

**Remarks of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya,
Hanna S. Tetteh, to the Security Council on the situation in Libya**

18 February 2026

Mr. President (United Kingdom), Excellencies, members of the Security Council, Ambassador Al-Sonni, Permanent Representative of Libya,

May I wish those fasting a Ramadan Mubarak.

Since my last briefing to you on the political Roadmap including the launch of the Structured Dialogue, each thematic group – the economy, governance, security, and national reconciliation and human rights – has held two rounds of deliberations in Tripoli. Across the four tracks, the sense of urgency to resolve the political impasse and produce governance and economic reforms is palpable. The Governance and Security tracks focused on recommendations for creating the conditions for holding national elections. The Economy track emphasized the need to address excessive spending while exploring options to increase state revenues through economic diversification and strengthened public financial management. The National Reconciliation and Human Rights track called for the judiciary to be insulated from political interference and polarization to safeguard its unity and independence. And the Women’s Caucus has also proven to be an effective mechanism to enhance women’s participation in the Structured Dialogue.

UNSMIL has also facilitated meetings between the Governance and Economy tracks of the Structured Dialogue and the relevant Berlin Process Working Groups in order for Libyans to convey first-hand their priorities and exchange views on international support needed to address critical reforms on strengthening governance.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

I welcome the completion of municipal elections in three western municipalities on 7 February. Over the last 14 months, elections have been concluded in 119 municipalities, an important development for accountable local governance. Additionally, the election of a second woman mayor in Libya’s history was recently announced.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Regrettably, there has been no meaningful progress between the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) in completing the first two steps of the Roadmap, despite UNSMIL’s efforts.

I previously reported that the two institutions reached agreement on establishing a mechanism for the selection of the HNEC Board by 11 December. The agreement was not implemented as stipulated, and subsequent unilateral actions were taken first by the HoR and then by the HCS, both of which complicated the situation further and which now

could threaten the unity of HNEC. UNSMIL has also conveyed that it will continue to work with the existing four members of the HNEC board until such time as there is an agreement. Amending the electoral and legal framework also remains blocked.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Despite UNSMIL's sustained engagement with the two institutions, their inability to use their agreed mechanism and follow-on unilateral actions has further eroded their credibility and confirms Libyan perceptions that the two bodies are unable or unwilling to work together to conclude the first two milestones of the Roadmap.

In light of this impasse and my commitment in my last briefing to advance an alternative approach, I have conducted preliminary talks with key political actors on a two-step approach: forming a small group to resolve the two Roadmap milestones critical for elections. Should this group fail to agree, a broader convening will be necessary to take forward the implementation of the roadmap. We have the opportunity to use the tools within the existing Libyan agreements to break this protracted impasse, and we would appreciate the support of the Council to enable us to move forward. In my August briefing, I estimated that these milestones could be concluded in two months with the necessary political will; six months later, the facts speak for themselves, and we cannot wait indefinitely.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The situation in Libya is deteriorating on many fronts. Libya's judicial system – which has historically remained largely unified despite prolonged political challenges, with the Supreme Court in Tripoli, including its Constitutional Chamber serving as the highest constitutional judicial body – is now increasingly divided, with serious implications for the country's unity.

In 2023 the HoR established a Supreme Constitutional Court in Benghazi, which became functional in December 2025, operating in parallel to the previously established Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court in Tripoli.

There are now competing mandates, conflicting court rulings and judicial incoherences. On 18 January 2026, the Benghazi-based Court issued rulings nullifying a 2014 judgement of the Tripoli-based Constitutional Chamber that had invalidated the HoR's mandate. The same day, the Benghazi-based Court also upheld Law No. 1 of 2020, which annulled legislation enacted after August 2014 by the General National Congress. At that time, the General National Congress did not recognize the results of the 2014 parliamentary elections which created the HoR and continued issuing legislation. This impasse was overcome through the negotiations of the Libyan Political Agreement.

Afterwards on the 28 January, the Tripoli-based Constitutional Chamber, the earlier Court, declared Law no. 1 unconstitutional, contradicting the prior decisions by the Benghazi

court. On 15 February, the Benghazi-based Court issued rulings annulling the Tripoli-based Court's 28 January decision and declared unconstitutional an earlier HoR decision to appoint the President of the Supreme Court in Tripoli.

Mr. President, your excellencies, I know this is a bit of back and forth, but it just tells you this is a process that essentially is dividing the Libyan judiciary.

On 12 February 2026, the Presidential Council issued a decree, transferring the Official Gazette to the GNU Ministry of Justice based on a November 2025 ruling of the Tripoli-based Chamber. This ruling rendered unconstitutional a 2022 law which had transferred the Official Gazette to the HoR.

There is also a dispute over the organization of the judiciary including the Supreme Judicial Council, and which could lead to its division.

The consequences of these actions are clear – contradictory, parallel judicial decisions put into jeopardy the unity of the legal and judicial systems and weaken the administration of justice in Libya by rendering ineffective the last mechanism for ensuring the accountability of governance actors. Ultimately it would also obstruct the UN facilitated political process.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

If actions are not taken to preserve the unity, coherence and independence of the judiciary, the conflicting legal systems that emerge will impact the economy, elections, governance, security and human rights. It is a red line that if crossed can undermine the unity of the state. I urge Libyan leaders to refrain from escalatory measures and cooperate with the independent Libyan mediation committee, that is constituted by Libyan judicial and legal experts committed to try to maintain a unified judiciary. They are using their best efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution and I call on this Council to hold individuals who continue to take actions towards dividing the judiciary and the administration of justice, to be held accountable for taking actions that seek to undermine the unity of the country.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Libya's economic trajectory is also in a downturn, and the Libyan people are facing significant hardships with devaluation of the currency, increasing prices, fuel shortages and growing discontent. This was recognized by the Prime Minister in his address yesterday.

The absence of a unified national budget and uncoordinated public spending due to parallel state institutions, along with declining oil revenues, have contributed to persistent foreign-currency imbalances. This is causing mounting pressure on foreign reserves and the steady decline in value of the Libyan dinar. On 18 January, the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) devalued the dinar a second time in nine months, by roughly 14.7 per cent. While

intended to ease foreign-currency pressures and narrow the gap with the parallel market, the devaluation is impacting the purchasing power of vulnerable households.

These developments underscore that the current economic “model” is not sustainable.

Over the last two months through the Structured Dialogue, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund along with Libyan economic experts have provided sobering assessments of the country’s economic and financial situation.

The GNU Minister of Economy and Trade reported in January that in accordance to studies, roughly 30 per cent of Libyans live in poverty. Independent estimates paint an even starker picture. Additionally, according to WFP, the price of Libya’s Minimum Food Expenditure Basket increased by 24 percent from early 2024 to mid-2025. Poverty rates are expected to worsen absent political stabilization, with marginalized areas, such as the South bearing the heaviest burden.

In January Libya hosted the Energy and Economic Summit which led to new agreements with foreign companies in the hydrocarbon sector. On 11 February, the National Oil Corporation announced awards for five areas for oil and gas licenses. This suggests a degree of renewed investor interest, which is a positive development. While this presents opportunities for additional revenue generation in the medium term, it is unlikely that there will be any positive impact on revenue generation during this financial year and hence will not address Libya’s immediate fiscal and liquidity strains.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Governance weaknesses, fragmented oversight, and persistent leakages through smuggling, arbitrage networks, and illicit rents also continue to drain sovereign resources.

Investigations from the Attorney-General’s office indicate that the ‘fuel-for-crude’ mechanism which ended in 2025 drained the state budget by about \$1.5 billion annually, when compared to global market prices. Recurrent fuel shortages may create the temptation to return to this opaque barter system, but in light of the losses incurred by the previous arrangement and weak governance and weak financial oversight, the risk of a further drain of the country’s resources is evident.

Meanwhile, public spending remains rigid and largely unproductive. Currently, nearly 80 percent of the total state expenditures is on public salaries and subsidies, leaving little for investment in recovery and sustainable development.

The Unified Development Programme that was signed last year should be implemented, and as a first step towards a unified budget to prevent further economic deterioration and the consequential impact on the public.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Transnational criminal networks have flourished in Libya further undermining stability and security. They thrive amid fragmented security and law-enforcement institutions, porous borders, weak financial oversight and limited accountability.

A report issued in January this year by UNODC showed that Libya has become a major transit hub for drug trafficking. This is closely linked to other transnational organized crimes, including the trafficking of weapons and people. These illicit economies generate substantial revenues, intersect with corruption and informal financial flows, and inevitably undermine state authority, distort the economy and fuel instability.

A joint report issued on 17 February by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNSMIL on human trafficking highlights human rights violations of migrants and asylum seekers, and criminal transnational trafficking networks plaguing Libya. Most recently in December 2025 and January 2026, the bodies of 21 migrants, including women, were discovered in a mass grave in Ajdabiya, while more than 400 migrants, including women and children, were released from trafficking and detention sites in Ajdabiya, Tobruk and Kufrah, many bearing signs of torture. This is not unique. Previous reports indicate that such incidents are ongoing all over the country. I urge Libyan authorities in cooperation with international partners to take decisive action to dismantle these illicit networks and hold the perpetrators accountable.

Targeted killings also continue. On 3 February, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, who was subject to an ICC arrest warrant, was killed in the Zintan area under unclear circumstances. It has been announced that an investigation will take place and we call for a swift and transparent investigation process to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

I would like pay tribute to the dedicated services of General Mohamed Al-Haddad, Chief of General Staff of the Libyan Army and Lieutenant General Al-Fitouri Ghribil a member of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, and their three colleagues and crew who tragically lost their lives in a plane crash on 23 December. General Haddad was a steadfast advocate for the unification of Libya's military institutions and Lt. General Ghribil played a key role in securing the 2020 Ceasefire Agreement.

Despite financial challenges, UNSMIL has made noteworthy progress in implementing the Strategic Review recommendations. An integrated economic section is being operationalized to strengthen analytical capacity and advance priority economic reform efforts. Engagement on the Security track has been streamlined into one coherent Security Institutions Reform and Reunification Section. We are deploying additional staff into Eastern Libya and are also working to enhance our efficiencies as much as possible and this is within existing resources.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

In closing, economic conditions are deteriorating, and poverty and pressure on society is increasing. This situation, in addition to the fragile security landscape, should be a matter for concern as such conditions can lead to unexpected political and security challenges. Hence the need to work with Libyans through the roadmap to address the main cause of this dysfunction, which is a divided government, with limited coordination and unilateral actions, including significant uncoordinated and uncontrolled spending, and a system of subsidies that is being exploited for private gain. This combination of factors that I have referenced today, I have referenced today creates a situation that is undermining the territorial integrity and unity of the state and this will have implications for the country and the broader region.

The only way forward is a political solution that brings Libyans together.

It is important that our collective efforts, including bilateral initiatives, complement each other, and address critical economic and security risks. As we seek to engage all relevant actors to advance the roadmap, the support of this Council remains a prerequisite for success.