



New special envoy for Yemen appointed

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed the Mauritanian Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed as his Special Envoy for Yemen succeeding Jamal Benomar.

In a statement released on Saturday, Mr. Ban's Spokesperson said that Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed will work closely with the members of the UN Security Council, the Gulf Cooperation Council, governments in the region and other partners, as well as the UN Country Team for Yemen.



The statement added that the Secretary-General expresses his sincerest gratitude to Mr. Benomar for his tireless efforts aimed at assisting the Yemeni people in realizing their aspirations for change through a peaceful transition.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed moves to his new post from his previous position as the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) and prior to that he worked as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Deputy Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), UN Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and UN Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative.

He has also served as a Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Syria and Yemen and held several positions with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). He brings over three decades of experience in development, humanitarian and political issues with the government of Mauritania and the UN in Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

UN Envoy, GPC leaders review dialogue arrangements

14/May/2015

The UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, met in Sana'a on Thursday with leaders of the General People Congress (GPC).

During the meeting, the UN envoy reviewed the objectives of his visit to Yemen, expressing his willingness to make every effort to bring the Yemenis on the table of dialogue in the near future.

Ahmed discussed with the GPC officials the ongoing arrangements for the Yemeni-Yemeni dialogue under UN auspices, in addition to reviewing of the tragic humanitarian situation in Yemen as a result of the unjust blockade on Yemen. The country is suffering a severe shortage of food, medicines and medical supplies besides the lack of petroleum derivatives.

The two sides agreed on that dialogue is the safest way to resolve all issues among the various parties to the political crisis in Yemen, stressing that problems would not solve by wars and fighting.

The GPC is ready to provide full support for the success of the UN envoy task in order to stop the aggression, lift the blockade and resume political dialogue under UN auspices, the GPC officials said.



Ban urges all sides in Yemen to renew commitment for extension of humanitarian pause

18 May 2015

Stressing that Yemenis have faced “tragic levels of suffering and violence” in recent months, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon has called on all sides in the conflict to refrain from any actions that undermine the safety and security of the country’s airports, seaports and transportation infrastructure, and to join consultations without preconditions.



Mr. Ban strongly encouraged ending immediately the interruptions in the import of fuel, food and medicines, in a [statement](#) delivered on his behalf by his Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, yesterday in Saudi Arabia at the Riyadh Conference on the situation in the country.

“Yemenis have faced tragic levels of suffering and violence in recent months. The humanitarian pause is important to give them time to seek medical assistance and for much-needed basic goods to flow into the country. This pause must now become a permanent ceasefire and mark an end to all hostilities,” he declared.

In order to allow the UN to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance, Mr. Ban reiterated his call on all parties to ensure that humanitarian agencies and their partners have safe and reliable access throughout the country.

“We have seen how the humanitarian pause has provided a ray of hope and badly needed aid to the people of Yemen. In this spirit, I call on all sides to renew their commitment to the humanitarian pause for another 5-day period,” he added.

The Secretary-General said that he is strongly determined to intensify his good offices and he intends to convene in the near future an inclusive and widely representative conference that will restart a Yemeni-Yemeni peace process in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

According to UN spokesperson Farhan Haq, while in Riyadh, Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed met with Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, Vice-President and Prime Minister Khaled Bahah and many Yemeni political leaders, as well as the ambassadors of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. He also met with General Abdulrahman Al-Banyan, Chief of Staff of the Royal Saudi Armed Forces, as part of his advocacy to secure an extension of the humanitarian pause.

For its duration, the humanitarian pause greatly facilitated access to areas which had been extremely difficult to reach. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) has reported that people affected by the conflict were able to move out of insecure areas, seek medical care and receive help, Mr. Haq told reporters at the daily noon briefing at UN Headquarters.

People previously trapped by fighting and airstrikes in Sa’ada, Aden, Lahj, Abyan and Al Dhale’e have reportedly moved from districts where access was previously blocked.

In the first four days of the pause, relief workers dispatched enough food aid to cover one month of food needs for more than 273,000 people, delivered fuel to ensure safe water access for 1.2 million people, and transported or distributed enough essential non-food items for nearly 32,000 people. Some 47 metric tonnes of medical supplies were given to hospitals and health facilities in five governorates.

However, insecurity, fuel shortages and other logistical challenges hindered full implementation of the humanitarian plan during the pause, Mr. Haq said.

Health facilities report that since 19 March, some 1,820 people have been killed and 7,330 injured due to the conflict. Casualty figures are likely to be underestimates. Humanitarian partners estimate that more than 545,000 people have been displaced in Yemen since 26 March.



UN agencies urge ‘predictable pauses’ for humanitarian aid

20/May/2015

Yemen’s five-day ceasefire aimed at allowing the delivery of critical aid to the country’s beleaguered civilian population did not last long enough for providing the necessary relief, according to the United Nations humanitarian agencies.

“Checkpoints, insecurity and high transport prices make it difficult to move about. Access to basic health care is too far away for many, and transport too expensive,” the spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Adrian Edwards, told reporters on Tuesday at a press briefing in Geneva.

“Scores of children were found to be malnourished, while the accumulation of garbage makes crowded situations worse, raising fears that disease will spread.”

Until its official end on 17 May, the truce greatly facilitated access to areas which had been extremely difficult to reach.

In the first four days of the humanitarian pause, relief workers dispatched enough food aid to cover one month of food needs for more than 273,000 people, delivered fuel to ensure safe water access for 1.2 million people, and transported or distributed enough essential non-food items for nearly 32,000 people. Some 47 metric tonnes of medical supplies were given to hospitals and health facilities in five governorates.

Mr. Edwards acknowledged that the truce had permitted UNHCR to fly in more aid, transport supplies from ports to distribution hubs in the capital, Sana’a, and Aden, and to preposition and distribute aid to displaced people in previously hard-to-reach areas.

But, he added, insecurity, fuel shortages and other logistical challenges had hindered full implementation of the humanitarian plan during the pause and thousands of civilians were still encountering enormous difficulties.

“Teams found traumatized populations – afraid, upset and struggling to meet basic needs,” the UNHCR spokesperson continued.

Indeed, health facilities report that since 19 March, some 1,820 people have been killed and 7,330 injured due to the conflict. Casualty figures are likely to be underestimates. Meanwhile, humanitarian partners estimate that more than 545,000 people have been displaced in Yemen since 26 March.

In a press release confirming UNHCR’s concerns, World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director in Yemen Purnima Kashyap explained that although her agency had “raced against time and a volatile situation on the ground,” its relief efforts had only reached half of the intended target.

The WFP had, in fact, dispatched food for more than 400,000 people during the 72-hour pause, and managed to reach areas that were previously inaccessible, but this was only half the 738,000 people it hoped to reach as transporters were reluctant to send their trucks to hotspots, where fighting and shelling continued.

“We are seriously concerned about families out of our reach,” Ms. Kashyap stated. “We need predictable pauses in fighting to allow us to line up partners on the ground to move food and reach the maximum number of people.”

According to the WFP, almost half of the population in Yemen were food-insecure even before the conflict, meaning that around 10 million people did not know where their next meal would come from. The country reportedly imports almost 90 percent of its food from abroad.

The United Nations now estimates that the conflict has pushed many more Yemenis into hunger.





UNICEF: Yemen's children at immediate risk of severe malnutrition

09/May/2015



More children in Yemen are at risk of dying from hunger and lack of health services than from bombs and bullets, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned amid ongoing fighting across the Gulf country.

Briefing the press in Geneva on Friday, UNICEF spokesperson Christophe Boulierac warned that 120,000 children in Yemen remain at immediate risk of severe malnutrition over the coming three months if health and hygiene services failed to resume normal functioning.

Boulierac explained that restrictions on commercial imports of fuel and food are largely to blame for the rapidly deteriorating situation facing the country's children.

He added that another 2.5 million children under five years of age are at immediate risk of diarrhea while 1.2 children are likely to suffer from preventable diseases such as pneumonia and measles as vaccination campaigns had ground to a halt.

More than 1,400 people have been killed and 300,000 have fled their homes in nearly three months of fighting in the war-torn Gulf nation. Emergency relief and medical teams from abroad are struggling to fly in to scale-up the humanitarian operation to address the needs of increasingly vulnerable Yemenis.

Insecurity and lack of fuel have also limited access to and delivery of services. Partners report difficulty providing medical services as result of the current security situation and continued airstrikes targeting Haradh, Sa'ada and Sana'a. Food relief partners have reported they have had to suspend assistance in several districts due to lack of fuel.

Jens Laerke, for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), confirmed that regular commercial imports of fuel had become the main issue and called for them to increase. The primary obstacle, he explained, was an inspection regime instituted by a recent Security Council resolution and which had resulted in a crippling effect on humanitarian operations.

In addition to the limited access to fuel, food imports had also been impacted, cautioned Mr. Laerke as he noted that 90 percent of the country depended on their food from imports.

Against that backdrop, the UN's World Health Organization (WHO) – which also addressed the briefing – cited reports of 484 suspected cases of dengue fever with two reported deaths.

Spokesperson of the WHO said the UN agency was on the ground and trying to send rapid diagnostic kits for both dengue and malaria but could not confirm the dengue cases without lab testing.

The spokesperson added that between 19 March and 4 May the number of casualties across the country had shot up to 1,439 deaths and 5,951 injuries, including 71 children deaths.



UN human rights office urges all parties to protect civilians

24/May/2015

The United Nations Human Rights Office has urged all parties to do all in their power to protect civilians, as the number of civilian casualties in the Yemen conflict tops 1,000.

In a statement issued on Friday, the UN organization urged all parties – coalition forces, the Yemeni armed forces, Houthis and other non-State armed groups – to adhere strictly to their obligations under international law.



At least 1,037 civilians, including 130 women and 234 children, lost their lives in Yemen between 26 March and 20 May, while at least another 2,453 civilians have been injured, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has announced.

"There has also been massive destruction of civilian infrastructure, particularly in Aden and Sa'ada," Cécile Pouilly, OHCHR spokesperson told reporters in Geneva.

Ms. Pouilly said that while the five-day humanitarian pause between 12 May and 17 May provided some respite, there are still reports of ground combat and shelling, and millions remain in need of humanitarian assistance.

She drew attention as well to the situation in prisons and rehabilitation facilities in Yemen. "Many such facilities have been affected by airstrikes or by armed clashes. More than 4,000 inmates have fled while several have been killed or injured," she added.

Conditions in correctional facilities in Yemen, many of which were chronically poor even prior to the current conflict, have deteriorated considerably.

"The general shortage of food and fuel means that prisoners lack access to sufficient food, electricity, water, proper sanitation facilities and necessary healthcare," Ms. Pouilly said.

There has reportedly been an outbreak of diseases such as scabies and mycosis, she added.

The OHCHR echoed UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call for all sides to engage in the upcoming consultations in Geneva in good faith. It also urged an extension of the humanitarian pause, as a first step towards a permanent ceasefire and an end to all hostilities by all parties to the conflict.

The consultations, set to begin on 28 May in Geneva, will bring together a broad range of Yemeni governmental and other actors, and follow extensive consultations by Mr. Ban's Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, together with strong expressions of support by the Security Council in several resolutions seeking a peaceful and Yemeni-led political transition process.

In addition, as many Yemeni parties as possible have been invited and Mr. Ban has urged participants to come without preconditions, according to the UN. The conference was expected to run for four to five days.



WFP CALLS FOR PREDICTABLE PAUSES IN FIGHTING TO DELIVER FOOD TO YEMEN CONFLICT ZONES

19 May 2015



The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is warning that the recent five-day “humanitarian pause” in Yemen was not long enough to reach all those in need of food and other relief supplies, and is appealing for a series of predictable breaks in the conflict to deliver desperately needed aid.

WFP dispatched food for more than 400,000 people in the 120-hour pause, and managed to reach areas that were previously inaccessible, but this was only half the 738,000 people it hoped to reach. Transporters were reluctant to send their trucks to hotspots, where fighting and shelling continued.

“We raced against time and a volatile situation on the ground during this short window of opportunity that allowed us to only reach half of our target,” said WFP Representative and Country Director in Yemen Purnima Kashyap. “We are seriously concerned about families out of our reach. We need predictable pauses in fighting to allow us to line up partners on the ground to move food and reach the maximum number of people.”

During the pause that ended on Sunday, WFP dispatched food assistance to some 400,000 people in Aden, Lahj, Abyan, Al-Dhale'e, Shabwa, Hajja and northern parts of Sa'ada. The pause allowed WFP to link up with partners in some areas where WFP had never worked prior to the conflict. But more predictable windows of opportunity are required to allow for effective planning and coordination in the coming weeks.

While the ceasefire was largely observed in central and northern parts of the country, clashes and insecurity persisted in the South and in Sa'ada in the North. Some districts, where needs are highest, were completely unreachable, with transporters wary of sending trucks.

“As time passes without reaching people in hot spots their situation will only get worse and the needs will increase,” Kashyap added.

Almost half of the population in Yemen were food-insecure even before the conflict, meaning that around 10 million people did not know where their next meal would come from. The United Nations estimates that the conflict has pushed many more Yemenis into hunger.

Before the upsurge in fighting began in March, WFP was assisting each month an average of 4 million vulnerable people in Yemen. Since 15 April, when the conflict broke out, WFP has delivered emergency food assistance to more than 1.7 million people struggling to survive in the hardest-hit parts of the country; almost two-thirds of them are women and children under five.

Yemen imports almost 90 percent of its food from abroad. WFP is extremely concerned that the impact of traders being unable to import food and transport it around the country will affect people's ability to feed their families.



UN stresses to hold Yemen Geneva conference on 28th May

22/May/2015

“The toll seems to grow higher by the day. Reports that two more children have been killed and six more children injured in the escalating conflict in Yemen underscore the urgent need for action to protect children -- and to bring an end to the hostilities that are devastating their lives and futures.

“Since the conflict escalated in March, as many as 135 children have been killed and 260 injured. Almost one-third of the deaths have been in the coastal city of A'den, where violence has again accelerated over the past few days.

“Each one of these deaths is a personal tragedy -- and a grim reminder of the toll that the conflict in Yemen is taking. It is also stark evidence of the nature of the violence, which preys on already vulnerable groups, with children all the more at risk.

“The latest victims of the conflict are from the Muhamasheen community, a group that has suffered decades of discrimination and ostracism in Yemen. Families from this settlement are now fleeing their homes.

“Children should not continue to pay the price of the violence in Yemen. All parties to the conflict are obligated under international humanitarian law to protect children from harm. At a minimum, there should be a humanitarian pause to enable lifesaving supplies to reach the injured, the sick, the vulnerable and all those affected by the violence.

“But only a complete end to hostilities can protect the children of Yemen. They are the future of Yemen.”

Statement on situation in Yemen by UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake

24 May 2015



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WHO: Loss of more lives can no longer continue

28/May/2015

The World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed its deep concern regarding continuity of the air strikes on Yemen which kill more civilians daily, and affirmed that these loss in lives is not acceptable to continue.

Director of the WHO, Margret Chan, said in a statement on Wednesday, that the continuous air attacks against Yemen has killed 2000 people and injured 8000 others.



She made clear that 8.6 million people in Yemen need urgent medical assistance, noting that the medicines sent to Yemen earlier, estimated at 48 tons, could only serve 400 thousand people.

“People’s sufferings will continue not only because of the war injuries but also because they cannot access the basic medication,” said Chan.

She warned of a real danger haunting health of millions of people in Yemen, signaling that many hospitals across the country had closed their emergency operation rooms due to staff and fuel shortages.

She also noted the wide violations of the International Humanitarian Law and Geneva Conventions with respect to the protection of health facilities and medical workers.

UNHCR Provides relief aid to Yemen

15/May/2015

One planeload sent by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) carrying relief aid landed in Sana'a on Friday.

A source at Sana'a international Airport said the plane was carrying 25 tons of relief assistance to the Yemeni people, pointing out there is another plane of the UNHCR will be arrived in the coming hours.



Supervised by:
ABDUSALAM SHARAFUDDIN
abdusalam.sharafuddin@unic.org

Designed By:
SAMEER AL-SANABANI
sameer.al-sanabani@unic.org

Bawnia St. Handal Zone, next to Handal Mosque,
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
P.O.Box : (237), Tel : 967-1-274000
Fax :967-1-274043
Website : <http://sanaa.sites.unicnetwork.org/>