



Statement by Ms Nesmah Mansoor ALI
UN Security Council briefing on Yemen
6th March 2025

President, Your Excellencies,

Thank you Denmark for giving me the opportunity to brief the Council. My name is Nesmah Mansoor Ali. I am the Senior Policy and Communication Officer, representing the [Peace Track Initiative \(PTI\)](#) and the [Women Solidarity Network](#). Our work focuses on climate justice, inclusive peacebuilding, and protecting women's rights in Yemen.

Today, I will highlight the urgent threats posed by Yemen's protracted conflict, climate change, and the deterioration of human rights.

Yemen has been ravaged by over a decade of armed conflict, coupled with environmental degradation, and climate crises. These realities have weakened state institutions and collapsed social protection systems, creating multidimensional insecurities that leave vulnerable populations, particularly rural and marginalized women, on the brink of survival.

I am a migrant of conflict and climate change. I was forced to leave my hometown Aden and parted with my family in 2020. Life in Aden was unbearable with scorching temperatures, chronic water shortages, and relentless power blackouts, amid the COVID 19 pandemic. Every day was a struggle to manage the brief two-hour window of electricity, juggling priorities: running the pump to fill water tanks, doing laundry, charging our devices, or snatching a few moments of sleep under the relief of air conditioning. Leaving Aden was necessary for survival and a painful testament to how conflict and climate change can uproot lives and tear families apart.

The war has devastated Yemen's environment and ecosystem. Attacks on oil refineries and ports, indiscriminate landmines in agricultural fields and coastal areas, leaks of oilⁱ and toxinsⁱⁱ, and the destruction of critical infrastructure like power stations and water systems have left Yemen in ruins. I will never forget the towering plume of smoke that covered the sky when the Houthis attacked Aden's refinery in 2015ⁱⁱⁱ—a dark, suffocating cloud choking the air and leaving the city in despair. This scenario repeated itself, as Israel attacked over two dozen oil storage tanks last year in Hodeida port^{iv}.

Marine ecosystems are equally ravaged, as oil spills, unregulated fishing, and untreated sewage have polluted coastal waters, destroying fish populations and endangering public health. Meanwhile, proliferation of landmines^v planted in farming and fishing zones make it dangerous to grow food or access clean water, worsening food insecurity. Compounding this, climate change is deepening Yemen's crisis. Floods are displacing landmines and complicating demining efforts, and also exacerbating pre-war intertribal conflicts over scarce resources that claim 4,000 lives annually^{vi}.

Women, especially those leading households, are disproportionately affected by climate change. A survey by our partners at South24^{vii} found that 88% of women in Aden, Hadhramout, and Mahra surveyed have reported declining livelihoods due to climate change damaging their income generation activities such as salt extraction, fish drying, and handcrafts. Cultural norms further hinder women's resilience, as they are often discouraged from learning to swim, leaving them vulnerable during floods and cyclones^{viii}.

Consulting with women across Yemen^{ix}, I heard heartbreaking stories of how the intersection of climate change and armed conflict has upended their lives. Aisha, a resilient fisherwoman from Aden shared *"The fish are vanishing, and we're forced to venture further into dangerous waters just to survive."* Her words reflect the desperation of coastal communities as pollution and overfishing deplete their livelihoods. Fatima, a woman from Al Mahrah, shared how Cyclone Tig in 2023 destroyed her family's agricultural land which was their only source of income. Meanwhile, Sumya, a young entrepreneur and friend of mine, had to abandon her dream of opening a chocolate business due to rising temperatures, increasing costs of raw materials, and endless power cuts.

These women's stories—of determination amid vanishing fish, ruined crops, and deferred dreams—highlight their unwavering strength as they confront the harsh realities of climate change. As we approach International Women's Day and mark the anniversary of the Beijing Platform, it is imperative that we prioritize the impacts of climate change and conflict on achieving gender equality.

To conclude, I call on the UN Security Council to act decisively and without delay to tackle the interlinked crises of conflict, climate change, and environmental degradation in Yemen, before these challenges push an already suffering population past the point of no return, and to take into consideration the following recommendations:

1. Prioritize climate-responsive peacebuilding by integrating climate change into peace negotiations, ensuring that climate adaptation and environmental restoration are central to any peace agreements or political settlements in Yemen.
2. Demand that the Sanctions Committee investigate environmental destruction as a potential war crime, including attacks on critical infrastructure, such as oil refineries, ports, and water systems, and demand accountability for environmental destruction.
3. Ensure full inclusion of women in all peace and political processes and support local peace initiatives through funding and empowering women-led and community-led peacebuilding efforts including those that address intertribal conflicts over water and land.
4. Promote environmental rehabilitation by supporting programs to clean up oil and toxins spills, remove landmines from agricultural and coastal areas, and restore damaged ecosystems, particularly in fishing zones and farming communities.
5. Support enforcing environmental regulations, working with national and local authorities and international partners to strengthen environmental governance and regulate private sector activities that contribute to pollution and resource depletion.

6. Provide targeted support for women-led households expanding social protection programs, such as cash transfers and livelihood support, for women disproportionately affected by climate change and conflict.

Thank you.

ⁱ 12 FALTERING SHIPS THREATEN ADEN WITH SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL AND MARINE DISASTERS

https://hjfyemen.org/humanitarian_story/192

ⁱⁱ Rubimar.. The catastrophe deteriorates in the Red Sea

https://www.hjfyemen.org/humanitarian_story/243

ⁱⁱⁱ Reuters. (2015, July 12). *Houthi attack sets refinery ablaze in Yemeni city Aden*. Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/houthi-attack-sets-refinery-ablaze-in-yemeni-city-aden-idUSKCN0PN271/>

^{iv} Human Rights Watch. (2024, August 19). *Yemen: Israeli port attack a possible war crime*. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/19/yemen-israeli-port-attack-possible-war-crime>

^v Alarashi, E. (2023, April 4). *Unseen dangers: Landmines plague Yemeni women*. Global Voices.

<https://globalvoices.org/2023/04/04/unseen-dangers-landmines-plague-yemeni-women/>

^{vi} SIPRI & NUPI. (2023). *Yemen: The conflict and the role of external actors*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/2023_sipri-nupi_fact_sheet_yemen_june.pdf

^{vii} South24. (2024). *Yemeni women face climate crisis: Study reveals rising challenges*. South24.

<https://south24.org/news/newse.php?nid=4219>

^{viii} DCAF. (2022). *Gender, Climate and Security in Yemen: The Linkages and Ways Forward*. Geneva: DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.

https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/GenderClimateSecurityYemen_EN.pdf

^{ix} Peace Track Initiative (2024), *Policy Paper on Climate Change and Women in Yemen: Towards Integrating the Women, Peace and Security Agenda*: <https://peacetrackinitiative.org/en/resources/30>