

**Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien**

**Remarks to Side Event on the margins of the General Assembly**  
**“Solutions to the Conflict in Yemen”**  
**New York, 1 October 2015**

*As Delivered*

Thank you for having me here to talk about what more we can do to improve the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which continues to deteriorate.

Four out of five Yemenis – 21.2 million people – now require humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Hundreds of thousands of children are malnourished and millions require access to healthcare at a time when more and more hospitals are shutting down.

Alarming numbers of civilians have been killed in the conflict. A recently-released report found that 4,500 civilians were killed or injured by explosive weapons in Yemen during the first seven months of 2015 – more than in any other country during that period. And the numbers continued to climb as we know yesterday, and the day before.

I remind all parties to the conflict that they have an obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians from harm. Those with influence over the parties to the conflict must urge them to replace the dialogue of weapons with a dialogue of words.

There is no military solution to this conflict – but I’m afraid I believe there are still some who do believe there can be a military victory.

All parties also have a legal obligation to allow and facilitate humanitarian relief to people in need, including via all airports and seaports – not just Aden, but also Hodaydeh. The parties and their respective allies outside Yemen know that.

I am pleased to note that during September, commercial food imports resumed and are nearly at pre-crisis levels. However, fuel imports dropped to zero in September and were only 12 per cent of pre-crisis levels during the previous month. This is severely hampering commercial activities, preventing people from being able to make a living, and is having a devastating impact on hospitals and basic services like water and sanitation.

The UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism will help to facilitate the resumption of commercial imports and is currently being operationalized. My thanks to the United States, United Kingdom and the European Union who have indicated that they will provide the necessary funding.

On 17 August, senior Saudi and Yemeni Government officials and Coalition military personnel reached agreement with the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator on access to Yemeni ports for both humanitarian and commercial cargo including fuel.

I urge the Government and Coalition to do everything in their power to honour this agreement.

Excellencies,  
Ministers,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Ten governorates, mostly along the Red Sea, are now one level away from the internationally recognized classification of famine.

Frankly, money is not the issue. We have now raised almost \$800 million of the \$1.6 billion appeal for Yemen.

I hope that with your participation here today, we can all make a commitment to do everything in our power to support the Yemeni people and to end this conflict as soon as possible.

Twenty-one million Yemeni people need you and us to help them tonight. Only you hold the keys to unimpeded and safe access. Unlock the doors and we will rush in to save lives, provide safety, give hope and foster dignity – the recipe for a peaceful Yemen in the future.

Thank you.