

UNITED NATIONS

OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR
AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR YEMEN

STATEMENT BY THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR YEMEN, JAMIE McGOLDRICK, CALLING ON PARTIES TO FACILITATE UNIMPEDED AID DELIVERY

Sana'a, 11 December 2017: The violence that engulfed Sana'a city over the last weeks has subsided, but the suffering continues. Famine still threatens millions; preventable diseases continually strike a weakened population in all parts of Yemen. The continuing blockade of ports, is limiting supplies of fuel, food and medicines; dramatically increasing the number of vulnerable people who need help.

The priority for humanitarian organisations is to resume life-saving operations that were scaled back because of insecurity. The lives of millions of people, including 8.4 million Yemenis who are a step away from famine, hinge on our ability to continue our operations and to provide health, safe water, food, shelter and nutrition support. This includes assistance to the thousands that were impacted by the recent violence in Sana'a city and other parts of Yemen.

Humanitarian organisations are doing their best, with limited resources, to address the threat of displacement, famine and disease, which millions of Yemenis face daily. Significant progress has been made, as 7 million people are fed monthly and an unprecedented cholera epidemic has been largely contained. Measures are in place to ensure the highest standards in aid delivery, with assistance reaching those in most need. Yet, these gains are under threat.

The parties to the conflict have an obligation to fully facilitate sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access, as required by international humanitarian law. This includes ensuring the protection of humanitarian staff and facilities, facilitating visas and desisting from any undue interference in the work of humanitarian organisations. It also means lifting the restrictions on Yemen's Red Sea ports and Sana'a airport, which continue to delay humanitarian supplies entering the country and are hindering the availability of essential commercial goods, such as food and fuel.

Aid organisations must be enabled to deliver critical assistance. The contrary will have a devastating impact on an already dire humanitarian situation. Furthermore, all parties to the conflict must uphold their responsibilities to ensure the protection of civilians.

As fighting intensifies along the western coast and other parts of Yemen, I am greatly alarmed at reports of hospitals being damaged, populations being impeded from fleeing to safe areas and killings and arbitrary detentions reportedly being carried out in Sana'a. Renewed violence will only lead to further devastation for the 22 million people who need assistance and protection. A political solution is the only mean to put an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people. I also reiterate my calls on States that have influence over the parties to step up their engagement to protect civilians and put an end to this conflict. As stated by the UN Secretary-General, it is in the interest of everybody to stop this war.

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