

# Speech: Addressing Threat of Famine in Yemen

Thank you very much indeed Mr President. I apologize also to Mark that a previous engagement delayed my coming into the Chamber, but thank you very much Mark for another sobering briefing.

It is very good that the UN can report swiftly to the Council in line with Resolution 2417, whenever the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in armed conflict contexts occurs. In that Resolution 2417, this Council expressed its intention to give its full attention to such information the Secretary-General provides. As we all know on the Council, Yemen has been one of those issues that the Council follows very deeply and is gravely concerned about. I am pleased to see the Ambassador has joined us today.

The numbers you have cited Mark are truly horrifying. The scale is of very grave concern and the fact that the crisis does not seem to be getting better is also something that the Council needs to take a deep interest in.

The figures, I won't repeat them, but the fact that they are in the millions ought to be very salutary for us to think about. And the acute malnourishment of nearly 2 million children under the age of five in particular is a warning call. I understand that nearly 400,000 of those children suffer from severe acute malnutrition and that's a life threatening condition and it requires urgent treatment.

The highest number of severe acute malnutrition cases is in Hodeidah governorate – some 100,000 cases. After airstrikes in late July resulted in the damage of the main sanitation facility and water supply, suspected cholera cases almost doubled and that of course increases the risk of a new wave of cholera. Only the humanitarian response is containing an outbreak like last year's and a further disruption of humanitarian operations could have, as Mark said, catastrophic consequences.

Mark – you asked for increased funding and more support to humanitarian operations. Those efforts from the UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are welcome. For the UK, we are determined to play our part. On World Food Day on 16 October, the United Kingdom announced a package of over \$125 million, which we hope will help UNICEF tackle malnutrition in Yemen.

But funding alone will not be enough to address the growing risk of famine. We need urgent action by all parties on the economy, imports and access, and protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Mr President, I wanted to highlight four issues in particular.

Firstly, about the economy: We share the concern about the rapid depreciation of the Yemeni Riyal. Soaring prices putting several basic commodities out of

reach for many Yemenis and the central bank struggling to pay public-sector salaries. We look to the Government of Yemen and the Central Bank to take urgent action to stabilise the Riyal – for example by issuing promised letters of credit to Yemeni commercial food importers. Until that happens, we also suggest that the Government of Yemen pause implementation of Decree 75, which is preventing staple goods such as wheat, cooking oil and rice getting into the country at a time when they are most needed.

Secondly, unhindered access for commercial and humanitarian food and fuel into and throughout Yemen is essential if famine is to be avoided. The conflict is cutting off important transport routes, including the main route between Hodeidah and Sanaa and alternatives become more congested and more vulnerable. For their part, the Houthis must stop interfering with the humanitarian response so that food, fuel and medicines reach those most in need throughout the North.

Thirdly, it is essential that military operations be conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law. This includes protection of civilians and it includes protection of civilian infrastructure. We have consistently made this clear in the Council, but I repeat it again today. Not only is it important that military operations proceed with regard to the principles of proportionality, precaution and distinction, it is also the case that further damage to food infrastructure, such as mills and wheat silos threaten already fragile food supplies.

Fourthly and lastly, as we have made clear – only a political settlement will enable the worsening humanitarian crisis to be properly addressed and will bring long-term stability to Yemen. We call on all parties to engage constructively and in good faith with UN Special Envoy's efforts to bring about a political settlement. We look forward to hearing from Martin Griffiths again in this Council. We last heard from the Special Envoy on 11 September following disappointing news from Geneva. We support his efforts which have continued since then, and we look forward to further update in the coming weeks on progress towards reaching agreement between the parties on confidence-building measures and a broader framework agreement.

On the four points that Mark has made – some of which I have covered now – I think they deserve very urgent consideration by the Council.

Thank you.

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## **Speech: Building Peace and Security in Central African Republic**

Thank you Mr President and a big thank you to all of our briefers. I would like to in particular ask SRSO Onanga and SR Moussa to pass on to their teams

on the ground the thanks of the Council for the work they do in difficult circumstances and I echo my American colleague's thanks and tribute to the Ambassador of Cote D'Ivoire for the very important work he has personally been spearheading on behalf of us all.

Mr President, we share the Secretary-General's assessment that the security situation in CAR remains extremely fragile – a message repeated in a letter sent to all of us today by 45 NGOs active in that country.

As our briefers today have illustrated there are some positive signals of progress in CAR, but the security, humanitarian and justice situation remains concerning. The international community must not relax its efforts towards building a secure, stable, and peaceful CAR.

Civilians, peacekeepers, and humanitarian workers continue to be attacked. More than one in four Central Africans remain displaced; half of the population are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. Only 36% of the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan has been funded. We encourage all member states to help fill this gap. The UK has provided £63 million – or \$81 million – in humanitarian aid to CAR since 2015. We believe that this aid supports progress towards a stable, secure, and peaceful CAR – something that remains in all of our interests.

It is clear that in order to achieve peace in CAR, efforts to stabilise the country in the short term must go hand in hand with longer-term progress on reconciliation, justice, and peace-building.

We therefore welcome the efforts of the African Peace Initiative, which remains the only viable path to peace. I agree wholeheartedly with the French Ambassador on the need to avoid parallel initiatives which risk confusion or worse.

A co-ordinated and sustained international support is vital if CAR is to achieve long lasting peace and stability. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation that there should be greater UN involvement in the Initiative, to ensure link up between political, peace, and security efforts and to reinforce crucial co-ordination between national and international partners on CAR's road to peace.

Mr President, MINUSCA has an essential role to play in supporting the Peace Initiative, and the UK is committed to working within the Security Council to ensure that MINUSCA can deliver this support as part of its stabilisation mandate. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation for MINUSCA's renewed focus on the peace process, including through more direct engagement.

Also, in support of MINUSCA's mandate delivery, we commend the Secretary General's plan to introduce a performance management mechanism to alleviate some of the pressures on the mission. This will give it greater ability to improve performance and to enforce the zero tolerance policy on sexual abuse and exploitation and sexual harassment. I note in this content, SRSG Parfait's comments about ensuring that troops that are deployed are properly

trained and equipped. He is right in saying that that is a responsibility of this Council.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation to establish and implement a comprehensive strategic outreach and communication plan, making clear what MINUSCA is delivering for the people of CAR, building a better understanding of the peace process, and making sure we take into account the views and needs of Central Africans. As we have all heard many times in this Council and seen, an inclusive peace process, including one that is inclusive of women, is more likely to be sustainable and successful.

Among these concerns for CAR, we must remember that there can be no peace without justice. Incitement to violence, including on religious and ethnic grounds, and attacks on civilians, peacekeepers, and humanitarian workers will continue unchecked if perpetrators perceive impunity to be the standard.

We recognise the efforts by the government of Central African Republic, together with MINUSCA, to bring some of the perpetrators of serious crimes to account. In this regard, we hope that the positive news of the inaugural session of the Special Criminal Court yesterday will soon translate to concrete progress in the fight against impunity, especially now that the Court's investigations can officially commence.

We urge the Central African Republic to work with international partners to expedite progress on criminal and transitional justice, and ensure that judicial mechanisms are in place to support due process on these and other cases – this remains an essential component to bringing stability to CAR.

Mr President, the international community and the government of the Central African Republic have come a long way since elections in 2015. We must continue to unite in our focus on building peace and stability in the country and on creating the conditions for the long-term protection and prosperity that the people deserve.

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## **Press release: G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Announcement of the Death of Jamal Khashoggi**

The G7 Foreign Ministers, of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, condemn in the strongest possible terms the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has confirmed took place in its consulate in Istanbul.

The confirmation of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi's death is a first step toward full transparency and accountability. However, the explanations offered leave many questions unanswered.

We reiterate our expectation for a thorough, credible, transparent, and prompt investigation by Saudi Arabia, in full collaboration

with the Turkish authorities, and a full and rigorous accounting of the circumstances surrounding Mr. Khashoggi's death. Those responsible for the killing must be held to account. Saudi Arabia must put in place measures to ensure something like this can never happen again.

The circumstances of Mr. Khashoggi's death reaffirm the need to protect journalists and freedom of expression around the world.

We also extend our deepest condolences to Mr. Khashoggi's family, his fiancée, and his friends.

## Further information

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