

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunset view from the Sulaibikhat beach. — Photo by Ghazi Qafaf (KUNA)

Kuwait ready to help Yemenis resume peace talks: Envoy

NEW YORK: Kuwait's Representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi on Thursday renewed his country's offer to host consultations with the Yemeni parties in preparation for official negotiations. Kuwait is ready to host a new round of the intra-Yemeni peace talks in collaboration with the UN with a view to reaching a final and comprehensive settlement to the crisis in Yemen, he said in a statement to a UN Security Council session on the latest developments in Yemen. He noted that such a settlement should be based on the GCC initiative and its executive mechanism, the outcomes of the previous rounds of national dialogue and the UN Security Council Resolution 2216.

"The Yemeni issue was at the heart of many international discussions throughout the General Assembly's high-level debate week," Ambassador Otaibi said, referring to the meetings of the 74th UNGA session. Among other meetings, officials from Kuwait, United Kingdom and Sweden met and released a joint statement in support of the Stockholm Agreement, reached in December 2018. They also condemned the attacks perpetrated by the Houthis against civilian installations in Saudi Arabia and urged all parties to engage in peace talks.

Ambassador Otaibi welcomed the positive indications, reported by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Yemen Martin Griffiths in his briefing to the Security Council earlier. However, he regretted that the progress in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement is still lagging behind the expectations of the international community 10 months after the agreement came into force. Welcoming the resumption of humanitarian operations in various parts of Yemen, Ambassador Al-Otaibi said the financial support of many partner countries, including more than \$600 million from Kuwait pledged since the start of the crisis, made such efforts possible. Expressing hope that the recently announced initiative to accelerate the delivery of oil to the port city of Hodeidah will continue to progress, he nevertheless joined other speakers in voicing regret about the decision not to allow international inspections of oil tankers in the Red Sea.

Instability still looms

In his briefing, Griffiths recalled his grim warnings to the UN Security Council in recent months regarding the perils facing Yemen. Briefing the Council via video tele-

conference from Riyadh, he said those perils include "the prospects of instability in the south and frightening risks that the country will be drawn into a regional conflict." While at times he had lost hope, he told the Council that there are reasons for optimism for the people of Yemen "even in the middle of a misery — which sometimes must seem endless." Outlining those current signs of hope — which he characterized as fragile and requiring diligent care and attention, he cited stronger willingness by the parties and noted that the last few days have seen progress in facilitating the movement of much needed oil supplies. "In addition, there has been no large scale fighting in the volatile south of the country and a tenuous calm continues to hold in Aden. This can be taken as a testimony to the restraint shown by those on the ground," Griffiths said. Many partners had hoped that an agreement would be announced today, as talks continue to progress in Jeddah under the leadership of Saudi Arabia.

"Indeed, there are encouraging signs that an agreement aimed at resolving issues between the Government and the Southern Transitional Council might be within reach," he pointed out. Underlining the need for the Government to return to Aden and for State institutions to become fully functional again. Recalling that Lt Gen Abhijit Guha just assumed his duties as Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) and Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, the UN envoy said confidence building is the key to the full implementation of that accord. The establishment of a Joint Operations Centre along with the two parties has resulted in a tangible reduction of ceasefire violations and the redeployment of forces will continue to be a primary focus.

Welcoming the release of 290 detainees by Houthis, Griffiths invited the parties to meet with the UN and its partners, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), at the earliest opportunity to resume discussions on further releases as laid out in the December 2018 Stockholm Agreement. He voiced gratitude to the humanitarian actors currently working to deliver assistance to people in need in Durhaimi and elsewhere, welcoming as "encouraging" the efforts by both parties to open humanitarian corridors. "Today we have some positive indications," he said, while cautioning, "Let's be under no illusion about the challenges and the difficulties ahead." — KUNA

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NEW YORK: This handout photo released by the UN shows Martin Griffiths (on screen), Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, briefing the Security Council meeting on the situation in Yemen on October 17, 2019 at the United Nations in New York. — AFP