

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
L'Église presbytérienne au Canada



MODERATOR OF THE 2017 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Rev. Peter Bush

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, M.P. P.C.
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Chrystia.Freeland@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, a Christian denomination with 90,000 members across Canada in 860 congregations. Our faith calls us to do what we can to care for the vulnerable. In some situations this involves providing humanitarian assistance. In other situations, we communicate our concerns to our elected officials. I write to you concerning the desperate situation of millions of Yemenis.

Over 17 million Yemenis suffer from hunger. Seven million Yemenis are dependent on food aid provided by the World Food Program. The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has worsened since the coalition led by Saudi Arabia imposed a blockade of the airports and the ports in Yemen on Monday, November 6.

Saudi Arabia has subsequently opened the port of Aden as well as those at Mocha and Mukalla. The main port of Hodeidah where rice, wheat, sugar and other goods enter Yemen has been partly re-opened. The smaller port of Saleef remains closed. The airport at Sana'a has been recently opened.

Fuel is not entering the country. Water pumped from boreholes use diesel pumps and if there is no fuel, many Yemenis will not have access to clean water. This will heighten the risk of yet further cholera outbreaks.

I encourage the Government of Canada to work with multilateral and bilateral partners and urge Saudi Arabia to fully lift the blockade at the airports and all the seaports immediately.

There are many challenges and complexities in persuading all parties in this conflict to agree to a ceasefire and to negotiate a peaceful resolution to this conflict. Nonetheless, unless the international community acts, then thousands of innocent civilians will die.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

The Rev. Peter G. Bush,
Moderator, 143rd General Assembly,
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Stephen Kendall and The Rev. Donald Muir