



Security Council Briefing on Yemen, 17 April 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you. I also thank Special Envoy Grundberg and OCHA's Deputy Director of Operations and Advocacy, Ghada Mudawi, for their briefings. I also acknowledge the participation of the representative of the Republic of Yemen to our meeting.

In April of last year, Yemen's warring sides had agreed to a military truce, which marked a significant moment of hope and granted critical respite to Yemeni civilians suffering the horrors of war.

Ever after the truce lapsed, critical tenets have continued to hold, bringing relative calm across Yemen.

Parties to the conflict, especially the Houthis, have a responsibility to maintain and build on the gains they have made towards peace in the last 12 months. They must refrain from any provocations and escalations and engage constructively in genuine dialogue towards a durable and permanent ceasefire.

We welcome the mediation efforts of Oman and Saudi Arabia in their support for peace in Yemen and are encouraged to see parties engaging in dialogue.



At this delicate juncture, we reiterate the importance of an inclusive Yemeni-led process, with full, equal, and meaningful participation of women, youth, and civil society, under UN auspices. This is the only way to achieve sustainable, long-lasting peace.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation continues to be devastating for the country's civilian population. Humanitarian access remains hampered by bureaucratic obstacles and restrictions, threatening the lives of millions of Yemenis in need of urgent aid.

This includes the delivery of vaccines, particularly to children, to ensure against sickness or death from preventable diseases like measles and polio.

Malta calls on the Houthis to revoke restrictions of movement for aid workers and engage with the humanitarian community on an acceptable way forward. Such disruptions limit the delivery of humanitarian assistance and prevent equitable access to essential services.

Aid operations must be allowed to perform their critical work without interference, and authorities must ensure the safety of aid workers and supporting staff.

Furthermore, the Mahram requirements imposed by the Houthis restrict the freedom of movement of Yemeni women and girls, as well as women humanitarian actors. Regrettably, the enforcement of these requirements has intensified.



On a more positive note, Malta is very encouraged by the release of nearly 900 conflict-related detainees over the weekend, as a result the agreement made at the Supervisory Committee of the Detainees' Exchange Agreement last month.

This agreement is a clear example of compromise and confidence-building, and we commend the Office of the Special Envoy and the International Committee of the Red Cross for their support.

We hope parties can build on the success of this cooperation and fulfil their commitment to the Stockholm Agreement to release all conflict-related detainees, and those arbitrarily detained.

Malta is also pleased to see further developments on the UN-coordinated operation for the FSO Safer oil tanker. We applaud UN colleagues for their tireless work.

My final point concerns mines and explosive remnants of war, which remain one of the leading causes of civilian death in Yemen, in particular children.

Even when peace is finally declared in Yemen, the legacy of these explosives will live on, whether in the life-changing injuries of children without limbs, or sporadic explosions that kill at random and pollute farmland.

We call on parties to stop the use of these indiscriminate weapons, and support urgent demining efforts.



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In conclusion, Malta reiterates that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. It is the responsibility of parties to demonstrate leadership, compromise and steadfast will to achieve peace.

I thank you.