First, they need protection. Members of the Security Council should use their political influence to ensure all parties uphold international humanitarian law, prevent grave violations against children and protect civilian infrastructure. Parties should apply a child-sensitive lens in how they interpret international humanitarian law. This means ensuring children's specific vulnerabilities are explicitly accounted for in weapons targeting and operational planning.

Secondly, life-saving assistance and the systems people depend upon must be sustained. We call on donors to provide flexible and sustainable funding so that education, health and other key services can continue to function, while responding to the new escalation.

Thirdly, aid must reach children wherever they are. All parties should guarantee the safety, security and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel — especially

Yemeni national staff — and facilitate full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to people in need, without interference or arbitrary detention. Member States should apply comprehensive humanitarian exceptions to all sanctions and counter-terror regimes so that no child is denied aid.

Yemen is more than the headlines of war. The children I met were articulate, witty and hopeful. Throughout my visit they spoke not only about what they have lost but about what they hope to become — teachers, engineers, doctors and community leaders. Their aspirations have survived this conflict. The question is whether our actions will help them realize them. They are not asking for special treatment. Like children everywhere, they want the chance to learn, play and build a future in safety. They do not lack resilience or ambition. What they lack is the protection and opportunity that only political action can provide. When I think of Yemen today, I think of Mohammed, a boy who feels safer in failing an exam than passing it. No child should have to make that choice.

The decisions taken by the Council will help determine whether Yemen's children inherit another generation of conflict, or the opportunity to build a different future. We urge all Member States, and the Council, to act and to use their influence to protect children, uphold international humanitarian law and prevent this crisis from deepening further. The cost of inaction will be measured not only in lives lost today, but in opportunities lost for an entire generation of Yemeni children.

The President: I thank Ms. Ashing for her briefing.

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

Ms. Foster (United Kingdom): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Assistant Secretary-General Yahya and the Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children International for their briefings. I also welcome the representatives of Yemen and Saudi Arabia to this meeting.

First, the United Kingdom unequivocally condemns the Houthis' dangerous escalation in Yemen. Their recent offensive has intensified the conflict, increased civilian suffering and pushed the prospect of peace further out of reach. In Ta'izz city, Houthi forces continue to besiege civilians and threaten vital supply routes, placing further strain on an already fragile health system. This is yet another example of their reckless disregard for the well-being of the Yemeni people. The Houthis' attacks on shipping, civilians and critical infrastructure pose a serious threat to regional security, maritime shipping and global energy security. The United Kingdom extends its condolences to Saudi Arabia for the attacks against Abha International Airport and King Khalid International Airport. The United Kingdom stands with the Government of Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the face of those attacks and reaffirms their right to defend their security and sovereignty in accordance with international law. Following months of Iranian attacks, including against commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, the Houthis' actions risk further destabilizing an already volatile region. We urge the Houthis to de-escalate and return to the path of diplomacy.

Secondly, the consequences of this escalation are being felt first and most acutely by ordinary Yemenis. Since fighting intensified in September, the most recent escalation is worsening an already catastrophic humanitarian situation — 479 civilians have been killed or injured, and more than 200,000 people have been forced to flee from their homes. Many have fled to communities already struggling to cope. UNICEF reports that 300 primary healthcare clinics have been affected, restricting access to life-saving care, including nutrition and vaccination support. As ever, women and girls are disproportionately affected, with the United Nations Population Fund reporting several instances of pregnant women forced to give birth on the roadside. We must do more. The United Kingdom commits to supporting the humanitarian response through its $137

million commitment this year. We welcome the recent release of a World Food Programme staff member, but many more remain in detention and have been separated from their families and loved ones for years. We will continue to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations, non-governmental organization, civil society and diplomatic mission personnel held by the Houthis, and for full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

Thirdly, this escalation demonstrates why effective international pressure on the Houthis remains essential. The Houthis are able to sustain their attacks because weapons and dual-use items continue to reach Houthi-controlled areas, in violation of the Council's decisions. Resolution 2140 (2014) established a sanctions regime to halt the flow of arms. All Member States must comply fully with its provisions. As we approach the renewal of the mandate next month, the Council must ensure that the sanctions regime remains effective, relevant and responsive to the evolving threat.

Ultimately, there is no military solution to this conflict. The United Kingdom remains steadfast in its support of Special Envoy Grundberg's efforts to secure de-escalation and to advance an inclusive political process. We urge the Houthis to choose dialogue over escalation and a political settlement over continued conflict.

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

We thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General Yahya for their comprehensive briefings, and we have listened carefully to the testimony of Ms. Ashing. We also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

The A3 remains deeply concerned by the escalation of hostilities in Yemen and its broader regional implications. Recent developments risk reversing the relative calm achieved following the 2022 United Nations-mediated truce and further undermining the prospects for a negotiated settlement. The expansion of fighting, including attacks against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and commercial shipping, and the deterioration of humanitarian conditions require our urgent and sustained attention.

Against this backdrop, we would like to make the following points.

On the political front, the A3 reiterates that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. We reaffirm our full support for the Special Envoy's good offices and for an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under the auspices of the United Nations. We further underscore that women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation must be ensured at every stage of the political process. Any lasting settlement must uphold the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen. We encourage regional and international actors with influence over the parties to exert all efforts towards de-escalation, dialogue and confidence-building measures.

On the security situation, we are deeply concerned by the intensification of fighting around Ta'izz and other populated areas. The A3 calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from further escalation. We condemn the recent Houthi attacks against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including attacks affecting civilians and civilian infrastructure. We also express grave concern regarding attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait. Such attacks threaten regional security, international navigation and global commerce. International law, including the freedom of navigation, must be fully respected. We reiterate that Yemen must not become an arena for regional confrontation, proxy warfare or the resolution of disputes originating beyond its borders.

On the humanitarian situation, the A3 is deeply alarmed by the rising number of civilian casualties and the displacement of approximately 200,000 people since early August, including 120,000 requiring emergency assistance. We are also concerned that thousands of Yemenis have crossed into Somalia and Djibouti, placing additional pressure on already limited humanitarian and reception capacities. Furthermore, according to reports, more than 2.2 million children under the age of 5 are acutely malnourished, including half a million who are severely malnourished, and the conditions faced by their mothers are also deeply concerning. We call on the international community and donors to redouble their efforts to support Yemen's humanitarian response and to support neighbouring countries receiving those fleeing the violence.

The A3 stresses that safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access must be facilitated throughout Yemen. Humanitarian and United Nations personnel must never be targeted. We call on all parties to build on the momentum created by the recent United Nations-brokered agreement and reiterate our call for the immediate, safe and unconditional release of all those detained. We recall that humanitarian workers are protected under relevant Security Council resolutions and that United Nations staff enjoy privileges and immunities. Humanitarian and United Nations personnel must be able to carry out their work independently, safely and without intimidation or interference.

In conclusion, the people of Yemen have endured conflict, displacement, hunger and uncertainty for too long. Their legitimate aspirations for peace, security, dignity and development must remain at the centre of the Council's efforts. The A3 stands in solidarity with the people of Yemen and reaffirms their unwavering support for an inclusive political settlement that preserves Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We will continue to support the Special Envoy and all credible efforts aimed at ending hostilities, alleviating civilian suffering and securing a just, comprehensive and lasting peace for Yemen.

Mr. Bartos (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Grunberg, Mr. Yahya and Ms. Ashing for their briefings.

The United States is gravely concerned by the continued escalation by the terrorist Houthis. We strongly condemn Houthi attacks against civilian infrastructure and airports, which have resulted in fatalities and injuries, including, most recently, the Houthi missile strikes on King Khaled International Airport in Riyadh. These outrageous attacks reflect a broader pattern of deplorable Houthi behaviour and blatant disregard for civilian life.

The Houthis have intensified attacks on critical energy infrastructure, including claimed strikes on Saudi Aramco facilities that threaten global energy security and economic stability far beyond the region. The pattern remains unmistakable. The Houthis act as instruments of Tehran to threaten freedom of navigation, undermine regional stability and terrorize innocent civilians. We demand that the Houthis cease their attacks against the legitimate Governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and we demand that Iran cease all support to the Houthis.

In the face of the Houthi threat, the United States stands firmly with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of Yemen as they defend their sovereignty and work to restore stability. The Houthis also rely on a flow of dual-use components and precursor chemicals. When the Council renews the Yemen sanctions regime in mid-November, it must act on the Panel of Experts' long-standing recommendations to take steps to cut off the flow of these items to the Houthis.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, we are concerned by the Houthis' role in the mounting civilian atrocities. Months before the recent aggressive activity, the Houthis closed humanitarian space through harassment of aid agencies and detention of humanitarian workers. This 19 October will mark the fifth anniversary of the beginning

of the Houthi detention of United States Embassy staff in Sana'a, an act of calculated cruelty. We reiterate our demand for the immediate and unconditional release of unjustly detained United Nations and United States Embassy staff. Going forward, the United States calls upon the Security Council to press for full implementation of resolutions 2140 (2014) and 2216 (2015) and to hold Iran accountable. The United States will continue working with our partners to counter the Houthi threat, defend our navigational rights and freedoms and support long-term regional stability.

Mr. Gaona (Colombia): Colombia's position on Yemen is grounded in the defence of international law, international humanitarian law, multilateralism and the central role that it plays vis-á-vis the Charter of the United Nations. We must remember that the sanctions regime on the Houthis is being systematically violated. This is something that we must remember when it comes to the meeting in November.

Resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2140 (2014) clearly state that it is prohibited for this organization to receive weapons. And now we are hearing also the proposal for certain chemicals to be prohibited. This is part of the conflict: the ability of the proxies and terrorist organizations to continue fighting and cause damage and human suffering across the country and soon, it seems, the region.

We must not forget that the attack yesterday was near Qatar, not just Saudi Arabia. Thus, there exists an exponential risk of escalation, and the Security Council must be aware of the situation.

We are grateful for the reports and the briefs of Mr. Grundberg, Mr. Yahya and Ms. Ashing. The later clearly touched on a very important situation, as it described another conflict — that of refugees — within the broader conflict, with children being perhaps the least protected.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

For Colombia, there is a clear and compelling concern that, of the most recently displaced persons in Yemen — the 175,000 displaced persons in the past months — 62 per cent are children. This calls for urgent action to protect one of the most defenceless populations in the international system, the international human rights and the rights of refugees. We also want to call attention to the number of refugees crossing the border into Somalia, a country that already faces limitations in terms of resources available to address the crisis.

We are talking about a humanitarian crisis that may become one of the major humanitarian crises of this century, as the conflict escalates. Considering that this is a country of 35 million people and that 22 million of them are in urgent need of food assistance, I believe that the Security Council must issue a joint appeal to all donors, not only to maintain current contributions, but also to redouble their efforts.

Hunger cannot be postponed. There is a reason why, in international law, the principle of humanity is different from the principles of distinction, necessity and proportionality. That principle of humanity requires each member of the Security Council to undertake bilateral and diplomatic efforts to separate the two conflicts that exist in Yemen: the political conflict, the military situation, and, naturally, the issue of violations of State sovereignty.

Colombia remains steadfast in its support for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the legitimate Government of Yemen, and it condemns the terrorist activities of the Houthis, as well as actions originating from Iran that affect the geopolitics of the conflict. However, Colombia also recognizes that there is a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented scale in the country that will have repercussions for the international system. For that reason, it calls upon all donors to intensify their efforts. Hunger cannot be postponed.

Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes (Latvia): Let me begin by thanking Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Mohamed Yahya, and Ms. Inger Ashing, Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children International, for their briefings exposing the gravity of the situation. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of Yemen and Saudi Arabia in today's meeting.

Latvia remains deeply alarmed by the enduring conflict in and around Yemen and its widening impact across the region. In recent months, the crisis has become increasingly embedded in broader regional tensions, creating a mutually reinforcing cycle in which developments in Yemen and across the region increasingly impact one another.

The collapse of the 2022 truce and the return to full-scale war have deepened Yemen's crisis, inflicted further suffering on civilians and undone the fragile progress achieved in recent years. Furthermore, we condemn the Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, including on airports and other civilian targets, as recently as yesterday.

We call for an immediate end to these attacks by the Houthis. We continue to stand in solidarity with the Governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia and affirm their right to defend their territory and population in accordance with international law. At the same time, Latvia supports sustained international efforts to contain the escalation, reverse the current trajectory of renewed warfare and restore the conditions for a Yemeni-led political settlement. Latvia reiterates that international humanitarian law is a legal obligation and must be upheld by all parties at all times.

Threats to the safety of seafarers and to maritime security remain a matter of grave concern. Freedom of navigation is not negotiable and must be protected in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Attacks on commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait are unacceptable and must cease immediately.

The continued flow of weapons and Iran's disruptive support for the Houthis are contributing to the expansion of hostilities and drawing an ever-wider area into the conflict. Ensuring the full implementation of resolution 2140 (2014) and the arms embargo remains critical. For Security Council decisions to have a meaningful impact on the ground, they must be fully respected and rigorously and collectively enforced.

As we have just heard, the renewed violence is exacting a devastating human toll, and the humanitarian situation is rapidly deteriorating. The Government of Yemen has warned that some areas could face a complete loss of health services, while the country lacks the resources and capacity to absorb further waves of displacement, putting already vulnerable populations, especially children, at even greater risk.

The international community must step up its support for Yemen's humanitarian response and help to ensure that vital services remain available to those in need. In that regard, I would like to highlight the leading contribution of the European Union and its member States, which continue to play a vital role in addressing Yemen's humanitarian needs.

At the same time, humanitarian access to Houthi-controlled areas remains a major challenge, severely limiting the ability of the international community to reach people in need. The continued detention of United Nations personnel, as well as humanitarian, civil society and diplomatic personnel, is a blatant obstruction of humanitarian action and international engagement. Latvia reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained United Nations, humanitarian, civil society and diplomatic personnel.

In that context, it is also important to stress that United Nations staff and other humanitarian personnel did not leave Houthi-controlled areas of their own accord but

were subjected to pressure from the Houthis to do so. That demonstrates a troubling disregard for the needs and well-being of the very people they claim to represent, their fellow Yemenis. Latvia expresses its support for and solidarity with the very few civil society organizations that still continue to operate in Houthi-controlled areas under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

The renewed fighting represents a serious setback to efforts to resolve the conflict in Yemen. There is no military solution to the conflict, and the current situation only reinforces the urgent need to pursue a political solution as soon as conditions allow.

Latvia remains firmly committed to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen. We also continue to support the crucial work of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and his efforts to bring the parties back to dialogue. Above all, our collective efforts must remain focused on the people of Yemen and on their right to peace, security and a stable future. The Council must therefore mobilize, give the situation its maximum attention and remain ready to act swiftly and decisively in support of that objective.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Assistant Secretary-General Mohamed Yahya and Ms. Inger Ashing for their briefings.

The situation in and around Yemen has deteriorated markedly in recent times. A significant exacerbation of the situation is being observed along the entire line of contact: the ceasefire regime, which had been observed de facto by the Yemeni protagonists since October 2022 even without its formal extension, is no longer in effect. The current phase of the military and political crisis in the country is the most serious in the past five years.

The official Yemeni authorities and the Ansar Allah movement exchange fire daily using artillery, armoured vehicles and unmanned aerial vehicles. Particularly fierce clashes are taking place along the coast of Ta‘izz Governorate, where the parties are fighting for control of the Governorate’s eponymous capital and the coastal city of Dhubab. At the same time, air strikes are being conducted daily against Ansar Allah positions in the northern parts of the country.

Moreover, the conflict in Yemen is increasingly and unmistakably assuming a regional dimension. That is linked to systematic Houthi strikes against targets in Saudi Arabia, which have affected not only border areas but also other parts of the country, including the capital, Riyadh. Regrettably, strikes against Saudi airports and energy infrastructure are resulting in casualties.

The escalation of tensions in the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab, a waterway of particular importance to global trade, is also a cause of extreme concern. It is regrettable that those developments are affecting international commercial shipping and disrupting established transport and logistics routes. We have consistently advocated the need to ensure the safety and freedom of maritime navigation and the uninterrupted operation of all strategic maritime routes. Nevertheless, commercial maritime traffic through Bab al-Mandab is continuing, albeit at a reduced level.

The situation in Yemen is indeed approaching catastrophe. It is critical and requires urgent rectification, to which all parties involved must contribute. We call upon them to exercise maximum restraint, cease the violence without delay and move towards negotiations.

Separately, we emphasize the need to refrain from large-scale strikes against civilian infrastructure, including the international airports in Aden, Riyadh and Sana’a. Those airports play a vital humanitarian and commercial role, including for vulnerable civilians.

We also regret that, at the current stage, some parties to the conflict are rejecting the political and diplomatic path towards de-escalation. We call upon them to approach the issue in a balanced and realistic manner. It must be clear to all that, in the longer term, there is simply no alternative to negotiations and that any attempt to resolve the crisis in Yemen by force risks plunging the entire country and the surrounding region into chaos.

The paramount task now facing the members of the Security Council and the international community is to prevent the confrontation from spreading and drawing in new participants. Solutions to the existing problems must be sought through the launch of a constructive intra-Yemeni dialogue based on the road map for a settlement. That is a balanced document that, subject to certain refinements, could well form the basis of a United Nations-led political process.

We also emphasize the need for coordinated multilateral efforts on the humanitarian track. The situation of ordinary people in Yemen is deteriorating rapidly, particularly in the northern parts of the country.

For our part, we will continue to provide Special Envoy Grundberg with all possible assistance in that endeavour. We will also continue our intensive political and diplomatic engagement with interested partners in the region with a view to de-escalating the situation in Yemen. We stand ready to cooperate constructively with the official Yemeni authorities and other political forces in the country, including the Houthis, who are an integral part of Yemeni society.

In conclusion, we wish to express our commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of friendly Yemen.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I would like to start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg, Assistant Secretary-General Yahya and Chief Executive Officer Ashing for their briefings.

Since we met a month ago (see S/PV.10222), the situation in Yemen has continued to deteriorate. Denmark strongly condemns the attacks by the Houthis in Yemen and against Saudi Arabia, including attacks against civilian infrastructure and threats to commercial shipping.

Denmark is deeply alarmed by the intensified clashes across several of Yemen's front lines and the growing humanitarian suffering that they have brought upon the Yemeni people. The Houthis bear full responsibility for this escalation, and we call on them to immediately cease all attacks.

Iran's long-standing support to the Houthis enables them to continue their attacks. This not only fuels the crisis and undermines efforts to achieve peace in Yemen but also risks further destabilizing the wider region. In this context, more must be done to effectively contain the Houthis' destructive capabilities. We need to remain focused on effectively curbing illegal transfers of arms and military support to the Houthis. To this end, Denmark looks forward to the upcoming sanctions renewal next month and urges more effective implementation. The growing ties between the Houthis and Al-Shabaab are also a cause of concern.

This return to fighting is exacerbating one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. More than a decade of conflict has left more than 22 million people, over half the population, in need of humanitarian assistance. Millions of Yemenis face hunger, and there is limited access to basic services. As we have heard, the escalation is inflicting unprecedented harm on the most vulnerable, with children bearing a disproportionate share of the suffering. More than 60 per cent of the displaced people are children; 2.2 million children under the age of five are acutely malnourished; and approximately 140,000 children are out of school due to forced school closures.

The escalation also further constrains the ability of aid organizations to deliver critical services. As several have mentioned this morning, more than 200,000 people have been displaced since August, and the number is growing by the day. We call for the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers, as well as for safe, unimpeded access so aid can reach those in need, including displaced families and the communities hosting them. The actions by the Houthis have led to the United Nations not being able to operate and help Yemenis in dire need in large parts of the country.

Denmark underscores the need for full adherence to international law, including international humanitarian law. We welcome the recent release of one World Food Programme worker and reiterate our demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all personnel from the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and diplomatic missions who have been arbitrarily detained by the Houthis.

In closing, an inclusive political process under the auspices of the United Nations is the only sustainable solution to this conflict. Denmark fully supports the efforts of Special Envoy Grundberg, and we call on the Houthis to immediately halt their attacks, engage constructively and alleviate the profound humanitarian suffering inflicted on the people of Yemen for far too long.

The President: Before giving the floor to the representative of Pakistan, I would like to say a few words.

As this is the last time that Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad will participate in a Council meeting in his capacity as the Permanent Representative of Pakistan, I would like to express, I believe on behalf of all the members of the Council, our sincere appreciation to His Excellency the Ambassador of Pakistan for his cooperation, constructive engagement and contributions to the work of the Council. We wish you dear Ambassador, dear Asim, every success in your future endeavours.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would like to thank you, Madam President, in particular for your kind words addressed to me, which I believe are words addressed to my country also.

I must say that it has been a great honour representing Pakistan at the United Nations and in the Security Council. I have had the pleasure, and I feel so privileged to have had this opportunity, to work with all of my dear colleagues and to admire their commitment and deep attachment to what we all say is our collective objective: the maintenance of international peace and security, the primary responsibility of the Security Council. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, his senior aides in the Secretariat and a number of Special Envoys, including Mr. Grundberg, and Special Representatives in the field, and thousands of our peacekeepers who are deployed in various missions, for their contribution to our work in the Security Council. Let us not forget the outstanding colleagues that we have in the Secretariat, the Security Council Affairs Division and my own team for their support.

I think together we have achieved a lot. Yet there are many situations and many challenges that require our collective attention and continuing work. And I think the situation in Yemen is one of those.

I would like to join colleagues in thanking the Special Envoy, Mr. Grundberg, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mohamed Yahya for their briefings. We also take note of the insightful remarks by Ms. Inger Ashing.

Yemen’s descent into conflict is deeply alarming. The escalation of hostilities, continued Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, threats to commercial shipping, fighting around Ta‘izz and Bab al-Mandab, and the deepening humanitarian crisis demand our urgent attention. In this context, Pakistan wishes to underscore four points.

First, we strongly condemn the continued Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, including the outrageous targeting of infrastructure in the Makkah Governorate and the power distribution station in Madinah. Pakistan has also strongly condemned the Houthi terrorist attacks targeting King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and Abha International Airport, which resulted in loss of lives and injuries to civilians. We call for an immediate end of such reckless attacks that constitute a grave threat to regional peace and security. The security and sanctity of the two Holy Mosques must be respected at all times. As the Prime Minister of Pakistan said yesterday:

> "Pakistan stands in unwavering solidarity with the leadership and the people of our brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In line with the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement and recent decisions taken by its Strategic Political and Defence Committee, our commitment to the Kingdom's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security is resolute. We also fully support Saudi Arabia's legitimate right to defend its people and protect its cities and vital infrastructure. The Houthi militia must immediately cease these attacks. We will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Saudi Arabia in the face of these attacks."

Secondly, Pakistan reaffirms its support for Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity and its internationally recognized Government. The intensifying Houthi offensive along Yemen's western coast and around Bab Al-Mandab underscores the urgency of protecting maritime security. The Houthis must cease attacks on commercial shipping. Freedom of navigation must be upheld in accordance with international law. These vital waterways cannot remain exposed to attacks that endanger seafarers, disrupt trade and compound global economic hardship.

Thirdly, Pakistan supports Special Envoy Grundberg's efforts, including his recent engagements. All diplomatic channels must be used to contain escalation, maintain communication and facilitate a cessation of hostilities, and we support the Special Envoy's mediation role and his call for political strategies. These efforts should restore a credible, inclusive, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under United Nations auspices.

Fourthly, civilians must be protected. Renewed fighting is causing the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. The offensive around Ta'izz and the attack by Houthi elements on Aden airport further underscore the vulnerability of civilian populations and essential infrastructure. Rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, the protection of civilian infrastructure and adequate funding for relief operations are indispensable. Food, fuel and essential commercial supplies must reach all those in need. We also reiterate our call for the immediate, unconditional and safe release of detained United Nations, humanitarian and diplomatic personnel.

The Council must act with unity and purpose to halt Houthi attacks, safeguard regional security, alleviate suffering and restore a credible path towards a political settlement. Pakistan stands with the Yemeni people, supports efforts towards a peaceful, stable and united Yemen and will continue to make every effort to advance lasting peace and stability in the region.

Mrs. Petrocelli Rojas (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Assistant Secretary-General Mohamed Yahya and Ms. Inger Ashing for their valuable briefings. We also extend a warm welcome to the representative of Yemen and the representative of Saudi Arabia, who honour us with their presence at this meeting.

The situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate, despite the Organization's efforts to reduce violence and promote a peaceful resolution. The 2022 truce demonstrated that dialogue and diplomacy can open pathways for peace. However, the progress made remains fragile, and the Yemeni people continue to face one of the world's longest-running humanitarian crises. We are particularly concerned about developments in the

security situation in Yemen, including the activities of the Houthis and their potential implications for maritime security in the region. The possibility of further attacks on commercial ships and vessels poses a threat not only to the safety of international shipping, but also to the stability of trade routes and global supply chains. Any further disruption of these routes could have repercussions extending beyond Yemen's borders, with implications for international trade, economic stability and food and energy security, particularly for the most vulnerable countries and populations.

Regardless of how the conflict unfolds on the ground, our attention must also be focused on the civilian population, which continues to endure the most severe effects of the conflict. Currently, more than 200,000 people have been forced to flee their homes as a result of the recent escalation in fighting, according to the latest figures from the International Organization for Migration. The number of displaced people continues to rise every day, as do humanitarian needs. Children are among those most affected by this crisis, which continues to jeopardize their safety, well-being and access to essential services.

In view of this situation, and while efforts continue to find an inclusive political solution for Yemen, humanitarian assistance must remain a priority, despite the challenges on the ground. These range from a lack of funding, which limits the scope of our response, to serious access and security difficulties caused by the actions of the Houthis, including threats and arbitrary detentions of humanitarian staff and raids on United Nations facilities. These actions limit the Organization's ability to fully carry out its duties and, even more alarmingly, place further strain on the Yemeni population that depends on this assistance. In this regard, we welcome the news of the release of one of the humanitarian workers. However, this is not enough. Seventy-two United Nations workers remain arbitrarily detained. We therefore reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all those arbitrarily detained.

Our attention must be focused on Yemen, because the longer this conflict drags on, the greater the consequences for the population and the humanitarian needs will be. We must therefore redouble our efforts to move towards an inclusive, lasting, Yemeni-led political solution that meets the needs and aspirations of the people.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Mohamed Yahya, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Ms. Inger Ashing of Save the Children International for their valuable briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Ambassador Abdulaziz Alwasil, and the Permanent Representative of the fraternal Republic of Yemen, His Excellency Ambassador Abdullah Al-Saadi.

The Kingdom of Bahrain condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks by the Houthi terrorist group on the cities and governorates of the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and affirms that the targeting of the holy Islamic sites, the latest of which was the attack on the Taiba power distribution station serving the Prophet's Holy Mosque in Al-Madinah al-Munawwarah on 1 October, following the attack on Mecca on 15 September, is not merely an act of aggression against the Kingdom alone, but a violation of the sanctity of the two Holy Mosques and an affront to the sacred sites of one and a half billion Muslims.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also condemns in the strongest terms the Houthis' continued escalation within the fraternal Republic of Yemen, in violation of the ceasefire, which, according to the International Organization for Migration, has caused the displacement of more than 145,000 people, who are facing dire humanitarian conditions amid shortages of food and healthcare. The Kingdom notes the World Health Organization's warning that this escalation is pushing the health system to the brink of

collapse and exacerbating the risks of outbreaks of epidemics, including cholera, among the displaced. The Houthis' violations, which are intended to intimidate the fraternal Yemeni people, their repeated attacks on the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and their serious threat to the security of maritime navigation in the Bab al-Mandab strait and the Red Sea, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and resolution 2722 (2024). Taken together, these hostile practices constitute a threat to international peace and security, as they reflect a continued pattern of the use of force and the undermining of regional security and stability.

The Kingdom of Bahrain condemns the Houthi terrorist group's deliberate targeting of civil airports in Najran, Jazan, Abha and Riyadh in the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and of the Aden airport in the fraternal Republic of Yemen with ballistic missiles and drones, in heinous attacks that target vital civilian infrastructure and endanger the lives of passengers, staff and flight crews. This confirms the Houthis' persistent terrorist approach of targeting civilians and civilian objects and threatening the security and safety of air traffic.

The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its full solidarity with the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its support for the latter's right to defend its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It also reaffirms its support for the legitimate Yemeni Government and its efforts aimed at restoring State institutions, extending its sovereignty over its territory and maintaining security and stability in Yemen. In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes the restoration of control by forces affiliated with the legitimate Yemeni Government over the Bab al-Mandab area and the surrounding strategic locations and commends the efforts undertaken by the Yemeni Government to enhance the security of this vital maritime corridor and uphold State authority.

At the same time, the Kingdom emphasizes that this significant development does not negate the continuing threats posed by the Houthi terrorist group to the safety and security of navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait, given that it continues to possess and deploy missiles, drones, booby-trapped boats and sea mines. It is therefore vital to continue and intensify regional and international efforts to address these threats in a comprehensive and sustainable manner and to curtail the group's ability to threaten ships, maritime corridors and international trade.

The press release issued by the Council on 18 September (SC/16458) reflects the unity of its members' position in condemning, in the strongest terms, the aggression of the Houthi terrorist group. I would like to point out that this is the third press release to be issued this year condemning the Houthis' criminal acts. The crucial question that must be answered is as follows. When will the Security Council move from issuing condemnations that fade into obscurity to taking practical steps that have a tangible impact on maintaining peace and security within Yemen and in the wider region, and how long will this terrorist group continue to move from one violation to the next, flouting all international law and international resolutions? The forthcoming review of the sanctions regime provides the Council with an opportunity to translate our words into action. I call on all members to work constructively to tighten these sanctions and cut off the Houthis' access to weapons and their components.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its support for the legitimate Yemeni Government and the commendable efforts being made by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hans Grundberg, to de-escalate the situation and revive the political process, leading to a comprehensive, Yemeni-led settlement that preserves Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, alleviates the suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people and guarantees their right to security, peace and a dignified life.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hans Grundberg; the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mohamed Yahya; and the Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children International, Ms. Inger Ashing, for their respective briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of Yemen and Saudi Arabia in our proceedings.

France condemns in the strongest possible terms the military escalation carried out by the Houthis in Yemen and on Saudi Arabian territory. The Houthis' repeated attacks on civilian infrastructure, including Saudi airports, have claimed further victims. These attacks destabilize the region and exacerbate people's suffering. Nothing can justify such strikes. France calls for full respect for international humanitarian law, in all circumstances, and reaffirms its full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni authorities. We stand alongside the legitimate Yemeni Government — the sole holder of State authority — in its efforts to establish its sovereignty over the whole of Yemeni territory.

This reckless escalation, embarked upon by the Houthis since the summer, is entirely their own responsibility. Having seized the Red Sea coastline by force, the Houthis are continuing their offensive, particularly around Ta'izz, where several million inhabitants are now living under siege. The Houthis must immediately cease their attacks in Yemen, against neighbouring countries and in the Red Sea and lift the siege of Ta'izz. Their offensive also threatens, beyond Yemen, one of the world's main maritime routes. The Council must remain firm on the principle: freedom of navigation is non-negotiable. No one may claim the right to control the Bab al-Mandab strait in violation of international law and resolution 2722 (2024). For its part, France will continue its commitment to the European Common Security and Defence Policy, European Union Naval Force ASPIDES, in a strictly defensive capacity. We must not delude ourselves. The Houthis would not be able to carry out such a campaign without the support of Iran, which is arming them in breach of the embargo imposed by resolution 2216 (2015). Tehran must put a stop to this.

The civilian population is paying the price for this fighting. More than 200,000 people have been displaced since early September, and thousands have fled to Djibouti and Somalia. Cholera and measles are on the rise, while the humanitarian appeal is only funded to 22 per cent. The Houthis must guarantee unimpeded humanitarian access and immediately and unconditionally release all those United Nations, non-governmental organizations and diplomatic mission staff whom they are arbitrarily detaining. We naturally welcome the release of a World Food Programme staff member on 5 October, but this does nothing to alter the situation of the 72 other staff members who remain in detention. Lastly, we condemn the large-scale recruitment of child soldiers by the Houthis, in breach of the action plan they signed with the United Nations in 2022. This unacceptable practice must cease immediately.

Faced with this crisis, the way forward is clear. First, the Houthi military offensives must cease immediately, as a means of ultimately enabling the resumption of an inclusive political process under the auspices of the United Nations and involving the whole of Yemeni society. France fully and firmly supports the efforts of the Special Envoy, Mr. Hans Grundberg, to make progress in this direction. We encourage him to continue his efforts, and we call on the parties to engage with him without delay, thereby prioritizing the path of negotiation.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General Yahya for their briefings. I also listened carefully to the statement by Ms. Ashing, the representative of civil society, and I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of Yemen and Saudi Arabia at today's meeting.

Since September, the situation on the ground in Yemen has undergone significant changes. The parties to the conflict have engaged in fierce fighting on multiple fronts, including the western coast of Yemen, Ta'izz, Ma'rib and Lahij, and the situation on the battlefield has entered a new phase of high-intensity confrontation. The conflict has resulted in more than 4,000 casualties and displaced approximately 200,000 people. The negative spillover effects of the conflict are accelerating its spread to the Bab al-Mandab strait and neighbouring countries. The situation in Yemen has reached a critical juncture, and the international community must seek a viable way out of the current impasse.

To this end, China proposes the following.

First, we must work as swiftly as possible to de-escalate the situation. China calls on all parties concerned to exercise restraint and avoid further provoking the situation, which could lead to the expansion and escalation of hostilities. We encourage both sides in the Yemen conflict to communicate through the Military Operations Coordination Committee mechanism to avoid miscalculations. We support regional countries in exercising their unique influence to actively mediate and promote dialogue, thereby facilitating the de-escalation of the conflict.

Secondly, we must return to the path of a political solution at the earliest opportunity. The current escalation of the conflict was not inevitable. The use of force is not the correct approach, and a political solution is the only long-term remedy. The sooner negotiations begin; the sooner peace may be achieved. China supports the parties to the conflict in defusing tensions through communication and dialogue, thereby creating the necessary conditions for the resumption of negotiations. The United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen has also been granted an important mandate to mediate and conciliate in the conflict. China calls on all parties to support him in discharging his duties in accordance with his mandate and playing his due role. The international community widely recognizes the Presidential Leadership Council as the legitimate Government. The sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Yemen and Saudi Arabia must be respected.

Thirdly, we must resolutely uphold the foundations of international law. No conflict may come at the cost of the lives and property of innocent civilians. China condemns all indiscriminate attacks on civilians and non-military targets. Attacks on infrastructure vital to people's livelihoods, such as airports and energy facilities, are unacceptable. We urge all relevant parties to comply with international humanitarian law and take necessary measures to put an end to attacks targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. All parties have an obligation to respect the merchant vessels of all nations and their freedom of navigation in accordance with international law. We also call upon the international community to continue providing emergency humanitarian aid to Yemen to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation caused by the fighting.

The Yemen issue has persisted for more than a decade and is closely linked to other issues in the region. To resolve the Yemen conflict thoroughly, it must be considered within the broader context of the overall situation in the Middle East. The conflict within Yemen, maritime safety and Yemen's relations with countries of the region are the three key aspects of the Yemen issue. As these are interlinked and mutually influential, they must be considered holistically and addressed in a coordinated manner.

Not long ago, President Xi Jinping put forward a four-point initiative to promote common security in the Middle East, calling for the advancement of comprehensive governance for regional common security and supporting regional countries in exploring the establishment of a new security architecture for the Middle East. This has provided new insights for resolving regional flashpoints, including the Yemen issue. China will continue to maintain contact and communication with all relevant parties, using its own approaches to encourage reconciliation and promote dialogue, thereby

playing a constructive role in advancing a political solution to the issue of Yemen and restoring lasting peace in the region.

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

I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mohamed Yahya and the Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children International, Inger Ashing, for their briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representatives of Yemen and Saudi Arabia to today's meeting.

Greece is deeply concerned by the continuation of military activity and the renewed escalation in and around Yemen and the Red Sea region. We condemn the Houthis' pursuit of military confrontation, including ongoing attacks against Saudi Arabia, civilian sites and critical energy infrastructure. The most recent ballistic missile and drone strikes against international airports in Riyadh, Abha and Aden pose a severe threat to aviation security. Such attacks are unacceptable and risk further destabilizing Yemen and the wider region.

We stand with Saudi Arabia and the Government of Yemen in upholding their sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with international law. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must never be targets. The number of casualties among the civilian population, including children, is alarming. The protection of civilian life remains an absolute priority, and all parties must comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law. There is no substitute for a political solution. Violence will only deepen Yemen's crisis, increase human suffering and further undermine regional stability.

The objective of a Yemeni-owned, Yemeni-led and inclusive peace process under the United Nations auspices in respect of Yemen's sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and political unity needs to be preserved. Greece commends the United Nations Special Envoy's continued engagement towards achieving this objective by keeping channels of communication open and sustaining the prospect of the peace process. We encourage all parties and regional partners to engage constructively with these efforts.

I must underline that maritime security in the Red Sea, including the Bab al-Mandab and Gulf of Aden is equally important and cannot be separated from the broader political process in Yemen. We condemn in the strongest terms Houthi attacks against commercial vessels and call for the full respect of freedom of navigation and the unimpeded passage of international shipping. International maritime routes must remain open, safe and secure. Restoring confidence and trust in these waters is essential not only for regional stability but also for global trade, food and energy security. Greece will continue its commitment through the European Union Naval Force Operation Aspides to safeguard freedom of navigation and protect commercial vessels in accordance with international law and in full respect of its defensive mandate.

Yemen must not be allowed to slide further into what could become one of the world's gravest humanitarian crises. The growing number of internally displaced persons, particular children, demands urgent attention. As we have heard, displacement, food insecurity and limited access to essential health services are placing children at a heightened risk of acute malnutrition and preventable diseases, including cholera and measles. The disruption of education is further compounding their vulnerability, with millions of children deprived of safe and continuous learning opportunities. Particular concern is warranted, regarding the recruitment and use of children by the Houthis.

Humanitarian assistance must reach those in need safely and without obstruction, with humanitarian personnel guaranteed secure and unhindered access. Although we

welcome the release of one United Nations staff member, at the same time we reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all 72 United Nations staff diplomatic personnel, non-governmental organization staff, humanitarian workers and other arbitrarily detained personnel.

The message must be clear: military escalation is not a solution. The cycle of violence must end. The objective needs to remain unchanged: a comprehensive political settlement that brings a sustainable end to the conflict and establishes the foundations for lasting peace and stability in Yemen for the benefit of the Yemeni people and the wider region.

I 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*): Allow me, Madam President, to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to you on your presidency of the Council this month, wishing you and your friendly delegation every success. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the friendly French Republic, for his successful presidency of the Council last month. I would like to thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Mohamed Yahya for their briefings, and we took note of the briefing by Ms. Inger Ashing, Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children International.

Today's meeting is taking place against a backdrop of ongoing escalation by the Houthi terrorist militias, which threatens the lives of Yemenis, the security of neighbouring States and the region and one of the world's most important maritime corridors. It is also taking place amid rapid developments at a pivotal moment in the history of the war in Yemen, which requires us to place today's events in their proper context. We must not begin by looking at the situation as the middle of a story, nor view the latest military developments in isolation from the roots of this war, its causes and its evolution over the past years. Before discussing the repercussions of this escalation, it is therefore necessary to identify unequivocally the party responsible for it. The Houthi militias are the ones that started the war, 12 years ago, with their armed coup against the Yemeni State, the political consensus and the national consensus. They have thwarted every peace initiative. More recently, they have chosen to end the truce, after the Yemeni Government had provided successive opportunities for peace and borne considerable political, economic and humanitarian costs in the interests of de-escalation.

The Houthi militias have responded to those opportunities by increasing their acquisition of weapons, mobilization and recruitment. They have expanded their attacks on civilians and infrastructure within Yemen, targeted the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, threatened commercial vessels and sought to impose a military fait accompli in Ta'izz, Mukha' and Bab al-Mandab. The Yemeni Government has repeatedly warned that continued leniency towards such behaviour would undermine peace efforts, lead to another round of violence and deepen the humanitarian crisis. Regrettably, that is precisely what has happened.

In response to this escalation, and pursuant to his constitutional and legal responsibilities to protect citizens and safeguard Yemen's sovereignty over Yemeni airspace, territory and territorial waters, His Excellency Mr. Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council, announced the launch of Operation Dawn of Yemen. The operation marks a new phase in the effort to restore State institutions, end the Houthi coup and complete the liberation of the remaining Yemeni territory all the way to Sana'a, the capital. Its purpose is to end the cycle of war; to restore security, stability and peace to Yemen and the region; and to prevent a terrorist armed group from usurping the Yemeni people's right to decide their own future and from dragging them back into conflict whenever peace conflicts with the interests of the group or its supporters in the Iranian regime.

We reaffirm that these operations are not a war against the inhabitants of any region or governorate, or against any sect or social group. Rather, they reflect the Yemeni Government's responsibility to protect its citizens, restore its national institutions, control the circulation of weapons and ensure that decisions on war and peace remain under the authority of the State and the law. Fundamentally, this is a struggle between the Yemeni people, their legitimate Government and State institutions, on the one hand, and the Houthi militias, supported by the Iranian regime, on the other. The Yemeni Government reaffirms its commitment to international humanitarian law and international human rights law; to the highest standards of discipline and adherence to the rules of engagement; to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure; to the prevention of reprisals and acts of retaliation; to ensuring the humane treatment of prisoners and the wounded; to investigating any violations of those commitments; and to extending a hand of reconciliation to those who had been misled to return and align themselves with the State and its institutions.

The humanitarian cost of this escalation reveals the nature of the project we face today. The Government has documented the deaths of at least 100 children during the clashes in September alone, while the Houthi militias continue to recruit children and send them to the front lines. Those children belong in school, with their families and communities, and not on the battlefield. Over the past weeks, attacks by the Houthi militias have once again displaced thousands of Yemenis. The number of internally displaced persons has reached approximately 200,000, most of whom have been displaced for the third or fourth time. Approximately 4,000 displaced persons are now heading towards Djibouti — all of them in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Houthi attacks have also targeted residential neighbourhoods, markets, schools, displacement camps and civilian and service facilities, exacerbating the pressure on communities already exhausted by years of war.

On Wednesday, the Houthi militias targeted Aden International Airport with two ballistic missiles, one of which had landed near the runway shortly before a civilian flight was due to land, putting passengers, staff and aviation safety at immediate risk in a serious attack that brought to mind the terrorist attack carried out by this militia against the airport in December 2020.

At the same time — and in a blatant and reprehensible manner — the Houthi terrorist militias have expanded their brutal attacks against the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, targeting airports, facilities and civilian and economic infrastructure. These crimes once again expose the true nature of the Houthi militias as a terrorist group that does not hesitate to target civilians and vital institutions in an attempt to sow confusion and divert attention from the violations and crimes that it has committed against the Yemeni people for years in the service of Iranian interests in the region, thereby demonstrating a complete disregard for innocent lives and for international laws and norms.

Over the past month, security and medical sources have recorded thousands of deaths and injuries among Yemenis who were misled into joining the ranks of the militias, in pursuit of terrorist objectives and the Iranian regime's goals to undermine the security and stability of Yemen, the region and the world. The claim to an exclusive divine right to rule cannot legitimize the suppression of an entire people's will, nor should serving an Iranian agenda that seeks to use the Bab al-Mandab strait as a bargaining chip, alongside the Strait of Hormuz, justify sacrificing Yemeni lives and futures or threatening global interests.

The Houthi threat is no longer a purely Yemeni issue that can be contained within its borders, nor is the threat to navigation merely a future possibility. It is a reality that could spread and intensify if impunity persists. As documented in United Nations reports, that risk is further compounded by the growing cooperation between the Houthi

militias and Al-Shabaab in Somalia, encompassing acts of piracy, arms smuggling, training and logistical support. Therefore, the entrenchment of an armed group's control over the Bab Al-Mandab strait — alongside its expanding ties to terrorist organizations on the opposite shore — threatens to transform this waterway into an interconnected hub for terrorism, smuggling and extortion.

In defending the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait, Yemeni forces, supported by the coalition led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are protecting a vital artery on which the entire global economy depends. If the freedom of navigation is a shared interest, protecting it is a shared responsibility. The Yemeni people must not be left to bear the costs alone. We therefore call on the Council to adopt a clear stance, holding the Houthi militias accountable for the escalation and ensuring the effective implementation of Council resolutions, foremost among them resolution 2216 (2015). We also call for practical and firm measures to curb financing and smuggling networks; halt the flow of weapons, technology, expertise and military and dual-use components to the Houthi militias; hold accountable those behind that support, foremost among them the Iranian regime; and strengthen cooperation with the Yemeni Government to combat the smuggling and financing networks fuelling this war. We further call for political, economic, humanitarian and security support for State institutions and for their capacity to protect civilians and provide relief to those displaced by the most recent escalation, in addition to the millions of Yemenis displaced by the Houthi militias within the country and across continents.

In that context, we reiterate our deep appreciation and gratitude to the leadership, Government and people of the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their steadfast support for the Yemeni people and their Government, and for their continued assistance to State institutions and the national economy. This includes the provision of a new tranche of State budget support at the beginning of this month, at a time when our country is facing unprecedented economic and humanitarian challenges. That assistance has extended beyond the fields of defence, security and the economy to support the lives, dignity and family stability of Yemeni citizens.

In response to a request from His Excellency President Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, directed that measures be taken to regularize the status of Yemenis residing in the Kingdom without proper documentation. This humanitarian initiative of the utmost importance opens up prospects for stability, employment and a dignified life for Yemenis who have been cut off from their livelihoods at home and alleviates the burden on thousands of Yemeni families in these exceptional circumstances.

These stances embody the reality that the international community's responsibility vis-à-vis Yemen should not be limited to managing the crisis or responding to its security repercussions. Rather, it must extend to protecting the Yemeni people, supporting their livelihoods and bolstering the capacity of their institutions to fulfil their essential obligations. While the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has provided a practical example of such solidarity, we call upon our partners in the international community to shoulder their responsibilities, redouble their economic and humanitarian support for the Yemeni Government and support its efforts to restore stability and end the suffering that is growing worse with every passing day as a result of the escalation by the terrorist Houthi militia, which is backed by the Iranian regime.

In conclusion, genuine, comprehensive and sustainable peace will remain our goal. However, the peace we seek is one that brings an end to the coup and restores State institutions and their control over the entire territory and national decision-making, thereby protecting the rights of its citizens, safeguarding their freedom and dignity and preventing Yemen from becoming a platform for threatening regional and international peace and security, in accordance with the agreed terms of reference, foremost among

them resolution 2216 (2015). We reaffirm our support for the efforts of Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your presidency of the Council this month. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to you and the members of the Council for the great attention that you are devoting to the situation in the region in general and in Yemen in particular. In addition, I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mohamed Yahya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Inger Ashing, Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children International, for their valuable briefings.

This meeting is being held against the backdrop of delicate circumstances and serious, significant developments that make it incumbent upon the international community and the Security Council to address their risks and threats with the utmost sense of responsibility. These rapidly unfolding developments in Yemen and the attendant, ongoing escalation by the terrorist Houthi militia now demand the Council's immediate attention, as the increasing attacks on civilians, the ongoing threats to the safety of navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait and the resulting repercussions extend beyond Yemen and the region to adversely affect international peace and security, while hampering international trade, the global economy and supply chains

The terrorist Houthi militia continues its hostile and terrorist practices against its own people at home and in neighbouring countries and the region as a whole. We have witnessed a dangerous escalation, characterized by the targeting of civilians, civilian objects and vital infrastructure in the Kingdom and by the militia's terrorist acts against the brotherly Yemeni people. These include the tightening of the internal blockade, forced displacement, starvation, the terrorizing of women and the recruitment of children and their deployment on the battlefield.

The Kingdom emphasizes that the militia's continued pursuit of military escalation rather than peace will serve only to prolong the Yemeni crisis and deepen the suffering of the Yemeni people. It will also undermine regional and international efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive political solution.

Yesterday there was a blatant escalation of aggression by the terrorist Houthi militia, in the form of two attacks targeting King Khalid International Airport in the capital, Riyadh. These attacks affected airport facilities and a Saudia Airlines aircraft, resulting in the deaths of three Saudi citizens and injuries to a number of citizens and residents of various nationalities, in addition to material damage.

The past few weeks have also witnessed a dangerous escalation in Houthi attacks on the Kingdom's territory. On 15 September, the militia made a second attempt to target Mecca, the holiest site in Islam, following its previous attempt on 27 July 2017. On 29 September, it also targeted the Taiba power distribution station in Al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, in an attack that inflamed the sentiments of Muslims around the world. As a result of these attacks, which targeted the cities of Abha, Khamis Mushayt, Jazan and Najran in September, 73 civilians, including women and children, were injured. The attacks also affected the capital, Riyadh, and other cities in the Kingdom and involved the firing of ballistic missiles and drones towards populated areas and civilian and vital infrastructure. On 6 and 7 October, Abha and King Khalid International Airports were subjected to attacks that resulted in the deaths of 3 civilians and injuries to 36 others of various nationalities, in addition to causing material damage. The attacks also affected facilities at Jazan and Najran airports.

These attacks, which claimed the lives of civilians from fraternal nations and Saudi citizens and endangered the safety of travellers and staff of various nationalities, do not merely constitute a violation of the Kingdom's sovereignty and security. They also constitute a direct threat to the safety of civilians and the security of civil aviation. By continuing this aggressive approach, the Houthi militia continues to threaten the security of maritime navigation and international trade in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait and to target ships and economic installations, thereby threatening the region's security and stability and the safety of global energy supply.

The Kingdom emphasizes that it will not allow Yemen to be turned into a platform from which to threaten its security or to threaten freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait, nor is it acceptable for a terrorist militia to impose its will on Yemen and the region by force of arms. The continued provision of external military and technical support to the Houthi militia, the transfer of knowledge and expertise to it and the development of its military capabilities have contributed to the persistence of chaos, the proliferation of weapons outside the State's control and threats to security and stability in Yemen and the region.

The Kingdom calls upon the international community to fulfil its responsibilities regarding the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, foremost among them resolution 2216 (2015) and resolution 2722 (2024) concerning freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. At the same time, the Kingdom reaffirms its inherent right to defend its territory, resources and sovereignty and the safety of its citizens and residents and to take all necessary measures to protect its security and deter attacks targeting civilians, civilian objects and economic installations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

My country has always prioritized the option of peace. It has made considerable efforts, in collaboration with fraternal and friendly nations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and has put forward concrete initiatives to keep the peace process in Yemen on track since 2011, the most recent of which was the road map submitted by the Kingdom to the Special Envoy, which was endorsed by the Yemeni Government but rejected by the Houthi militia. However, on every occasion the Houthi militia has chosen aggressive and reckless escalation, working to undermine efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive political solution, reneging on their commitments and dragging the Yemeni people into conflicts that do not serve their interests, while threatening the security and stability of the region. We affirm our full support for the brotherly Yemeni people in ending the coup and restoring the State and its institutions from the control of the terrorist Houthi militia.

The Kingdom has been, and continues to be, one of the largest supporters of Yemen, providing substantial humanitarian, developmental and economic aid to the brotherly Yemeni people. As part of this continuous assistance, the Kingdom recently provided new support to the Central Bank of Yemen, with the aim of enhancing economic, financial and monetary stability and improving living conditions for citizens. On 4 October, through the Saudi Development and Reconstruction Programme for Yemen, the Kingdom also provided a new instalment of its budget support grant for the Yemeni Government, exceeding 224 million Saudi riyals, which should help to reduce the budget deficit, ensuring regular government financial flows, enhancing purchasing power and stimulating commercial markets. The economic and development support provided by the Kingdom to Yemen during the period from 2012 to 2026 exceeded $12.6 billion, while the humanitarian support provided by the Kingdom to Yemen exceeded $4.5 billion.

The Kingdom renews its support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, aimed at reaching a Yemeni-led comprehensive political settlement that preserves Yemen's unity, sovereignty,

independence and territorial integrity and fulfils the long-term aspirations of the brotherly Yemeni people for security, stability and development.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security and stopping the Houthi attacks that threaten the security of the Kingdom and the region and the safety of international navigation. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia affirms that its objective remains achieving security and stability, ending the suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people and supporting all serious efforts leading to a comprehensive and sustainable political solution that preserve Yemen's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

The meeting rose at noon.