

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND  
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR MARK LOWCOCK**

**Statement on the situation in Yemen**

I am deeply concerned that the United Nations has been unable to access the Red Sea Mills in Hodeida since September 2018. Enough grain to feed 3.7 million people for a month has sat unused and possibly spoiling in silos at the mills for more than four months, while nearly 10 million people across the country remain just a step away from famine. No-one gains anything from this: but millions of starving people suffer.

Last month, two silos were hit by mortar shells landing in the compound of the mills, which is located in an area controlled by the Government of Yemen. The resultant fire destroyed some of the grain – probably enough to feed hundreds of thousands of people for a month. These events are to be deplored.

Access to the mills grows ever more urgent as time passes and the risk of spoilage to the remaining grain increases.

To date, forces affiliated with Ansar Allah have declined to authorize the United Nations to cross front lines into Government-controlled areas to access the mills, citing security concerns. Discussions continue with all parties, and I appreciate the genuine efforts that have been made on all sides to find a solution. But it remains elusive. I implore all parties, in particular Ansar Allah affiliated groups, to finalize an agreement and facilitate access to the mills in the coming days.

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners are scaling up to reach 12 million people with emergency food assistance, which is a 50 per cent increase over 2018 targets. In December, the World Food Programme reached more than 10 million people – a record achievement.

We can save huge numbers of people, most of them in areas controlled by Ansar Allah. But we need more help to do that from the authorities who control these areas.

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