Panel Discussion on Humanitarian Access in Yemen

3 April, 13.45 – 15.00
Palais des Nations, Salle XVIII

Background and objectives

Full and unimpeded humanitarian access is a fundamental prerequisite to effective humanitarian action, especially in situations of armed conflict. International humanitarian law stipulates that parties to armed conflicts must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance. The issue of humanitarian access continues to be at the center of attention in the Yemen crisis where it is severely limited by state and non-state actors through embargos, bureaucratic restrictions, hostility in civilian areas and attacks on humanitarian personnel.

The UN Security Council on March 15 issued a Presidential Statement calling on all parties to the conflict to allow and facilitate the safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian supplies and personnel to all affected governorates in Yemen. The Security Council further called for the full and sustained opening of all Yemen’s ports, including Hodeida and Saleef ports, and stressed the importance of keeping these functioning and open to all commercial and humanitarian imports, including food, fuel and medical imports. The Security Council also stressed that the operations of the humanitarian air and sea services and related services for staff of humanitarian agencies should proceed unhindered.

The discussion aims to identify concrete measures to facilitate access in Yemen based on the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Format and participants

Opening remarks:
Ms. Isabella Lövin, Swedish Deputy Prime Minister

Moderator:
Mr. Yves Daccord, Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Panelists include:
Ms. Nathalie Chuard, Head of Middle East and North Africa Division of Swiss Humanitarian Aid
Mr. Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Mr. Robert Mardini, Regional Director for ICRC operations in the Near and Middle East
Ms. Safa Murad Rafiq, Project Coordinator of TQBE Foundation for Rights and Freedoms [TBC]
Mr. Mohammed Al Jabir, Executive Director of the Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Operations Support Center

The event is open to everybody including press. Translation between English-Arabic will be provided.