

**Statement of SRSB Martin Kobler to the Security Council**

**8 February 2017**

**“2017: The Year of Decisions”**

Mr President, Distinguished members of the Council,

Firstly, I would like to congratulate Ukraine for presiding over the council this month.

Mr President,

More than one year has passed since the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement in Skhirat.

And that year, 2016, was spent seeking to implement the Agreement and to begin to re-establish state authority all across Libya.

While there was not nearly enough progress, some important gains were made.

The Presidency Council and Libyan economic institutions continue to work together on disbursing the funds of the 2017 budget. The budget will enable state institutions to deliver much needed basic services.

Oil production has increased to over 700,000 barrels per day and this provides the Libyan state with much needed revenue.

On the security front, the Islamic State, which one year ago was expanding its territory in Libya, now controls none. It still poses a threat, however.

I once again pay respect to those who lost their lives fighting against terrorism on the battlefields in Sirte, Benghazi and elsewhere.

Mr President,

Despite these gains, Libyans are not yet in a position to address the root causes of divisions. 2017 must be a year of decisions:

Decisions on possible limited amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement, which enable the House of Representatives to endorse the Government of National Accord.

Decisions on how to form a strong united army and police force. Only then can armed groups be effectively demobilized.

Decisions on how best to utilize the revenues from oil and gas exports for the benefit of all Libyans and end the dire humanitarian situation in the country.

Mr President,

I would like to update you on the items I put in front of you in my last briefing.

First, on current political issues:

The past two months brought visible progress and converging visions from the east, south and west on possible amendments of the Libyan Political Agreement.

Most agree on the following principles:

- First, the Libyan Political Agreement must remain the framework of the political process.

- Second, solutions must be found through inclusive dialogue – not resolved through violence.
- Third, possible amendments to the Political Agreement should be endorsed by the House of Representatives as a package, followed by a constitutional amendment and the endorsement of the Government of National Accord.
- And last, the discussions should take place under the umbrella of the United Nations. However, the political process must be Libyan-led and Libyan-owned. Only Libyans can take decisions on the future of Libya.

In many meetings, both inside and outside the country, possible amendments were discussed. In particular:

- The question of the Supreme Commandership of the Libyan army;
- The chain of command of the army; in particular the role of General Haftar; and
- The future composition and role of the Presidency Council.

I am confident that a format will be found in the next weeks within which these questions can be decided upon and recommendations can be put forth for approval to the relevant institutions.

In January, informal consultations of members of the Libyan Political Dialogue in Tunisia, and the 13th of December Cairo Communiqué, were important milestones in identifying contentious issues.

However, no individual and no group can decide on the way forward alone. It must be a collective effort.

All Libyan institutions need to uphold their responsibilities and obligations to implement the Agreement. Together, they can advance the process to endorse a Government. Only by doing this they can address the needs of the Libyan citizens.

In this regard, I urge the House of Representatives to conclude its deliberation and nominate the delegation for further discussions.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of neighbouring states and regional organisations, who continue to contribute on fostering consensus.

I attended the Neighbouring States Conference in Cairo on 21st of January and the African Union High Level Committee meeting in Brazzaville under President Sassou Nguesso on 27th of January. I am impressed by the coherence of the approach of both Neighbouring States and the African Union.

The Troika formed between the African Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations has contributed to improving coordination and building trust.

We agreed in a meeting in Cairo on 21st of January to associate the European Union with this important forum.

These last weeks have been truly best practice effort on how to converge the views between Libyans on one side and the African Union, League of Arab States, the European Union and the neighbouring countries on the other side.

I come to my second point, no political process can continue without addressing the issue of armed groups and proliferation of weapons. While some of these groups are nominally controlled by state institutions, too many are driven by narrow interests.

The on-going formation of the Presidential Guard is a step in the right direction.

However, the Presidential Guard is no substitute for a unified Libyan army. It is a transitional measure.

The Presidential Guard must be integrated once a consensus on the command structure of a future united Libyan army is reached.

National security institutions, including the police, must be empowered and developed. There are no alternatives. Without strong army and police, armed groups cannot be demobilized.

The citizens of Libya deserve security and an end to the rampant crime and lawlessness.

Third, while The Islamic State

no longer controls territory, the fight against terrorism is far from finished.

The country's borders remain porous. Terrorists, human and weapons traffickers and criminal gangs continue to exploit the security vacuum. Libya's neighbours are rightly concerned that this will affect their own security.

I welcome the efforts by regional organizations, including the African Union and European Union to assist regional states in improving their capacities and coordination.

Regional solutions are required to effectively and comprehensively address the security threats.

Now is the time to consolidate the hard-won victories in the fight against terrorism. I am pleased by the efforts to create and deliver post-liberation plans in Sirte and Benghazi. I will continue to work with the Presidency Council and the international community to meet the humanitarian needs, stabilisation, reconstruction and recovery.

Fourth, recent months have seen positive developments on Libya's economic performance.

Libya is a wealthy country with abundant natural resources. However, despite its wealth, living conditions and public services have deteriorated over the past years.

Institutional frailty, poor financial management and corruption, among other factors, are taking their toll.

Now, Libya has a unified budget. The Presidency Council and the Central Bank agreed on a 2017 budget framework of 37.5 billion Libyan Dinars.

This is an opportunity to address much needed service delivery.

And some sectors must be prioritized.

Health services are inadequate. Visiting a children's hospital in Tripoli, I saw first-hand the implications of poor management and insufficient financing. With the hospital lacking basic supplies and medicines, people were left to find their own means to relieve the suffering of their loved-ones.

The Presidency Council and the Government must quickly improve the poor service delivery and tackle outstanding economic challenges.

Fifth, human rights, the rule of law and irregular migration must be addressed seriously and comprehensively.

The rule of law continues to be undermined by armed groups that abduct, mistreat and commit other human rights abuses with impunity. This must end.

I would like to make a special note on the plight of the migrants. Libya's wealth has long made it attractive for economic migrants. Their labour continues to contribute to the development of the country.

However, migrants are extremely vulnerable. Those held in detention have no legal recourse and suffer appalling conditions. Many have died.

UNSMIL and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published a report on the 13th of December detailing the disastrous situation and ill-treatment in detention centres. We have submitted concrete recommendations to the Libyan authorities and the international community.

While fully understanding the concerns of the neighbouring states and regions, all actions must respect international humanitarian law and the dignity of migrants.

I am working together with the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UNHCR to address these problems.

These efforts include saving lives at sea, combatting human trafficking, and training the Libyan Coast Guard. I would also like to reiterate my continued support to the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Human trafficking may constitute a crime against humanity and it could be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court.

Mr President,

Beyond institutional and political agreements, a national reconciliation process is long overdue.

A process is needed to heal the wounds of years of conflict and oppression.

In January, we held a workshop in Malta with Libyan experts and activists, to establish a roadmap for national reconciliation for Libya.

We need to find ways to support community reconciliation, and make it resonate at a national level.

We will establish more channels of communication between traditional leaders, elders and youth, and also with women, who too often remain at the margins of these processes.

Mr President,

Distinguished members of the Council,

I am encouraged by the renewed Libyan efforts and regional activity, particularly among the neighbours, to overcome the political deadlock.

We are beginning to see an emerging consensus among parties.

2017 must be a year of decisions and political breakthrough.

I would like to thank the Security Council for its cohesive support.

There is no alternative to a sustainable Libyan-owned political solution.

And the Libyan Political Agreement still provides a viable framework for resolving differences and restoring the democratic transition.

I am hopeful that with bold decisions and actions we will witness a political breakthrough that can place Libya back on the path of peace, prosperity and stability.

The people of Libya deserve it.

Thank you very much Mr President.