



To all United Nations Security Council Members

25 May 2017

UN Security Council must act to end man-made humanitarian crisis in Yemen

We the undersigned organisations call upon UN Security Council members to take action to bring about an immediate ceasefire in Yemen, end the humanitarian crisis and support the UN Special Envoy's efforts towards an inclusive political solution to the conflict.

The Security Council can and must do more to protect civilians from the horrors of cholera, hunger and indiscriminate attacks by all parties to the conflict. The scale and speed of the multiple crises demand that the Security Council breaks its year-long inaction on Yemen. The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is now the largest in the world, with more than 18 million people in need of assistance and 7 million already at risk of famine. These figures come on top of over 50,000 casualties due to armed conflict.

The escalating cholera outbreak is a public health emergency that brings a new sense of urgency to an already acute situation. There are already over 40,000 suspected cholera cases across 19 of Yemen's 22 governorates, over 400 deaths, and the World Health Organisation predicts that as many as 300,000 people across Yemen could be infected within six months.

Yemen's crisis is man-made. It is a direct result of the armed conflict and cannot be solved with aid alone. It requires a political solution. It also requires that countries, including members of the Security Council, who are fuelling the conflict by supplying arms that are at risk of being used in the conflict cease doing so immediately.

There are concrete actions the Security Council can help to initiate that will immediately and positively impact the lives of Yemenis. These actions can build confidence and momentum towards a political break-through. As the penholder on Yemen in the Security Council, responsibility to lead the international response to the multiple crises in Yemen rests primarily with the United Kingdom. When the Security Council meets on 30 May to be briefed on Yemen, we call on the United Kingdom with the support of all Security Council members to make a clear and unequivocal commitment to take the following actions:

- Recognise that Yemen's man-made humanitarian crisis has dramatically worsened and is taking a massive toll on civilians, who are the primary victims.
- Demand that parties to the conflict comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including that they ensure the safety of civilians, cease targeting civilian infrastructure, halt the use of illegal and indiscriminate weapons and refrain from impeding humanitarian access and supply through either bureaucratic delays or direct threats.
- Demand that the parties to the conflict comply with their obligations under international human rights law, including that they release all people who are arbitrarily detained, allow civil society organisations to operate freely, and ensure accountability for those who are responsible for alleged breaches of international law.
- Demand that all parties to the conflict ensure the full and effective functioning of the vital lifeline of Hudaydah Port, based on the recommendations of the UN Security Council Panel of Experts on Yemen. In the first instance, this means ensuring that this critical access route is protected from attack as well as the immediate installation of the four new cranes that are available to increase the speed at which essential imports are processed. Furthermore, the situation requires new inspection reporting requirements and strengthened support for the unhindered implementation of UNVIM's mandate to ensure the consistent and swift supply of essential commodities, including an end to excessive delays imposed on vessels cleared by UNVIM.
- Demand the re-opening of Sana'a airport for commercial flights so that additional humanitarian supplies can enter the country and people in need of medical treatment can leave.
- Call on the parties to the conflict to cooperate with the Special Envoy to work expeditiously on a plan to resume the effective functioning of the Central Bank, thereby enabling the payment of public sector salaries as well as the disbursement of social-welfare cash transfers.

These actions collectively constitute the minimum acceptable response from the Security Council if we are to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and reinvigorate the UN-led political dialogue, which is critical to finding an end to the conflict.

The people of Yemen cannot wait any longer for Security Council action.

Signed,

1. Action Against Hunger
2. Arab Program for Human Rights Activists
3. Avaaz
4. Christian Aid
5. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
6. Handicap International
7. International Rescue Committee
8. Islamic Relief
9. Medecins du Monde
10. Mercy Corps
11. Mwatana Organisation for Human Rights (Yemen)
12. Oxfam
13. Physicians for Human Rights

14. Saferworld
15. Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies (Yemen)
16. Save the Children
17. Society for Threatened Peoples
18. Tearfund
19. The Arab Center for the Promotion of Human Rights
20. The Yemen Peace Project
21. War Child UK
22. Wogood for Human Security (Yemen)

Copy to:

UN Secretary-General, António Guterres

UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed

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