U.N. Shuttle Diplomacy Aims to Avert Assault on Key Yemen Port

The United Nations is engaged in "intense" shuttle diplomacy between the Iran-aligned Houthi group in Yemen, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in a bid to avert an attack on Yemen's Hodeidah port city, U.N. chief Antonio Guterres said.

A Saudi-led coalition military attack or siege on the Houthi-held western city, long a target in the war, could cost up to 250,000 lives, the United Nations has warned. The Red Sea port is a lifeline for millions of people, handling most of the country's commercial imports and humanitarian aid supplies.

The U.N. Security Council met behind closed doors on Monday at the request of Britain to be briefed on the situation after heavy fighting erupted near Hodeidah.

"We are, at the present moment, in intense consultation," Guterres told reporters. "I hope that it will be possible to avoid a battle for Hodeidah."

UN envoy warns of serious consequences for civilians due to escalation in Hodeidah

The United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, said the military developments in Hodeidah are very worrying and the military escalation has serious consequences for the humanitarian situation in Yemen, "I can only reiterate that there is no military solution to the conflict," Griffith said.

Griffith confirmed that he would continue to work on any opportunity to avoid military confrontation in Hodeidah.

Mr Griffiths said that he was in constant contact with all the parties involved to ensure that all of their concerns were addressed, on a political, humanitarian and security level.

Mr Griffiths call on the parties to engage constructively with his efforts to spare Hodeidah any military confrontation, and to exercise restraint and to give peace a chance.”

He also stressed that the United Nations is determined to press ahead with the political process to end the conflict in Yemen despite recent developments.

250,000 people ‘may lose everything - even their lives’ in assault on key Yemeni port city: UN humanitarian coordinator

Lise Grande’s statement comes amid ongoing fighting in the Arabian peninsula State, where 22 million people are in need of aid and protection; three-quarters of the entire population.

Around 8.4 million of this number are severely food insecure and at risk of starvation, according to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

OCHA has warned repeatedly of the risks to ordinary Yemenis of being caught up in crossfire, since a military campaign intensified, involving a Saudi-backed international coalition and Houthi opposition forces which escalated in March 2015. Since then, according to the UN human rights office, OHCHR, 6,439 civilians have been killed and more than 10,000 have been injured.
U.N. Shuttle Diplomacy Aims to Avert ….

He said U.N. Yemen envoy Martin Griffiths was shuttling between Sanaa and also the UAE and Saudi Arabia. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday called on all parties "to honor their commitments to work with the U.N." He said in a statement that he had spoken with leaders of the United Arab Emirates and "made clear our desire to address their security concerns while preserving the free flow of humanitarian aid and life-saving commercial imports." Griffiths has been working on a peace plan that calls on the Houthi group to give up its ballistic missiles in return for an end to a Saudi-led coalition bombing campaign and a transitional governance agreement. He is due to brief the U.N. Security Council later this month. Previous U.N. efforts have failed to end the more than three-year-old conflict which pits the Houthis, who seized the capital Sanaa in 2014, against other Yemeni forces backed by a coalition loyal to exiled President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and led by U.S. allies Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. After briefing the Security Council, U.N. aid chief Mark Lowcock told reporters that "if for any period Hodeidah were not to operate effectively the consequences in humanitarian terms would be catastrophic."

250,000 people ‘may lose everything - even ….

Speaking to journalists in Geneva on behalf of Ms Grande, Jens Laerke said that in a “prolonged worst case (scenario), we fear that as many as 250,000 people may lose everything - even their lives”. In response to the threat of military attack, humanitarian agencies had developed “contingency plans”, he added. The country’s already weak infrastructure has also suffered tremendous damage, including to massive portside cranes in Hodeidah; a city which is “the single most important point of entry for food and basic supplies” for the whole country, Laerke told reporters.

OCHA/Giles Clarke

The port in the city of Hodeidah is a major lifeline for Yemen, bringing in food and humanitarian assistance. These cranes have been out of service since mid-2015, with little hope of repair anytime soon. (file) Close to 70 per cent of Yemen’s imports, including commercial and humanitarian goods, enter through Hodeidah and Saleef to the north. As many as 600,000 people live in and around Hodeidah, Mr Laerke continued, before repeating the UN Humanitarian Coordinator’s comments that the Red Sea port city needed to stay open to prevent famine and “a recurrence of the cholera epidemic”, that began in October 2016.

By the end of January 2018, the number of suspected cases had risen to more than one million, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition to concerns for civilians around Hodeidah, needs in Yemen remain massive, said Laerke who described ongoing emergency as “the worst humanitarian crisis in the world”. “Across the country, people are desperate for food, medical help and protection,” he explained. “This is why humanitarian organizations have dramatically ramped up the amount of assistance we are providing.”
Women Empowerment through Preserving Basic Childhood Rights

Due to the current context and considering people’s priority, ERRY Joint programme has contributed on mitigating people’s agony by its 3X6 approach livelihood component which has the ultimate goal of enhancing resilience through livelihoods recovery programmes during crisis by eventually creating businesses to the most vulnerable people in the targeted areas. One of the major successful deliverables of this component is the story of three women, Hanan Klada, Nada Bari and Fawzia Al Ahdal, who took a new turn when they found out about UNDP 3X6 approach - part of the EU-funded Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen ERRY Joint programme. ERRY- UNDP 3X6 approach gives a golden opportunity to many entrepreneurs especially women who want to accomplish their dreams of becoming more independent and empowered by managing their own businesses. The three ambitious women saved money through rapid employment activities- Cash for Work. They also received Life and Business Skills training in complement to their income generating activity. Part of their training, which was conducted under the supervision and coaching of a professional consultant, included Simple Business Plan Development and Basic Marketing Concepts. “The training I received played a major role on our plan success; I used to have only a desire to have my own business, but now I have both the desire and knowledge”, Nada illustrated. After receiving the appropriate training, Hanan, Nada and Fawzia decided to jointly work together toward achieving their business plan through using the money they have accumulated during their cash for work period besides the granted money given to them at the final stage. After conducting the need assessments of the area they are living in, with the help of the consultant, the three women decided to establish a small kindergartener. This project did not only help Hanan, Nada, and Fawzia generating an income, but also had a great impact on many children who, for years, have been dreaming of having a playground and educational zone where they can have a relief of dominated war and conflict environment in the whole country. “You really cannot imagine how happy the kids were as they impatiently were observing the project during its implementation”. Hanan explained. Since the project was launched in November 2017, the project shows a gradual success and the revenue and profit also has regularly increased.” We provide competitive prices, so during our first year, we have around 70 children. ERRY has made a difference in our life, we have an income now, and the children are also happy. Fawzia added.
UNICEF warns of attack on Hodiedah

UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore warned of an attack on Yemen's Red Sea city of Hodiedah by Saudi-led coalition forces.

In the statement, the UNICEF said at least 300,000 children currently live in and around the city, who have been suffering for so long already.

“There are 11 million children in need of humanitarian aid and the attack will lead to choke off this lifeline and will have devastating consequences”, the statement said. Henrietta H. Fore said that more than millions Yemeni children depend on the humanitarian and commercial goods that come through that port every day for their very survival.

“We urge all parties to the conflict and all those who have influence over them to put the protection of children above all other considerations, she said. Henrietta H. Fore welcomed current diplomatic efforts to avert a full attack on Hodeida, adding peace should be given a chance and the children of Yemen deserve nothing less.

UNFPA warns of catastrophic consequences due to military operation in Hodeidah

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) warned of catastrophic consequences of any further escalation of violence around the Red port city of Hodeidah.

Luay Shabaneh, Regional Director of the United Nations Population Fund for the Arab Region said in a statement obtained by Saba that the recent escalation of violence in western coast of Hodeidah would put the lives of an estimated 250,000 civilians at grave risk.

The port of Hodeidah is a key port for the humanitarian lifeline for the people of Yemen, Shabaneh added. He called on all parties of the conflict to stop fighting in Hodeidah for the safety of civilians and ensuring to receive the assistance that they are needed to survive.
UN urges Yemen port be kept open despite offensive

The UN Security Council on Thursday called for a key port in war-ravaged Yemen to be kept open to deliveries of vital food and humanitarian supplies after the Saudi-led coalition launched an offensive to seize Hodeida.

But the council brushed aside a call by Sweden, a non-permanent member, for a freeze to the military operation to allow time for talks on a rebel withdrawal from the Red Sea.

The council met behind closed doors at Britain's request following UN warnings of a looming humanitarian disaster from an all-out assault on Hodeida.

Following a two-hour closed-door meeting, Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia, who holds the council presidency, said council members were "united in their deep concern about the risks to the humanitarian situation".

Council members "reiterated their call for the ports of Hodeida and Saleef to be kept open," said Nebenzia.

The United Nations has warned that the military operation could cripple deliveries of commercial goods and humanitarian aid to millions of people in Yemen who are on the brink of famine.

The Red Sea port, controlled by the Iran-backed Huthi rebels, serves as the entry point for 70 percent of the impoverished country's imports, but the coalition maintains that the rebels use it to smuggle weapons.

"It is time for the Security Council to call for an immediate freeze of the military attack on Hodeida," said Swedish Deputy Ambassador Carl Skau in a statement ahead of the meeting.

"This is needed to give the special envoy and United Nations-led efforts a chance to avert disaster and find a sustainable political solution to the conflict".

It was the second time this week that the council has met to try to address the crisis in Yemen.

On Monday, the Security Council said it supported UN envoy Martin Griffiths, who is leading diplomatic efforts to convince the Huthi rebels to hand over control of the port.

The council did not call on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, whose troops are backing Yemeni forces, to refrain from attacking Hodeida.

More than 22 million people in Yemen are in need of aid, including 8.4 million who are at risk of starvation, according to the United Nations, which considers Yemen to be the world's worst humanitarian crisis.
A week after fighting began in the port city of Hodeidah, hundreds of thousands of civilians remain at serious risk. ReliefWeb quoted Lise Grande, Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen as saying that “We are deeply worried about the situation,” said. “Even before the fighting began, conditions in Hodeidah were some of the worst in the country.”

Twenty-five percent of children in Hodeidah are suffering from acute malnutrition. If nutritional support from humanitarian partners is disrupted, it risks the lives of almost 100,000 children. Hodeidah was one of the epicentres of last year’s cholera outbreak, one of the worst in modern history.

“The level and degree of human suffering is heart-breaking,” said Ms. Grande. “Humanitarians have been on the ground distributing assistance throughout, and we will stay as long as conditions permit. We have been off-loading food at the port and we are rushing in as many emergency stocks as possible while we can. Partners have established ten humanitarian service points and are distributing food boxes and emergency kits to displaced families. We have prepositioned sufficient fuel to help operate water points, treatment plants and hospitals, and, every day we help to provide over 46 million litres of water. Eleven health teams have been dispatched to health facilities in Hodeidah.”

“Of all the things we are worried about, cholera is top of the list. It wouldn’t take much to start an unstoppable outbreak. If the water system in just one neighbourhood breaks down, and if nothing can be done to immediately address the situation, cholera could spread with lightning speed,” said Ms. Grande.

The United Nations considers Yemen the worst humanitarian crisis in the world and has called on all parties to the conflict to do everything possible to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, including the port of Hodeidah, which is the main entry point for humanitarian assistance into the country. The UN and partners are requesting USD 3 billion through the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan to support 22.2 million people in need. To date, USD 1.5 billion, half of resources necessary for the year, has been received.

**UN: Migrant returns from Yemen postponed**

The UN migration agency, IOM on Friday said it has been forced to postpone its voluntary humanitarian return assistance to migrants stranded in Hudaydah due to the ongoing offensive.

"The same military operations have, so far, caused 5,775 Yemenis to flee their homes in the Hudaydah area since it began last Wednesday. This figure is set to increase over the coming days," IOM Yemen Chief of Mission, Sarat Dash said in a statement on Friday. "A few weeks ago, it was almost unimaginable that the situation in Yemen -- already the world’s worst humanitarian crisis -- could have deteriorated even further to the extent that the military offensive on Hudaydah has caused," Dash said.

The World Food Programme (WFP) spokeswoman said on Friday it was "extremely concerned about the recent upsurge in fighting in Hodeidah [Hudaydah] governorate and city, which has already displaced around 26,000 people." "Yemen has always imported most of its food – most of it by sea, with Hodeidah being the main gateway. WFP calls on all parties to the conflict to respect International Humanitarian Law, avoid targeting humanitarian food and fuel stocks and infrastructure and ensure continuous, unfettered access to Hodeidah Port," WFP spokeswoman Bettina Luescher told a news conference in Geneva on Friday. "The fighting must stop now to avert what could be one of the worst hunger crises in living history."

WFP estimated that the current upsurge in fighting could result in up to 1.1 million people being either displaced or trapped within Hudaydah city and in need of emergency food assistance.

"Twenty-five percent of children in Hodeidah are suffering from acute malnutrition. If nutritional support from humanitarian partners is disrupted, it risks the lives of almost 100,000 children," UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen Lise Grande said in a statement.
WHO: Cholera ‘continues to threaten millions’ in Yemen

The fight against cholera in Yemen is “far from over”, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said yesterday, and that the epidemic “continues to threaten millions”

“The rainy season runs from mid-April to the end of August, which will further increase the risk of transmission,” the UN agency said in a statement on its official website.

Cholera continues to be a threat for “millions” in the war-torn country, especially women, children and the elderly, according to WHO’s statement.

“Efforts are now being coordinated to save the lives of vulnerable population groups and get Yemen rid of this water borne but preventable disease”.

The UN agency’s representative in Yemen, Nevio Zagaria, said that a third wave of the epidemic is expected, which necessitates the adoption of public health methods against it.

“In addition to conducting vaccination campaigns, an integrated comprehensive cholera outbreak response operational plan has been developed in cooperation with the health authorities and collaboration with health partners to implement activities regarding early detection, referral, case investigation and management, water and sanitation, health education, promotion and food hygiene,” Zagaria said.

OCHA: People in Socotra are at risk of hunger

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Yemen said on Friday that the people of Socotra Island are at risk of increasing hunger as a result of the cyclone that hit the Island late May.

A report issued by the office mentioned that there are urgent need to cover the gap in food stocks that has arisen as a result of the Mekunu hurricane.

The report noted that seven ships carrying foods stocks sunk with their load due to the hurricane. It added that the access to the island across the sea would not be possible within a few weeks because of the strong wind, and will be accessible only through the airport.

"There is no stock of wheat flour and sugar on the island currently," the report said. "There are only small amounts of rice."

The report indicated that 90% of the population in the assessed areas lost their food stocks.

The tropical cyclone Mekunu hit Socotra Island and Mahara province late in last month, causing heavy damage to roads, homes and infrastructure.
UN Secretary General's Message on
INTERNATIONAL DAY
IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE

This day acknowledges and honours the many survivors of torture world-wide, including those who have been tortured for their political or other views, those caught in the fight against terrorism or those who have been tortured simply because of their differences. Victims of torture have a right to an effective remedy, rehabilitation and redress.

The absolute prohibition of torture has been stipulated in unequivocal terms in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the United Nations Convention against Torture. Much has been achieved in the fight against this and other cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and treatment, yet more action is needed to eradicate torture fully. Torture remains unacceptable and unjustified at all times, including during states of emergency, political instability, or even in a war.

On this day, let us also pay tribute to all those who stand in solidarity with victims and their families – and reaffirm our commitment to ending this abominable and useless practice.