



**Briefing of the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen
to the open session of the UN Security Council**

17 June 2019 (*As delivered*)

Thank you very much Mr. President, and thank you to the members of this Council.

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on the latest developments in the Yemeni peace process. With this Council's steadfast support, I have continued to work with both the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah on the implementation of the Stockholm agreement and the way forward to a comprehensive political solution to the conflict based on the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the National Dialogue Conference outcomes and all relevant Security Council resolutions including in particular 2216.

In Hudaydah, the parties have sustained the reduction in violence across the governorate for the six full months since the agreement entered into force in the middle of last December. This has continued despite the delays in the implementation of the agreement due to a number of challenges and the frustrations we have all experienced associated with those challenges. During the five months prior to the ceasefire, the fighting resulted in more than 1,300 civilian casualties in the governorate. In the five months following the initiation of the ceasefire, the number of civilian casualties was reduced by 68%. I nevertheless of course remain deeply concerned by continued violence and civilian casualties. However, it is clear that the overall de-escalation continues to benefit the people of the city and the opportunities for effective humanitarian response.

The Redeployment Coordination Committee set up by that agreement and their members from both parties have continued to engage constructively with my colleague General Michael Lollesgaard on the plans for the first and second phases of the redeployments during the past months. He remains positive that an agreement on both phases of the redeployments can be achieved in line with what the parties agreed in Stockholm, including in particular with regard to the tripartite monitoring mechanism. Once outstanding issues are resolved, joint implementation can commence. Joint implementation will allow for the parties to fully verify all elements of the redeployments including those previously executed. I commend General Michael Lollesgaard for his efforts to build relationships and confidence relentlessly between the parties to ensure the effectiveness of the RCC throughout his engagements amid challenging logistical and political circumstances.

The economic aspects of the Hudaydah agreement regarding the revenues of the ports as outlined in that agreement and also are the forefront of our attention. I hope that achieving consensus on these aspects will enable the payment of public sector salaries in Hudaydah governorate and then across all Yemen. This would be a significant step forward for the benefit of the Yemeni people. And we have had very positive exchanges with the Government of Yemen on this matter. I hope to build on last month's Amman meeting and convene further discussions with both parties in the near future.

I thank the Council for your continued support, which has been instrumental in the implementation to date of the Stockholm Agreement since its inception. Parties should take the necessary next steps to ensure the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement in its entirety while ensuring full respect for Yemen's sovereignty. And I note the Government of Yemen's flexibility and continued support to the agreement in its entirety and their continued constructive engagement in this regard. I look forward to continue my close engagement with President Hadi, the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah to advance implementation of the agreement.

Mr. President,

If I may, allow me to brief you on where the parties stand with the remaining aspects of those agreements agreed in Stockholm last December.

We all hoped that the Statement of Understanding on Taiz agreed in Stockholm would open the door for the parties to work together on a way forward for the city and to alleviate the suffering of its citizens. The military and political situation in the city is extremely complex and fragile, to the detriment of the population. And I continue to work with the parties to convene a meeting of the joint committee agreed in Stockholm, to identify a way out of the current situation. The benefits of a de-escalation of tensions and improved access for humanitarian aid would be tangible, immediate and visible.

I am also disappointed by the lack of progress on the implementation of the exchanges of prisoners and detainees as agreed indeed before the Stockholm sessions. This is in essence a humanitarian issue which would provide relief for the prisoners and detainees, and reunite them with their loved ones and their families. As I have informed this Council previously, the parties have held productive sessions on the details on exchanges in recent months. With greater flexibility, I believe that they can translate these discussions into actions on the ground.

I believe passionately that more than any other issue, tangible progress on the exchange of prisoners would indicate seriousness by the parties to build confidence in a significant humanitarian gesture of good faith. This has yet to happen despite the continued efforts of ICRC with whom my Office works very closely. I call on the parties to prioritize the implementation of the exchange of prisoners in good faith and to demonstrate the required flexibility to make it a reality, for the sake of peace and perhaps even more importantly for the sake of thousands of Yemeni families who long to be reunited and are extremely disappointed that this has not yet happened.

Mr. President,

This Council has recently expressed concern at re-escalating violence across Yemen and at the attacks on civilian infrastructure in Southern Saudi Arabia. I must echo these concerns, including the recent drone attacks on Abha airport. I have repeatedly warned that war can take peace off the table, and in the context of wider regional tensions, the risks to the political process have never looked more stark. Naturally, I call for steps to be taken to de-escalate tensions for the benefit of the Yemeni people as well as for regional security.

The Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah have consistently affirmed to me and continue to do so that a political solution is the only solution to this conflict. The longer the conflict goes on, the more challenges and the greater difficulties we will face in resolving it and reversing its terrible effect on the

people of Yemen. The continued dialogue between the parties to implement the Stockholm agreement is significant, but it is not enough for the Yemeni people. They want their suffering to end now and not tomorrow.

And finally I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. President if I may, to reaffirm my personal commitment and that of the United Nations to pursue an impartial and inclusive political process based on national ownership in full respect to Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity as underscored by this Council on numerous occasions.

Ending the conflict in Yemen can only be achieved through a comprehensive political solution. Opportunities for compromise are still readily available for the parties. And with the support of this Council, Mr. President, I remain confident that the parties can yet reach a comprehensive and peaceful settlement to the conflict in Yemen.

Thank you very much.