

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
AND EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR STEPHEN O'BRIEN**

REMARKS TO THE PRESS

Riyadh, 5 October 2016

I would like to thank the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, as well as the Government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the warm welcome I have received on my second visit as the UN's humanitarian chief. I would also like to thank the Kingdom for its generosity towards those in the world who have the least.

I have had the pleasure to meet key officials of the Kingdom and conveyed my great appreciation of the strong and growing partnership that we in the UN have with the Kingdom as we carry out our humanitarian work both in the region and in the world.

The establishment of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center in 2015 has been a continuation of the Kingdom's philanthropy to the international community's efforts to support people in need. Its generosity has made a real impact in Yemen and elsewhere. In my meeting with H.E. Dr. Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Supervisor General of KSRelief, we discussed how our two entities can better work together in a more complementary and efficient way.

It is critical that we collectively do our utmost to help families and communities in urgent need through respecting core humanitarian principles and values. I am encouraged by the willingness of the authorities in the Kingdom to work closely with the UN and our humanitarian partners to improve and facilitate humanitarian action in the MENA region and beyond.

My visit here was also an opportunity to discuss the desperate humanitarian situation in Yemen. This morning, I met with key officials and officers from the Ministry of Defense including members of the Evacuation and Humanitarian Operation Cell (EHOC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We all agreed that the utmost must be done to save and protect lives in Yemen in accordance with international humanitarian law. We also discussed facilitation of humanitarian access and that we must rely on facts for impartial and neutral action.

I also had the pleasure of meeting H.E. AbdulLatif Al Zayani, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, to discuss the situation in Yemen and how we can mutually support our efforts to alleviate the human suffering of the Yemeni people.

I have also met President Hadi, Government of Yemen, here in Riyadh to discuss the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Yemen and the need to ensure the protection of civilians as hostilities sadly continues and even intensify in Yemen.

As in all humanitarian crises around the world, there is absolutely no time to waste. While the humanitarians will continue to provide aid to all those in need, there is an urgent need for a political, durable solution to the crisis beginning with a resumption of the cessation of hostilities.

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