



Statement by the Embassy of the Republic of Yemen in Tokyo

The Embassy of the Republic of Yemen in Tokyo would like to draw attention to the new developments on the Safer Oil Tanker at the Yemeni west coast and the potential of environmental disaster looming there.

Safer is an oil tanker holding 1.1 million barrels of oil, about four times as much oil as spilled from Exxon Valdez in 1998. The tanker has not undergone regular maintenance since 2015 because of the Houthi militia refused to allow the UN technical team to enter the area for maintenance. **[The ship structure, equipment and operating systems are deteriorating, leaving the tanker at risk of leaking, exploding or catch fire. An impact of spill would have catastrophic environmental and humanitarian consequence in the Red Sea ecosystems where almost 30 million people depend, including at least 1.6 million Yemenis. The impact of disaster will extend to the livelihood of fishing communities living around the area, and the damage cost to Yemen fisheries could run to an over 25 years]**, according to report from the UN News.

The Government of the Republic of Yemen has been warning the International Community, including the Security Council of the potential disaster and called for immediate intervention by sending a technical team from the United Nations for condition assessment, initial repair and maintenance and/or discharge of the oil if necessary to remove the threat of oil spill. The Government has provided all facilities for the arrival of the United Nations team.

Despite the Government warning about the manipulative attitude of the Houthi militias towards giving a permission to the UN technical team to enter the area where the ship is located to conduct the inspection, and further warning about potential of the Houthi militias using the threat as a bargaining power to leverage vested interest, the UN believed the deceptive claim of the militia on July 15, 2020 to allow the team to enter the area for the inspection.

The statement of the spokesman of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Stephane Dujarric on February 2nd 2021 in which he revealed that **"we have not received a response to multiple requests to the Houthi militias to provide a letter with security assurance. But the militias said they "are considering a review of their formal approval of the mission to deploy"**. That was no surprise to the Yemeni Government but consolidated what it has been warning about all the time.

Given this new developments, the Yemeni Government calls upon the International Community to change its approach to these militias, particularly in this serious humanitarian and environmental issue, and renews its appeal to the Security Council to take binding and deterrent measures against these militias to ensure discharge of the oil and disposal of the tanker before the world wakes up to one of the greatest environmental and humanitarian disasters in the region and the world.

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