

## **DSRSG KOURY'S REMARKS ON LIBYA TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL - 19 JUNE 2024**

Mister President,

Members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you today on the situation in Libya. Let me first wish the Libyan people and all Muslims celebrating Eid Al Adha, a joyous occasion. May it bring respite for those suffering. It is the first Eid al-Adha since the Derna disaster, a tragic event that brings back memories of those who lost their lives in this terrible catastrophe. Yet, in the face of adversity, the Libyan people continue to demonstrate determination and unity.

Since assuming the role of Officer in Charge and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for political affairs, I began consultations to hear the concerns and priorities of the Libyan people, including their views on an inclusive Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process. To date, I have held meetings in the East and West of Libya. I met with political leaders and officials, academics, civil society organizations, women's groups, and military leaders. I also engaged representatives of cultural components, business people, as well as members of the diplomatic community. These consultations are ongoing, and while I plan to visit other areas of the country soon. I will now share with you some observations to date.

Overwhelmingly, citizens conveyed the need for a political agreement so that credible national elections can be held to restore legitimacy to all institutions. I discussed the need for an inclusive Libyan-led process to overcome the political impasse and support the Libyan people in achieving their aspirations for peace, stability, prosperity and democracy. Libyans have also shared their ideas on what a future political process should look like, including the role of the five key Libyan institutional actors, of the two Chambers, the need for a broad-based type of dialogue, a combination of the above, and other ideas.

Many have signaled the importance of a "pact" or an agreement that would, among other things, affirm the parties' respect for electoral outcomes. Similarly, some have emphasized the importance of including sufficient detail and mechanisms of enforcement in any future agreement to help ensure that the parties will adhere to its terms.

They also provided ideas on a roadmap on the substantive aspects, including whether to focus on issues of an interim government formation and steps to advance the holding of elections. Other citizens and officials expressed the need to address underlying conflict drivers. These to focus on issues relating to the economy, security structures, and the governance structure in Libya. The need for more decentralization, inclusiveness, fairness and transparency in governance was also widely expressed.

Many Libyans continue to express deep concerns about the de facto division of the country and parallel governing institutions. I share this concern. These developments undermine economic, security and stability, as well as Libya's sovereignty and territorial integrity, amidst concerns about the impact of geopolitical tensions playing out on Libya.

Mister President,

In addition to a national political solution, many Libyans have also been emphasizing the need for local elections, an important step in ensuring accountable service delivery and in restoring legitimacy to an important segment of Libyan institutions. On the 9th of June, the High National Elections Commission, or HNEC, opened voter registration for municipal elections in 60 municipalities across Libya. To date, over 36,000 people have registered at in-person registration centres and through the electronic SMS system. This is an important step, although voter registration, in particular female voter registration, remains quite low. HNEC, with the support of UNSMIL, is undertaking efforts to encourage greater registration.

Moreover, on the onset of the Eid, ten out of 12 in-person registration centres in the eastern municipalities have been prevented from opening. I urge the authorities to allow those centers to open and enable Libyans to register and exercise their political rights.

Mister President,

Conflict prevention and preserving stability remain at the forefront of most Libyans concerns. In April, there were brief though intense clashes in the densely populated Ain Zara district in Tripoli. Faced with the risk of further escalation in the capital, armed group leaders successfully engaged in dialogue to de-escalate the situation. In May, sporadic clashes between armed groups in al-Jmail and al-Zawiya and the car-bombing in Tripoli last week, coupled with reports of continued arms build-up in the country, are also a stark reminder of the fragility of Libya's security landscape. These dynamics underscore the importance of unified, reformed security sector institutions and the importance of local mediation efforts.

While no violation of the Ceasefire Agreement was recorded during the reporting period, progress on the withdrawal of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries remains stalled. Among other factors, the security situation in several neighboring countries has disrupted contact initiated by the 5+5 Committee with the liaison committees established by these nations to deal with the issues.

Greater efforts are also needed by Libyan authorities to address the presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Twelve children were injured in Awbari in southern Libya and Tripoli in April and May alone.

Mister President,

For many Libyans, the economic situation is difficult, with families and small businesses facing high prices, less purchasing power, or limited access to cash. Libyan wealth is not translating into equitable distribution of resources, access to services and opportunities for all people, particularly youth and women. Unifying the national budget is an absolute necessity, and I urge all stakeholders to resolve remaining differences to ensure its swift adoption and agree on its transparent and accountable implementation.

On human rights, I remain deeply concerned by the reports of violations throughout the country, particularly the repetitive pattern of abduction or arbitrary arrest and detention of Libyans. On 17 May, House of Representatives member Ibrahim al-Darsi disappeared in Benghazi. On 19 April, political activist Siraj Dughman died under unclear circumstances while in detention in Benghazi. House of Representative Member Hassan al-Ferjani Jaballa, among others, remains arbitrarily detained in Tripoli. The Mission continues to call on transparent and independent investigations into the disappearances and deaths of men and women in custody, and for those arbitrarily detained to be released.

Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers also continue to experience serious human rights violations. A comprehensive legal and policy framework is needed to address their situation and manage migration in line with international principles.

In light of the horrific war in Sudan and its impact on Libya, on 28 May, UN agencies and humanitarian partners launched in coordination with Libyan authorities the 2024 Response Plan for Sudanese Refugees in Libya. The Plan provides for \$43.8 million dollars to meet the needs of a projected population of 195,000 people including Sudanese refugees and host communities.

Mister President,

These developments illustrate the fragility of the situation and the multiple needs and challenges the Libyan people face. UNSMIL and the UN family continues to support a multi-pronged approach to address these issues of concern, including advancing work on economic reform, security, and human rights priorities, along with the political efforts.

In an encouraging step, the co-chairs of the security working group are continuing its discussions among themselves and with the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in preparation for the next security working group meeting in Libya. The co-chairs of the economic working group are also discussing an agenda for resuming its work in support of Libyan efforts. The International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights group is also engaged in advocacy to support national efforts to address arbitrary detention and efforts towards rights-based national reconciliation.

It is critical to advance national reconciliation and transitional justice, and I commend the work of the Presidential Council and the House of Representatives Justice and Reconciliation Committee for agreeing on one draft law that upholds victims' rights and adheres to international standards. I call on all relevant bodies to engage in the same

spirit so that this vital legislation can be adopted based on consensus. The Mission, together with the African Union, is ready to continue providing facilitation and technical advice.

UNSMIL also continues to support Libyan efforts for greater empowerment of youth. Libyan youth have expressed their desire for an active role in developing solutions for their communities and in shaping their country's future. In line with Security Council Resolution 2250 (2013) on Youth, Peace and Security, UNSMIL launched in May its new youth engagement strategy, which focuses on training, advocacy, and networking, aiming to empower young people.

In June, the first annual Ra'idat training programme for 30 young women across Libya, was successfully completed. This program was done in cooperation with the UN family, HNEC and Ministry of Education. A second training cohort will be launched in September.

Members of the Security Council,

In closing, there is consensus among Libyan people about the need to advance the political process. The status quo is not sustainable. While institutional and political divisions keep deepening, ordinary Libyans long for peace, stability, prosperity and reconciliation. Resolute and united action to advance a political process is needed by Libyans with the support of the international community. Thank you