



**Office of the Special Envoy
of the Secretary-General for Yemen**

UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg's Briefing to the Security Council

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Mr. President, allow me to warmly welcome the newly elected members of the Security Council and I look forward to close and constructive cooperation in the period ahead with all of you.

Mr. President, over the past months Yemen has experienced a series of rapid and significant developments that have reshaped key political and security dynamics. While the relative de-escalation achieved in Yemen since 2022 created a temporary calm, it was never intended to represent an end state, but rather an opening that required sustained political direction to translate fragile stability into lasting resolution. This is something that I have repeatedly stressed to this Council. The developments in southern Yemen highlight how quickly that fragile balance can be disrupted and how critical it is to re-anchor the process in a credible political pathway. Absent a comprehensive approach that addresses Yemen's many challenges in an integrated manner, rather than in isolation, the risk of recurrent and destabilizing cycles will remain a persistent feature in the country's trajectory.

In recent days, military de-escalation and general stabilization have been achieved, yet the security situation in parts of the south remains fragile. In December, forces affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council sought to expand their presence in Hadramout and Al Mahra. And in early January, government-aligned forces, including the Nation Shield Forces and with support from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, moved to reassert control over both governorates and subsequently deployed to Aden and other government areas to secure key administrative, economic and military infrastructure. These developments have been accompanied by adjustments in key political appointments and command decisions at the national and local levels.

While following these developments closely I have remained active in my engagements with relevant stakeholders. I have had in depth discussions in Cairo, Muscat and Riyadh with Yemeni actors, regional partners and the wider international community to help defuse tensions and support a political way forward. I welcome and encourage regional and national efforts to address recent developments through dialogue. Achieving sustained and concrete solutions for Yemen necessitates not only the active willingness of Yemeni stakeholders but also the concerted and united support of the region.

This brings me to a critical point. The future of the south cannot be determined by any single actor or through force. Ultimately, it is up to Yemenis – including the full diversity of southern perspectives – to address this complex and longstanding issue. President Rashad al-Alimi's initiative to convene a dialogue, hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a range of southern actors offers an opportunity to start addressing the issue of the south through political engagement. Such a dialogue reflects the importance of inclusive internal deliberation to build consensus and prepare for a Yemen-wide political process under UN auspices.

Mr. President, these diplomatic and political efforts must ultimately be judged by how they respond to the realities Yemenis face every day. In my Office's consultations with Yemenis from across the country, what we hear is strikingly consistent. Regardless of where people live, they speak of the same priorities: services that function, salaries that are paid, freedom of movement, and institutions that work for people rather than factions.

For many Yemenis, instability is first felt in the economy – in prices that rise overnight, in salary payments pushed even further back, and in basic services breaking down. With the economy already fragile and household resilience largely exhausted, even short-lived political and security instability can trigger currency pressure, widen fiscal gaps, and stall reform efforts. I welcome statements by the Government recognizing the need to shield economic institutions, including the Central Bank, from political and security disputes. And I urge the Government to maintain momentum on its economic reform agenda, which is essential to restoring confidence and stability.

Mr. President, these priorities underscore a broader reality: Yemen's political, economic, and security challenges are inseparable, and progress in one will not hold without progress in the others. The issue of the south, in particular, is bound up with fundamental questions about the future shape of the state, security arrangements, and economic governance. This is why ultimately Yemen needs a comprehensive, inclusive, nationwide political process – one that offers Yemenis a space to debate and negotiate these questions together, rather than in isolation. Only such a process can deliver on the shared aspirations we hear from Yemenis across the country and only such a process can sustainably end the conflict. That is why I remain relentlessly focused on securing a political process, which was and remains the central aim of the UN roadmap.

Mr. President, while I have centered my remarks today on southern Yemen because of the consequential developments there, the imperative is Yemen-wide. Progress will depend on all parties, including Ansar Allah, refraining from escalatory actions and rhetoric, and remaining open to engaging under UN auspices on confidence-building steps and a comprehensive political process.

Last month in Muscat, the Government of Yemen, the Coalition and Ansar Allah demonstrated what political will for peaceful negotiations can still achieve. Meeting under UN auspices, they agreed on the number of conflict-related detainees to be released in the next phase, as a step toward fulfilling their commitment to release all conflict related detainees under the "All-for-All" principle. More work remains to finalize implementation, including agreement on the names of

detainees to be released, which the parties have started to work on. But the meeting itself, and the fact that it produced a shared outcome, sent an important signal and renewed hope for families across Yemen. I would like to reiterate my deep appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for hosting the discussions and my thanks to the International Committee of the Red Cross for its indispensable role. The onus is now on the parties to move from agreement to action. There is nothing preventing these releases but political will.

Mr. President, I must also express my deep concern regarding the continued detention of UN personnel and other staff in Sana'a. Despite sustained engagement by the UN to secure the release of our staff, Ansar Allah has instead detained additional personnel and, very alarmingly, referred some to their special criminal court. These actions undermine the ability of the United Nations to operate, which ultimately harms the Yemeni population we are mandated to support. I call on Ansar Allah to immediately release these staff and rescind the court referrals. I also urge regional and international actors to use their influence to secure the immediate release of all detained UN and other staff.

Mr. President, this is a moment for Yemeni leaders to invest in politics rather than force, in institutions rather than fragmentation, and in the national interest rather than narrow calculations. Unified Security Council support for a UN-facilitated political process remains one of the strongest signals that this investment is worthwhile. The last thing Yemen needs right now is a conflict within a conflict. The opportunity exists to move decisively toward stabilization and a comprehensive peace process, rather than drift toward confrontation. This Council's unity and concerted exercise of its influence will be critical to steer Yemen on the right path.

Thank you very much **Mr. President**.