

Yemen's Vice President at UNGA: Protecting the Sea 'Begins with Ending the Threat of the Militia on Land'



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PLC Vice President tells international press the Red Sea crisis cannot be solved at sea alone, and calls for support to the Yemeni state rather than a war fought on its behalf

NEW YORK, Sept. 25, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- The Vice President of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council, H.E. Abdullah Al-Alimi Bawazir, told an on-the-record roundtable of U.S. and international journalists on Wednesday, September 23, that the threat to shipping in the Bab al-Mandab began on Yemeni soil and can only be ended there. He urged the international community to support the Yemeni state in restoring its authority.

Speaking on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, the Vice President said the crisis in Yemen has long been viewed from only two standpoints, humanitarian and civil war. Both are critical, he said, but neither is sufficient, because Yemen is part of the security of the Red Sea, of global energy supply and of the stability of the region and the world.

"The battle of Bab al-Mandab — it did not really start from the west coast," the Vice President said. "It actually started the day Sanaa fell into the hands of the militias. And the security of Bab al-Mandab is very much connected to the security of Yemeni territory."



He recalled that the Yemeni government came to the General Assembly in 2015 to warn that a Houthi takeover, backed by Iran, would not remain within Yemen's borders. "Today, this particular scenario is no longer hypothetical," he said. "An armed group, outside the context of the state, is able to impose its own conditions on the security of the international trade path."

The Vice President cautioned against the idea that the Red Sea can be secured from the sea alone. "We could actually protect the ship alone today, but we could not really protect the same ship tomorrow. So protecting the sea actually begins with ending the threat of the militia on land," he said. "From our standpoint, the security of the strait is connected to a strong state that is able to control its own territory."

He stressed that Yemen is not asking others to fight in its place. "We don't tell the world to come and actually conduct a war on behalf of the Yemenis. We say: come in and support the Yemeni state so that it can actually regain its authority," he said. "This is not a call for war, and it's not really a call for an endless war, but a call for a strategy that actually ends the war and indeed eliminates its causes."

Addressing the United States, he welcomed U.S. economic and financial measures against the Houthis, including their designation as a terrorist organization, and said American strikes had affected Houthi capabilities. But he added that "a campaign alone does not really achieve victory." "The aerial campaigns are important, but supporting the Yemeni government and forces on the ground is indeed a guarantor against the danger of those militias," he said.

The Vice President cited the reports of the UN Panel of Experts from 2023 through 2025, which confirmed Iranian financial and military support to the Houthis. He pointed to tested missile and drone debris and to intercepted shipments of weapons bound for the group, and said Iran has transferred not only weapons but the knowledge of military manufacturing. "This issue is no longer hypothetical, but rather facts that have been proven on the ground," he said.

On reported Houthi assurances regarding shipping, he warned that "accepting assurances from the militia that exists outside the context of the state is incorrect," because "some parties actually read these signals as the beginning of legitimizing this group."

The Vice President said protecting navigation through the Bab al-Mandab is a shared responsibility of Yemen, the region and the world, and that "the Yemeni people are actually capable and determined to go through with their confrontation of the Houthis."

He closed by looking beyond the conflict. "Stability of Yemen is indeed an investment in the security of the region [and] of the world," he said. "We seek peace for our country." Noting Yemen's young population, he added: "We aspire to build a new Yemen that is secure and stable, that would actually contribute in the security and stability of the region."



The roundtable was opened by H.E. Ambassador Jamila Rajaa, who said Yemen has too often been missing from the rooms where resolutions on Yemen are made, and that the meeting was an opportunity for Yemen's voice to be heard.

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