

United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen

UPDATE

May 2016



UNVIM Timeline

14 April 2015	UN Security Council resolution 2216 (2015) imposes an arms embargo on Yemen, leading to an impeded flow of commercial items
6 August 2015	Request from the Government of Yemen (GoY) to the Secretary-General to establish UNVIM
11 August 2015	Secretary-General confirms to the GoY the establishment of UNVIM
12 February 2016	Secretary-General informs Member States about UNVIM
18 April 2016	First meeting of the UNVIM Steering Committee in Riyadh
2 May 2016	UNVIM starts operations with announcement through Yemen Ministry of Transport and statement by the Secretary-General on 3 May

Context

The current conflict in Yemen has resulted in a widespread humanitarian crisis, and has left 82% of the population (21.1 million people) in need of some form of assistance. Yemen is a net-food-importing country with an import dependency for 90% of its overall domestic wheat and 100% of its rice requirements (WFP 2010 Market Study) as well as about 70% of its fuel. Current humanitarian assistance only covers a small part of the populations' basic needs. Since January 2016 there has been a sharp decline in shipping and imports of food and fuel to Yemen. In March, only 49 ships were able to berth. Only 312 577 MT of food were imported, representing a 32% drop compared to February. Fuel imports recorded the lowest level since October 2015 (43 572 MT) only covering 8% of the country monthly requirements. According to estimates by the Yemen Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) from April 2016, the GDP was expected to have decreased by over 34,6% compared to the previous year.

Mandate & Objective

At the request of the Republic of Yemen, the United Nations have instituted a United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM), which aims to facilitate the unimpeded flow of commercial items to Yemen and to revive the economy of the country, in line with Security Council resolution 2216 (2015).

UNVIM applies only to commercial imports and bilateral assistance going to Yemeni ports outside of the authority of the Government of Yemen. Shipments from UN and other international humanitarian organizations as well as smaller vessels and dhows will not be subject to UNVIM verification. The UNVIM verification process operates solely on a voluntary basis. Any inspection in international waters would also be voluntary, requiring the ship's permission throughout the inspection.

The Mechanism does not infringe upon the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen, as well as the unity, sovereignty, independence or territorial integrity of the Republic of Yemen, or of any other States in the region.

UNVIM aims to restore trust among the shipping community that goods can be delivered to Yemen without unexpected and costly delays, thus decrease insurance rates and costs for shipping companies and traders, increase the amount of basic goods and services entering Yemen, decrease the inflated prices for commodities and thus cover basic needs of the suffering population that cannot be met through humanitarian assistance.

Structure

The UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has been requested to operationalize and manage services of the impartial verification and inspection mechanism on behalf of the United Nations and Member States.

UNVIM operates from its Head Office in Djibouti, where main activities such as management of clearance requests, coordination of inspection, and monitoring of operations take place. Two UNVIM Monitors each will be based in designated ports in Djibouti, Dubai, Jeddah and Salalah to observe the screening of cargo destined for Yemen.

A Steering Committee that includes the UN, the Government of Yemen, and Coalition forces has been established to monitor the Mechanism. The first monthly meeting of the Committee took place in Riyadh on 18 April 2016.

Verification and Inspection Process

Yemen-based traders and importers notify UNVIM on upcoming shipments and shipping companies submit their requests for clearance to UNVIM upon their departure from their port of origin. Forms are available at www.vimye.org. UNVIM reviews those requests according to its Standard Operating Procedures and internal guidelines for verification and inspection and notify Coalition Forces and the requesting party within 48 hours about the result of the review. Should the review by UNVIM establishes reasonable grounds that a shipment might contain items in violation of the arms embargo imposed by Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), UNVIM will conduct a primary inspection at international waters and/or ask the vessel to reroute to Djibouti for a second inspection. Member States will conduct screenings of cargo transhipped in Djibouti, Dubai, Jeddah and Salalah in the presence of UNVIM Monitors.

Way Forward

UNVIM has started its operations May 2 with the official announcement through the Yemen Minister of Transport and the Secretary-General's statement on 3 May. This includes the official replacement of the existing process, regular receipt and processing of clearance requests, monitoring of cargo screenings at transshipment ports as well as inspecting vessels, if deemed necessary.

UNVIM Monitors will be deployed to Dubai, Jeddah and Salalah pending issuance of their visas.

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Please visit www.vimye.org for more information.