



M. Emmanuel Macron
 Président de la République
 Palais de l'Elysée
 55 rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré
 75008 Paris

Paris, 4 June 2018.

Subject: Paris Humanitarian Conference on Yemen

Dear President Macron,

We welcome French efforts to address the ongoing armed conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen, and your announcement during Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Paris on 10 April that France would host an international humanitarian conference on Yemen in Paris in June.

22 million Yemenis need humanitarian assistance to survive, and urgent action from the international community to address the root causes of the crisis is long overdue. We write, as representatives of Yemeni civil society and international humanitarian, peacebuilding and human rights organisations, to share our expectations about what the proposed conference must deliver if it is to make a meaningful difference to the lives of Yemeni people.

First, we urge you to reiterate throughout the conference that only an inclusive political solution can fully address the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Any initiatives to improve the humanitarian situation must be consistent with ongoing international efforts. For this reason, it is imperative that the conference is organised in close liaison with the United Nations and its Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, and with other key international actors.

Second, we are concerned about the credibility of a humanitarian event on Yemen co-hosted by Saudi Arabia, one of the parties to the conflict. It is France's responsibility, as the convener, to ensure that the conference adheres to humanitarian principles and that all parties to the conflict participate and engage in good faith, guided by the sole objective of alleviating the suffering of Yemenis.

Third, we urge you to ensure that a diverse group of Yemeni civil society representatives, including women and youth, are meaningfully included in the conference and that the conference is a safe space

for their full and equal participation. Any international gathering to address the needs of Yemen's people must include their voices at its heart.

Fourth, it is absolutely imperative that the conference emphasises the right of civilians in Yemen to protection and makes reference to the outrageous violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed by all parties to the conflict. We are particularly concerned about the prospect of an imminent attack on Hodeidah port that would have a disastrous impact on civilians throughout the country.

We urge you to condemn violations and ensure that a key outcome of the conference is that all parties immediately cease indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, stop using explosive weapons in populated areas, and remove all obstacles that impede humanitarian access. The conference should support international accountability for violations against civilians, including access to Yemen for the Panel of Experts established to monitor implementation of Resolution 2140, and the Group of Eminent Experts appointed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2017.

As host of the conference, France should lead by example and, pursuant of France's international commitments, we urge you to suspend the transfer of any French military equipment at risk of being used against civilians in Yemen.

Finally, to reinforce current international efforts, the conference should demand that key stakeholders enforce the UN Security Council's Presidential Statement of 15 March 2018, and seek to secure the delivery of the following actions:

- Acknowledgement by all parties that current levels of imports into Yemen (including fuel and food) are not sufficient to meet the basic needs of the population; public commitments to fully and unconditionally lift the recurring blockade on Yemeni ports, and to remove all delays and obstructions to humanitarian access (including movement of aid workers) and the delivery essential commercial goods; guarantees to ensure fair distribution of aid throughout the country;
- Guarantees that Yemen's ports will be kept functioning and protected from further attacks, including Hodeidah port, which is a critical lifeline for millions of Yemenis;
- Public commitments by all parties to engage with the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) in good faith and to report on any inspections parties conduct, as required by UN Security Council resolution 2216;
- Public commitment to allow more regular medical evacuations immediately and develop a clear roadmap for the full reopening of Sana'a International Airport to commercial flights, without preconditions or conditions for use;
- Agreement on a plan for the immediate resumption of payments of public sector salaries across the whole of Yemen especially for health, education and sanitation front line workers, to address the critical issue of the collapse of social services and the economy.

The commitments announced at the conference should be made public in a communiqué that sets out clear deadlines and establishes international monitoring mechanisms (including benchmarks and reporting systems) to ensure thorough implementation and transparency.

A French-hosted humanitarian conference on Yemen that does not set down strict and clear conditions and outcomes would not only pose risks to the credibility of French international leadership; more importantly, it could embolden parties to the conflict at a time when restraint, not escalation, is needed.

After more than three years of brutal war, parties to the conflict must hear loud and clear that they will not be allowed to continue to pursue military solutions at the expense of Yemeni lives.

Please be assured of our commitment to work with you on an initiative that delivers on these critical goals to bring hope to the people of Yemen.

Sincerely,

List of signatories:

1. ACAT
2. Action Contre la Faim
3. Alliance internationale pour la défense des droits et des libertés
4. Awam Foundation for Cultural Development (Yemen)
5. CARE International
6. Christian Aid
7. Defaa' Foundation for Rights and Freedoms (Yemen)
8. Enjaz Foundation for Development (Yemen)
9. For Me Organization (Yemen)
10. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
11. Handicap International
12. Improve Your Society Organization (Yemen)
13. International Rescue Committee
14. Islamic Relief Worldwide
15. Mercy Corps
16. Norwegian Refugee Council
17. Oxfam France
18. Première urgence internationale
19. Saferworld
20. Save the Children
21. Shabwa Youth Council (Yémen)
22. Sisters' Arab Forum for Human Rights (Yemen)
23. Social Democratic Forum (Yemen)
24. Solidarités International
25. War Child UK
26. Wogood Foundation for Human Security (Yemen)
27. Yemen Center for Human Rights Studies (Yemen)