

**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for
Libya and Head of UNSMIL to the Security Council**

15 July 2015

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Council, Excellencies,

1. Since my last briefing to the Council, the situation in Libya continued to deteriorate amidst significant political fragmentation and violence. Too many Libyans continue to die in this fight among brothers and far too much destruction has taken place. The chaos on the ground has also given way to an expansion of extremist groups, including Daesh affiliates, into a number of areas across the country. This vacuum of authority has also been exploited by human smugglers and many refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are using the country as a launching area for an unprecedented surge in dangerous crossings of the Mediterranean.

Mr. President,

2. The Libyan people have been crying out for an end to the chaos. I am pleased to report today that this message has been heard by a number of courageous Libyan leaders who on 11 July, in Skhirat, Morocco, initialed a political agreement. This act signaled the adoption of a framework for further talks and has brought the country one step closer to ending the conflict and fulfilling the goals of the 2011 revolution.

3. While some members of the dialogue were not present, the message in Skhirat was one of reconciliation and encouragement for all Libyans to join together to end the unnecessary state of affairs and suffering. The dialogue committee of the Libyan House of Representatives, boycotting members from the House of Representatives and independent personalities, initialed along with a number of representatives of political parties and of municipalities from eastern and western Libya, who witnessed the ceremony that was attended by the Foreign Minister of Morocco.

4. The initialing of the agreement is only one, albeit important step forward in the process of addressing the political and institutional divisions. This initialing also marks a consensus among the parties on the text, with the clear understanding that it will not be further amended, without prejudice to the negotiations on its annexes.

5. This agreement sets out a comprehensive framework that will allow Libya to complete the transition that started in 2011. The text includes guiding principles and puts in place institutions and decision-making mechanisms to guide the transition until the adoption of a permanent constitution. This is intended to culminate in the creation of a modern, democratic state based on the principle of inclusion, the rule of law, separation of powers and respect for human rights.
6. I want to praise the Libyan participants for their achievement after months of tough negotiations. This is a Libyan agreement, developed by Libyan representatives through their relentless efforts and political determination. The multiple tracks of this process sought to involve all segments of Libyan society, from municipal representatives, to political parties, women and activists who have been engaged since January and gathered in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Switzerland, Morocco and at the European Union in Brussels.
7. As you know, the dialogue committee of the General National Congress decided not to initial this agreement, although they remain committed to the dialogue process. As I mentioned in Skhirat, I want to emphasise that the door remains open for them to join. I also wish to emphasise and acknowledge their important role in developing this text. This agreement is also the fruit of their hard work, and they should not be on the sidelines as this shared vision for a solution to the crisis continues to take shape.
8. The Libyan people have unequivocally expressed themselves in favor of peace and I am confident that the moderate voices will hear this call and will work constructively to end the conflict and bring Libya back on the path of stability, democratic transition and economic recovery.
9. Through this agreement, which has received strong support from the international community, important progress was made; but I shall not shy away from underscoring that crucial work remains to complete this initial and significant development. As we move on to the next phase of negotiations, regarding the formation of a government of national accord and the annexes to the agreement, I am confident that all remaining issues will be addressed.

10. The Libyan people deserve a strong government representing all Libyans, a government that the international community can and will support, to address the many challenges that the country is facing

Mr. President,

11. Allow me to express my earnest gratitude to Morocco and all of Libya's neighbors for their support and generosity for hosting the many sessions of this dialogue. Their support, and that of many other countries, such as Algeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, and as well as the League of Arab States and the European Union, has been crucial in building consensus throughout this process. I also wish to thank the African Union and the Forum of Libya's Neighboring Countries for their support and for having provided important opportunities for crucial discussions and exchanges.

Mr. President,

12. In western Libya, local ceasefires and reconciliation agreements have improved the security situation and allowed for an improvement in the humanitarian situation. A growing *rapprochement* between the cities of Misrata, Warshafana, Zawia and Zintan has been instrumental in facilitating these ceasefires.

13. In central Libya, Daesh-affiliated militants established full control over the city of Sirte and the surrounding coastal area. Misrata forces withdrew to the area of Abu Grain, some 75 km from Sirte, but continue to carry out airstrikes and block Daesh advances westward. The prevailing political and security divisions within the country have prevented the development of a coordinated policy to deal with the threat of Daesh affiliates.

14. In Benghazi, clashes between the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council and Operation Dignity continue with neither side making significant gains; the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council's early July offensive has not changed the situation on the ground. In Derna, hardline Islamists from the Derna Mujaheddin Shura Council ejected Daesh from the city in June.

15. UNSMIL has continued its efforts to convene the security track of the political dialogue. For that purpose the mission has organised a number of

meetings with armed groups in Libya and abroad, and has also intensified its regular bilateral contacts with leaders of armed formations from all sides. We expect to have meetings in the coming weeks in Egypt and other countries in the region same as we hope to convene the tribal track also in Egypt whose role has been equally very important

16. The role of security actors is an important part of the overall reconciliation effort, and will be instrumental in sustaining, supporting and implementing the political agreement. We have listened to their concerns and taken onboard their contributions, and it is my intention to convene all security actors before the final signing of the agreement.

17. With respect to the human rights situation in the country, violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law have continued to take place with impunity across Libya, with the civilian population bearing the brunt of the protracted fighting. In Benghazi, where fighting has once again escalated in recent days, the shelling of residential areas has led to the killings and injury of children and medical workers, as well to further destruction of civilian infrastructure. The two main hospitals still functioning, the Benghazi Medical Centre and the Jalaa Hospital - have been hit. Armed men wielding hand grenades reportedly entered the Medical Centre on 5 July threatening doctors and other staff. A number of civilians are believed to be trapped, including in Elblad and Sabri, as the warring parties fail to ensure their safe evacuation. More than half of the population in Benghazi is estimated to have left in a bid to escape the violence, and the ongoing fighting is impeding humanitarian relief operations.

18. The situation in Benghazi, birthplace of the revolution, remains of serious concern. We must refocus our efforts on this city in particular, to try and put an end to the fighting, which has caused so much destruction.

19. In western Libya, periodic outbursts of fighting including in residential areas led to the killing and injury of civilians including children in the cities of al-Zawiya and al-Ajilat. Armed groups have targeted individuals due to their family or perceived political affiliations. Thousands of Libyans remain illegally detained, including detainees who have been reportedly tortured. They include people held solely based on their family or tribal identity, many abducted for the purpose of exchanging them for fighters. Among them are also humanitarian workers.

20. I was encouraged by the recent release of prisoners in various cities over the past weeks. However, all those illegally detained should be released without further delay. I have urged all parties to do so before the end of Ramadan. Such measures are not only a matter of human rights: they would contribute significantly to facilitating the next phase of the political dialogue and to reconciliation.

21. I would be remiss if I did not mention the plight of foreign nationals, especially irregular migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, who remain vulnerable to killings, prolonged arbitrary detention, exploitation and sexual violence among other abuses. A number of non-Muslim migrant workers remain missing after having being abducted around Sirte in previous months. I fear for their safety after Daesh released videos in February and April 2015 depicting the brutal killings of some 50 Christians.

22. The lack of security impedes the resumption of the work of the judiciary, in Benghazi, Derna and Sirte. In Tripoli, the last session of the trial of Saif al-Islam Qadhafi, Abdullah al-Senussi, and 35 other former regime officials for violations committed during the 2011 conflict, took place on 20 May, and the verdict is expected on 28 July. Libya must overcome this dark chapter in its history by holding those responsible for serious crimes accountable, in accordance with international standards for due process and fair trial.

23. The overall humanitarian situation continues to cause concern, with the number of internally displaced doubled since last September and an underfunded humanitarian response. Awbari, Ghat and other areas of the South that require assistance remain largely inaccessible to the international humanitarian community as a result of deteriorating security conditions.

Mr. President,

24. Libya is at a critical stage, and it is my duty to seize this opportunity of addressing the Council to urge all parties in Libya to continue to engage constructively in the dialogue process. Spoilers should be held accountable, as they bear the responsibility of hindering the political agreement. Once again we must join together and send an unequivocal message that only through dialogue and political compromise, can a peaceful resolution of the conflict be achieved.

25. A peaceful transition will only succeed in Libya through a significant and coordinated effort in supporting a future Government of National Accord and to ensure that sufficient security is achieved in Tripoli and throughout the country to ensure that key functions of the public administration can resume. A Government of National Accord can be the only interlocutor through which the growing threat of Daesh and its affiliate groups can be effectively tackled. I am confident that the international community is ready to offer the needed support based on the priorities that the Libyans will identify. The UN stands ready to work with the Libyans to ensure national ownership in this process.

Thank you, Mr. President.