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TO THE UNITED NATIONS



Security Council Meeting on the situation in the Middle East (Yemen)
Briefing
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Greece's Remarks delivered
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I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary General Tom Fletcher for their informative briefings and continued engagement to promote peace and stability in the region. I would also like to thank Ms. Dina El-Mamoun for her insightful remarks, as well as to welcome the presence here today of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

Dear colleagues,

The deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen is highly alarming. We are witnessing unprecedented levels of food insecurity, malnutrition and cholera, which affect the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children. This situation is unsustainable, with detrimental effects for the stability in Yemen and the region. Unhindered humanitarian assistance and protection need to be sustained and intensified, in all feasible manners.

I would like to make the following points:

Firstly, women continue to bear to a great extent the brunt of this crisis. Extensive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the Houthi-controlled areas, including sexual and gender-based violence, lead a growing number of women being deprived even of their core freedoms and human rights.

Women humanitarian workers, journalists and human rights defenders continue to be the target of violence and arbitrary detentions. We deem women's effective participation in the peace process as essential for a sustainable political solution, and it is vital to empower women and combat the marginalization of such an important part of the Yemeni society.

Second, we strongly condemn the continuous unlawful and unjustifiable detention of diplomatic staff, UN and NGO personnel and humanitarian workers by the Houthis. We welcome the recent release of two personnel members and we call for the immediate and unconditional release of all of them. It is imperative that all diplomatic and humanitarian personnel operate in a secure environment indiscriminately, and their safety must be guaranteed at all times.

Third, we remain deeply concerned about the assistance received by the Houthis, including through a collaborative network of terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab.



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We call on all Member States to respect the arms embargo established with UNSC Res. 2216/2015 and refrain from any form of support and transfer of weaponry and advanced technology, in violation of the international obligations thereto.

We believe that UNVIM holds an important role in the verification and inspection of merchant vessels, by upholding the arms embargo, therefore it needs to be provided with adequate funding and additional means in order to further enhance its operational capabilities.

Fourth, we need not to lose sight of the continuing precarious situation in the Red Sea region. The threat of Houthi attacks against transiting vessels remains a constant deterring factor for maritime shipping. We call for the halting of the practice of indiscriminate and arbitrary detention of commercial and merchant vessels and their crews by the Houthis and for upholding the safety of seafarers.

Greece remains dedicated to safeguarding maritime security and freedom of navigation through the EU Naval Operation ASPIDES in the Red Sea, with full respect to the Operation's defensive posture. We commend the outstanding results of this EU operation, which has escorted more than 440 ships over the first year of its mandate.

We welcome the recent ceasefire agreement reached between the US and the Houthis, as well as any initiatives which can prevent and deter Houthi attacks and sustainably protect the safety of international maritime routes. Support by regional and international stakeholders will be instrumental in this respect.

But, let us not forget that we are witnessing ongoing escalatory actions by the Houthis, who continue launching unjustified attacks against Israel, with the systematic use of advanced weaponry, even against civilian infrastructure. We strongly condemn these attacks and repeat that international humanitarian law must be fully and unconditionally respected by all, especially regarding the need to protect civilian population and civilian infrastructure.

Finally, I want to reiterate our full and wholehearted support for the SG Special Envoy H. Grundberg and his dedicated efforts to revitalize the peace dialogue in Yemen, through an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under the UN auspices, with full respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Yemen. We commend the Special Envoy's continuous endeavors to bring the Yemeni parties back on a negotiation path aiming at de-escalation and a sustainable and durable political settlement.



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Peace and a durable political settlement in Yemen are ultimately the keys for addressing the sufferings of the Yemeni people, as well as enhancing regional stability and security, including maritime security and the freedom of navigation.

I thank you.