

(Translated from Arabic)

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Yemen to the United Nations Office at Geneva

Reference: 123

Date: 1 May 2017

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Yemen to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

With regard to the letter dated 1 March 2017, reference No. AI YEM 1/2017, containing questions from Mr. Hilal Elver, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, and Mr. Dainius Puras, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Mission wishes to submit to the Office the attached replies from the Government to the questions raised. The Mission will forward to the Office any additional information that it receives from the Government in this regard.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Yemen to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva takes this opportunity to convey to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

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Replies from the Government of the Republic of Yemen to the questions raised by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, and the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

I. Additional information on the allegations contained in the letter

The Yemeni Government reaffirms that there is no blockade on the port of Al-Hudaydah and that imports of relief and humanitarian supplies or commercial goods are not prohibited. The situation merely requires prohibitions on the import of weapons into Yemen. Imports of nutritional goods into Yemen are subject to a United Nations inspection and investigation mechanism. Hence, the inflow into Yemen of commercial goods and relief assistance is normal. The main cause of the humanitarian crisis is the centralized procedure applicable to imported goods, which means that coastal areas, such as the port of Al-Hudaydah, are deprived of goods that are conveyed to the centre.

The impediments that have led to the exacerbation of the humanitarian situation are related to the obstacles imposed and the practices used by the insurgent militias. For example, they control the port of Al-Hudaydah and require businesspeople and those responsible for relief convoys to pay tax, delaying the arrival of the convoys and detaining them for days. They also apprehend the staff of humanitarian organizations, and exercise control over some of the relief and its sources, diverting it to specific regions and depriving needy areas. They seize imports of fuel and sell it on the black market to finance their war machine. The insurgent militias also impose an oppressive siege on some towns, including those located in Bilad al-Wafi in Taiz Governorate as well as on the city of Taiz. They prevent aid from reaching them and seize medical necessities. Moreover, imported aid is subject to the mercy of the militias. This situation heralds a humanitarian disaster in the city and has had an adverse impact on living conditions in general and on the health sector in particular, which is operating under extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances and with scant facilities.

The mines planted by the Houthi and Saleh militias, which have claimed thousands of victims, constitute a major impediment to the return of displaced persons to liberated towns as well as to the delivery of humanitarian aid. The legitimate Government is therefore taking vigorous action to clear the mines, and would appreciate assistance from the international community and the United Nations in this regard.

The Houthi and Saleh militias routinely target medical teams and health-care centres in some regions, including the city of Taiz, adding to the people's suffering.

In response, the legitimate Government, given its responsibility for all Yemeni citizens throughout the country, both in liberated and non-liberated areas, seeks to facilitate the transport of humanitarian aid and commercial goods to all parts of Yemen, including Sana'a, Sa'dah and Omran. For example, the ample aid provided by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre and the Emirati Red Crescent has been conveyed indiscriminately to the various governorates of Yemen, including Sa'dah Governorate. In addition, goods imported through the port of Aden and destined for various northern regions have never encountered any incident aimed at the seizure or confiscation of any of the convoys.

Health-care centres and medical teams in areas controlled by the legitimate Government have never experienced any infringements or intrusions. When some individual incidents occurred, they were addressed and the perpetrators were prosecuted.

Another factor that has contributed to the exacerbation of humanitarian suffering is the looting by the insurgent militias of the resources of State institutions and their transfer either for use in the war effort or for personal exploitation by the leaders of the coup. Such actions have deprived the State's civil servants of their salaries. The legitimate Government has, in response, taken steps to disburse the civil servants' salaries in liberated areas, reaffirming its responsibility for all citizens throughout Yemen and its willingness to pay the salaries of staff in areas subject to the control of the insurgents, provided that the resources of State institutions in unliberated areas are transferred to the Central Bank in the provisional capital city of Aden and to its branches in the governorates with a view to

ensuring adequate liquidity and the continuity of the financial cycle. This procedure was followed by the legitimate Government from the beginning of the insurgency until October 2016, when it transferred all revenue for the areas under legitimate control to the Central Bank in Sana'a, which was under the control of the insurgents. Until such time as the insurgent authorities transfer the revenue to the Central Bank in Aden and its branches in the governorates, the militias will bear responsibility for payment of the salaries of staff in the areas under their control.

II. Steps taken to ensure the availability and accessibility of food, medicines, fuel and other necessary goods

The legitimate Government took steps, with the support of the Arab coalition, to reconstruct and enhance the capacity of the port of Aden to receive commercial imports and imports of humanitarian aid. The port is now fully equipped for the purpose. Al-Mokha port is also being reconstructed to receive aid and supplies, and the port of Al-Mukalla is also fully equipped to receive commercial goods and food supplies.

Action is being taken, in coordination with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to open safe corridors for the transport of goods and aid through borders crossings with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to a dry port in Ma'rib Governorate, from which they are transported to needy regions in the northern governorates.

The legitimate Government is currently seeking to repair the electricity transmission network leading from Ma'rib to Sana'a. Engineering teams are repairing transmission towers that were destroyed during military hostilities in areas under the Government's control leading to Sana'a. The insurgent militias are responsible for repairing destroyed transmission towers in areas under their control.

III. Information regarding measures to ensure the availability and accessibility of health infrastructure and staff to care for the needs of the population of Yemen

The local authorities in liberated areas provide protection for health-care facilities and medical staff. They also cooperate with the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, the Emirati Red Crescent and the Kuwaiti Red Crescent, which provide support for repairs to damaged health-care facilities in liberated areas, in accordance with the requisite specifications. The forces of the legitimate Government seek to prevent the targeting of medical staff and health-care facilities in areas engaged in military hostilities.

IV. Steps taken to maintain and increase the domestic production of food

The Government is assisting local farmers in producing food. It is also providing remedial assistance for the fisheries sector, which has been damaged by the war and the militias' use of Yemeni coastal areas to smuggle weapons. However, the available resources are still limited. In addition, the Government's Steering Committee responsible for the project on livelihood and enhancement of Yemeni rural resilience, in cooperation with the European Union, the World Food Programme, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, has been preparing an action plan for implementation of the project in 2017 through a series of activities, such as the creation of job opportunities in the agriculture, fisheries and water resources sector, the organization of training courses, and the combating of poverty and unemployment among young people and women. A number of provinces of the governorates of Hajjah, Al-Hudaydah, Lahij and Abyan receive project funding from the European Union totalling US\$ 38 million for activities implemented under the Social Fund for Development programme and through civil society organizations. The scope of the project will be extended in the coming months to other governorates and provinces by means of additional funding of US\$ 60 million from the European Union.

V. Steps taken to contain the spread of communicable diseases, particularly cholera

The Government has established medical teams to contain communicable diseases, particularly cholera and dengue fever. However, its efforts continue to be impeded in some besieged areas, especially the city of Taiz.

The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with regional and international partners, takes action to contain communicable diseases and establishes health-care programmes in all regions, including those under the control of the insurgent militias. For example, the Ministry has implemented programmes to contain dengue fever, has launched vaccination campaigns against communicable diseases, including poliomyelitis, and has implemented a project to contain malaria and dengue fever. Medical teams monitor cases of communicable diseases, but the scale of the challenges to be addressed in the health-care sector demand strong support from international partners.

VI. Steps taken to ensure that medical staff, medical infrastructure such as hospitals and ambulances, and patients are not targeted by combatants

The Yemeni Government is taking all necessary steps to protect health-care facilities and medical staff in areas under its control and to punish any party that perpetrates wrongful acts. It complies with international humanitarian law and the ethics of war, and there has been no record of any violations on the part of the Government. In areas that are the scene of military hostilities, the legitimate forces seek to avoid targeting anyone working in the health-care sector and to avoid damaging any health-care facilities.
