

We are gravely concerned about the reports coming from Yemen that the armed groups loyal to the President of the Republic of Yemen Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi have begun an offensive against the Red Sea port of Al Hudaydah. The operation is reported to have the support of the Arab coalition at sea and in the air.

These developments are particularly disturbing because Al Hudaydah is the main transit and logistics hub through which a lion's share of food, medicines and other essentials for Yemeni civilians pass. If the unfolding military operation blocks this supply channel, the civilians, who are already dealing with huge deprivation, will find themselves on the brink of death. They will face a horrible choice: to be killed by bomb strikes and shelling or to die from starvation and diseases.

It is difficult to even imagine the number of casualties among the direct participants of the fight for Al Hudaydah. Reports from the military area quote hundreds of troops killed on both sides within the first days of the operation alone.

All this confirms our initial fears that the storming of Al Hudaydah may have catastrophic consequences for the entire Yemen. It is deeply regrettable that UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths was not granted the requested additional time to prevent this scenario.

It is expected that the hardest impact will be on the prospects of political resolution of the Yemeni crisis and we still do not see an alternative to it. Even more so that recently, thanks to the UN's certain efforts, a range of worthy ideas emerged on how to stop the armed conflict and finally get the sides to the Yemeni conflict to sit down at the negotiating table.

On our part, we urge for soonest suspension of the military action in Yemen in order to give a chance to peaceful initiatives of the international community.