



Security Council

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Status of implementation of Security Council resolution [2451 \(2018\)](#)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present note is submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution [2451 \(2018\)](#), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on progress regarding the implementation of the resolution, including any breaches of commitments by the parties, on a weekly basis, as called for by the parties, until further notice. The present report covers the period from 29 December 2018 to 4 January 2019.

II. Redeployment Coordination Committee

2. Further to my previous report to the Security Council ([S/2018/1173](#)), the first joint meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, held from 26 to 28 December 2018, was a historic occasion at which representatives of the Government of Yemen and the Houthis were brought together at a location on the frontlines of the conflict. The meeting was held within four days of the arrival of the United Nations-appointed Chair of the Committee, Patrick Cammaert, in the city of Hudaydah. Both parties made concerted efforts to ensure the safety and security of the participants during the three-day meeting, including through the demining of access routes and the restraint shown by the various forces operating in the city and its environs.

3. At the first meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, the parties considered the terms of reference of the Committee and the modalities for the implementation of its mandate. The parties agreed that the Committee provided a forum in which to share relevant information, to build mutual trust and to de-escalate and prevent the recurrence of conflict in order to create a space in Hudaydah for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. The parties agreed on the following structures: a secretariat to support the Committee Chair; a Joint Coordination and Communication Centre to serve as an information repository; and a Liaison and Coordination Mechanism, with liaison and coordination teams to supervise and monitor the ceasefire and redeployment compliance of the parties to the Agreement.

4. Given the stark humanitarian conditions that compelled the reaching of an agreement on Hudaydah, the Committee Chair worked to persuade the parties to consider humanitarian confidence-building measures as the first order of priority,



alongside steps to uphold the ceasefire and the redeployment of forces. Discussions on a confidence-building measure to ease humanitarian access proved contentious and revealed the current lack of trust between the parties. Nevertheless, by 28 December 2018, the parties had agreed to a proposal by the Chair to open the Hudaydah-Sana'a road (from the port and through Kilo 16), as a matter of priority, as well as on modalities for the movement of a humanitarian convoy along the route on 29 December 2018. It was also decided that the Committee would reconvene on 1 January 2019.

5. The confidence-building measure to open the Hudaydah-Sana'a road as a humanitarian corridor did not proceed as planned on 29 December 2018. While the Government of Yemen was purportedly ready to support the movement of a humanitarian convoy that day, the Houthis were not. In a meeting with Houthi representatives at the Hudaydah port, the Committee Chair expressed his disappointment about the missed opportunity to build confidence between the parties and to facilitate much-needed aid for the Yemeni people. Meanwhile, in lieu of preparations for the confidence-building measures, the Houthi representatives to the Committee informed the Chair of unilateral redeployment measures taken at the Hudaydah port and invited the United Nations to inspect the redeployment. While the Chair welcomed that effort, he emphasized that any redeployment would only be credible if it were conducted in consonance with mutually agreed modalities and if both parties and the United Nations were able to monitor the process and ascertain that it was in accordance with the Stockholm Agreement.

6. To ensure transparency and the transmission of accurate information about the events of 29 December, the Committee Chair held a telephone conversation with the representatives of the Government of Yemen to the Committee, in which he explained the events of the day. Given the extensive media coverage of the unilateral redeployment of Houthi forces from the Hudaydah port and the subsequent loss of trust among the parties, the Chair also communicated the facts about the events of 29 December through an official letter dated 30 December 2018 addressed to both parties.

7. On 1 January 2019, the Redeployment Coordination Committee reconvened in the city of Hudaydah. Between 1 and 3 January 2019, the Committee discussed and agreed on the operationalization of the Liaison and Coordination Mechanism. Both parties also appointed liaison officers. On 2 January 2019, a workshop was held for the six liaison officers (three from each party), to provide a broad overview of the concept of the Mechanism and its modalities for operation and to help to build trust and relationships between the liaison officers. The Chair and advance team are identifying capacities to mount an ad hoc liaison and coordination team, within existing limited resources, in the eventuality of any urgent requirement.

8. The parties also used that meeting to discuss their initial views on redeployment. The Chair presented a series of questions to the parties to assist them in the preparation of their respective proposals. Those proposals were to be presented to the Chair at the next Committee meeting, scheduled for 8 January 2019.

III. The situation in the city of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa

A. Monitoring of the ceasefire in Hudaydah

9. During the reporting period, mutual allegations of ceasefire violations continued. Alleged incidents were most commonly reported in frontline areas of the southern part of Hudaydah Governorate, along key routes running from Houthi-held territory in the east to territory held by the Government of Yemen on the western

coastal strip, and in contested areas of Hudaydah city. Most alleged incident reports involved direct and indirect fire engagements. There have been no reports suggesting that either party has attempted to make new territorial gains.

10. Of concern during the reporting period are the allegations relating to the town of Durayhimi, situated approximately 15 km south of Hudaydah city and the location of most of the alleged incidents. It is worth noting that Durayhimi is contested, with both parties controlling sections of the town and its environs. The Houthis have also alleged that Government of Yemen forces were reinforcing their positions to the south-east of the airport and in the general area of the 22 May Hospital, while the Government of Yemen has alleged that the Houthis continued to fortify their positions in the city, by constructing new defences along key routes on the periphery of the city.

11. At the present time, none of the alleged incidents of ceasefire violations have been independently assessed by the Redeployment Coordination Committee. As at 3 January 2019, the Committee was discussing the parameters of what constituted a ceasefire violation and what the most appropriate liaison and coordination mechanism to ascertain violations would be.

B. Redeployment of forces

12. Under the Stockholm Agreement, a two-phased redeployment of forces is envisioned, from the city of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa to agreed-upon locations outside the city and the ports, the details of which are to be determined by the Redeployment Coordination Committee. The timelines stipulated in the Agreement involve a first phase of redeployment of forces from the three ports and from critical parts of the city associated with humanitarian facilities, within two weeks of the ceasefire entering into force. A second phase, which would see the full mutual redeployment of all forces from the city of Hudaydah and the ports, is to be completed within a maximum of three weeks of the ceasefire entering into force.

13. As reported in paragraph 8 above, the Committee is discussing the modalities for a credible redeployment of forces, including the identification of agreed-upon locations and units for redeployment, modalities for verification and monitoring activities and realistic timeframes. Agreement on those modalities is critical to the integrity of the process, in order to avert a recurrence of the disputed Houthi redeployment from the port of Hudaydah on 29 December 2018.

C. Strengthened United Nations presence

14. As part of the plan by the World Food Programme (WFP) to support the management of the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa, WFP has appointed a project lead to oversee the preparation phase of its facilitation and support efforts. WFP is on standby to undertake the assessment of the ports. To date, however, none of the appointed staff members have received visas.

15. Of the overall staffing requirements by United Nations entities supporting the agreement on Hudaydah, 39 personnel members are currently in-country or have secured visas, and 28 visas are currently under process and pending approval by the authorities in Sana'a. No visas or equipment, including armoured vehicles, communications equipment and personal protective equipment, were cleared for United Nations entities during the reporting period. Adding to those challenges are the constraints on accommodations in Hudaydah. Overall, existing United Nations accommodations and office space have reached full capacity, and discussions are underway to identify additional space. Some United Nations sites currently remain

off-limits owing to security concerns. The Department of Safety and Security is awaiting permission from the authorities in Sana'a to deploy international staff to Hudaydah to assess accommodation options and reassess the post-ceasefire security situation in the city.

IV. Humanitarian situation and access

16. Bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian access remain since the adoption of Security Council resolution [2451 \(2018\)](#). Two weeks prior to the reporting period, the authorities in Sana'a requested a 72-hour advance notice period for United Nations movement requests (increased from 48 hours), including for Hudaydah. On 31 December 2018, United Nations entities in Hudaydah met with the National Authority for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Recovery (affiliated with the authorities in Sana'a) to discuss priority routes to reopen in order to facilitate humanitarian access. The Authority agreed to support the opening of priority roads, as outlined in the Stockholm Agreement, and to prioritize routes needed for humanitarian access, starting with the Hudaydah-Sana'a road (from the port and through Kilo 16), which had been slated to reopen on 29 December 2018 (see paragraphs 4 and 5 above).

V. Prisoner exchange

17. Both parties submitted comments on the responses to the lists of prisoners proposed for release and exchange, in accordance with the prisoner exchange agreement. The parties continue to work with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the International Committee of the Red Cross to finalize the logistics and procedures involved in the release and exchange process.

VI. Situation in Ta'izz

18. Staff of the Office of the Special Envoy are currently in Aden to prepare meetings with the joint committee referred to in the statement of understanding on Ta'izz. The Office plans to undertake bilateral discussions locally with each party in early January before convening a meeting of the joint committee.

VII. Observations

19. I am encouraged that the parties remain committed to the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. I am especially heartened by the goodwill of the parties and their cooperation with the United Nations-appointed Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee in preparing and convening the first meetings of the Committee in the city of Hudaydah, within a relatively short period of time. Those efforts are reassuring and underscore our collective recognition of the urgency of finding a sustainable solution for Hudaydah and securing the vital humanitarian response, which the Stockholm Agreement is intended to enable.

20. The reports of the Redeployment Coordination Committee for the current period, however, demonstrate the complexity of the implementation task at hand. Despite the fact that both parties consented to the Stockholm Agreement, there is still a lack of common interpretation with regard to the implementation and sequencing of the agreement on Hudaydah, driven by the lack of trust among the parties and their apprehension with respect to making operational concessions outside of a

comprehensive political solution to the conflict in Yemen. Against that background, it is critical that the parties, through the Redeployment Coordination Committee, immediately formulate an effective monitoring mechanism to supervise the ceasefire and the redeployment of forces along agreed specifications. In particular, for redeployment to be successful and credible, it must be a fully verifiable exercise conducted by both parties and the United Nations. Anything short of that goal could derail the fragile progress being made to address the situation in Hudaydah. I therefore urge the parties to continue to work together to define the modalities of the process, in good faith and in a timely manner, and to provide the Committee with unhindered access throughout Hudaydah Governorate so that it can implement its mandate.

21. The United Nations continues to move forward with its support to the parties in their implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. United Nations operations depend on the full cooperation of both parties. As I have said before, the timely issuance of visas and other administrative approvals for required equipment are critical to the additional deployment of United Nations personnel needed to support the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. Such cooperation will, in turn, create a positive atmosphere conducive to the next steps facilitated by the United Nations aimed at ending the conflict.

22. I again urge the parties to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and assets at all times. Since the Redeployment Coordination Committee Chair and the advance team arrived in Hudaydah, they have been informed by the Department of Safety and Security of the increased number of threats against the Committee and against United Nations personnel. That increased threat is of growing concern and will impede the work of the Committee and the ability of the United Nations to operate safely and effectively.

23. Lastly, I wish to urge continued unity of purpose within the Security Council and the broader international community to sustain pressure on both parties as they work together to implement the Stockholm Agreement. Although the specified deadlines may not be met in the coming days, as long as the parties demonstrate goodwill, no effort should be spared to support the easing of restrictions on humanitarian operations and progress on security arrangements. The people of Yemen deserve that much. Achieving the immediate objective of avoiding an unspeakable human tragedy in Hudaydah and further afield in Yemen requires nothing less.