



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council briefing on
the situation in the Middle East (Yemen)
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Greece's Statement delivered
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Mr. President,

I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher for their pertinent briefings today. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in the meeting.

The security situation in Yemen has reached a critical crossroad. During the last weeks, Houthis have displayed an alarming escalation of violence by intensifying their attacks, while we are witnessing a political stalemate in the peace negotiation process.

I wish to make three points.

First, Greece condemns in the strongest possible terms the Houthi invasion into the premises of the World Food Programme and UNICEF in Sana'a, which led to the forcible detention of at least twenty-one UN personnel. More than forty UN and NGO personnel, diplomatic staff, and humanitarian workers are now unlawfully detained by the Houthis. We express our deep gratitude for their service in very difficult circumstances. We strongly reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained personnel. The tragic death under Houthi detention of a member of the World Food Programme in February this year remains unaddressed. We call for the immediate and transparent investigation of his death. The recent press statement issued by the Council on the 12th September sends a unified and unequivocal message of condemnation of these acts.

Humanitarian workers face increasing violence and threats. Houthi arbitrary detentions have aggravated security conditions, thus affecting the delivery of humanitarian response. Life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian assistance and protection services must continue uninterrupted to avoid -as we just heard- a humanitarian catastrophe.

Second, maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea region continue to deteriorate. The Houthi attacks against commercial vessels M/V Magic Seas and Eternity C in July severely undermined the already fragile trust to an important international

maritime trade route. Greece strongly condemns these attacks, which pose a severe threat to freedom of navigation and impact on peace and security in the region. Four crew members of the Eternity C were killed, while eleven more are still held hostage by the Houthis. We call for the immediate release of all and their safe return to their families. The lives and welfare of seafarers must be protected at all times.

Greece remains fully engaged in safeguarding maritime security in the Red Sea region by continuing to provide leadership and substantial support to EU Naval Operation “ASPIDES”, in line with SC resolutions and with full respect to the Operation’s defense posture.

Third, the international community must intensify coordinated efforts towards de-escalation and rebuild of trust between the parties. Regional stakeholders remain crucial for achieving tangible results. We condemn the continuous strikes by the Houthis against Israel, which feed military escalation, and perpetuate instability in the region. In any case, the protection of civilians must never be jeopardized. Greece deplores the loss of lives among civilians and strongly reiterates that international humanitarian law must be fully and unconditionally respected by all parties.

We reiterate our steadfast support to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and his tireless efforts to reinvigorate the political dialogue. An inclusive, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned peace process under the UN auspices, with full respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Yemen, is the only sustainable solution. The stability of the Red Sea region needs to be an integral part of this process.

I thank you.