

SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily's Remarks to the Security Council Meeting on Libya - 15 November 2022

(As Delivered)

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Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on recent developments in Libya.

Since my last briefing to this Council on 24 October, I have pursued my consultations with Libyan stakeholders from all regions of the country, which I had initiated upon arriving in Tripoli in mid-October. During the reporting period, I engaged repeatedly with members of the Presidential Council, the High Council of State, and other key actors in the political, economic and security spheres, recalling that it was their moral and political responsibility to work actively towards bringing the country back to peace and stability through a Libyan Libyan solution to the crisis.

I also encouraged them to engage in dialogue with each other inside Libya, which would send a clear message to the population that they are serious about resolving their differences. It would also send a clear message to the international community that Libyans from all walks of life are ready to take their future into their own hands. I made it clear that the United Nations and UNSMIL stood ready to actively support these meetings, and that I was ready to provide them with my good offices.

Mr. President,

On 5 November in Tripoli, at the invitation of the Government, I attended a simulation exercise on securing national elections. While I welcome such a plan as encouraging, the holding of elections requires more sustained efforts in all areas, by all actors and in all regions. For its part, UNSMIL continues to provide technical assistance to the High National Elections Commission to maintain readiness for elections once all political, legal and security conditions are met.

Yesterday, I led a joint mission to Sebha, in Libya's south, with my Deputy and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator during which I had the opportunity to meet local officials, tribal leaders, academics and civil society organisations. This visit follows earlier visits I conducted to the East and West of the country, which I reported on previously.

Since my briefing I also started to engage with representatives of the international community on the ground, to hear their views and concerns on the way forward in Libya. In Tripoli, I

consulted with a wide range of regional and international representatives to exchange views and compare notes. On the margins of the Summit of the League of Arab States in Algiers as a member of the Secretary General's delegation from 31 October to 1 November, I had the opportunity to meet a several high-level officials from concerned countries and regions. In its outcome document, the Summit called for an ending to the Libyan crisis through a Libyan-led solution that achieves the popular aspiration for elections as soon as possible, which I welcome. In the coming days, I intend to follow up with visits to some of the main external actors in the region.

There appears to be broad agreement that Libya's institutions are facing a serious legitimacy crisis, and that restoring that legitimacy across the board is of paramount importance. There is also consensus around the need to coordinate bilateral and multilateral diplomatic initiatives and to coalesce behind the efforts of the United Nations. This Council's unanimous support in amplifying these messages with all interested parties will be key if we want to move forward.

Mr. President,

The popular aspiration for peace, stability and legitimate institutions is clear from my interaction with Libyans. However, there is an increasingly recognition that some institutional players are actively hindering progress towards elections. The genuine political will of these actors needs to be tested against reality, as we approach December 24th, the first anniversary of the postponement of elections and the 7th anniversary of the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA).

Further prolonging the interim period will make the country even more vulnerable to political, economic and security instability, and could put the country at risk of partition. We must therefore join hands in encouraging Libyan leaders to work with resolve towards the holding of elections as soon as possible. I urge this Council to send an unequivocal message to obstructionists that their actions will not remain without consequences.

Mr. President,

I am pleased to report some progress on the security track. On 27 October in Sirte, I convened a meeting of the 5+5 JMC which brought the 5+5 JMC activities back on track. During this first joint meeting in many months, the JMC agreed to establish a sub-committee for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of armed groups, which is expected to focus on the mapping and classification of the armed groups in Libya, as a key pre-DDR step.

Meanwhile, the ceasefire continues to hold, despite the continued use of escalatory rhetoric and the build-up of forces on both sides. All parties must refrain from any steps that could undermine the ceasefire. In this regard, I would like to urge this Council to impress upon all actors that recourse to violence and intimidation will not be accepted and that there is no military solution to the Libya crisis. Delaying tactics to postpone the elections indefinitely will only deepen the crisis.

I am concerned with the lack of progress in the implementation of the JMC's action plan on the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters, and foreign forces. Renewed focus by the Libyan parties on kickstarting the withdrawal process in line with the action plan is required.

Pending necessary approval by the Libyan authorities for their deployment to Sirte, UNSMIL ceasefire monitors continue to operate from Tripoli. They have not reported any ceasefire violations during the reporting period.

Mr. President,

On the economic front, the lack of accountability, transparency, and equity in the allocation of resources remains a key cause of tensions. I therefore welcome the Council's emphasis, in Resolution 2656 (2022), on the importance of establishing a Libyan-led mechanism that brings together stakeholders from across the country to set spending priorities and ensure that oil and gas revenues are managed in a transparent and equitable manner, with effective Libyan oversight.

On 9 November, the co-chairs of the Economic Working Group resumed consultations and agreed on the urgency to support related initiatives by Libyan institutions and assist them in harmonising proposals for temporary mechanisms until an elected Government is in place or a national budget is agreed.

Mr. President,

The human rights situation in Libya remains alarming. UNSMIL continued to document enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and ill-treatment in detention facilities across the country.

Since October, dozens of detainees in Mitiga prison have reportedly started a hunger strike to protest against their conditions of detention. Authorities have refused to issue "detention certificates" preventing families from receiving allowances and salaries of their detained relatives.

Human rights violations against migrants and asylum seekers continue with impunity. I reiterate the urgent need to find rights-based alternatives to detention. Migrants and refugees crossing the Central Mediterranean from Libya continue to be intercepted by Libyan authorities, disembarked in Libya, and sent to detention centres where they suffer serious human rights abuses. We reiterate our call on Libyan authorities and neighbouring countries to uphold international standards related to safe search and rescue practices and ensure that intercepted persons are disembarked in a place of safety.

On the humanitarian front, I am pleased to report a continuing 57% decrease in the number of internally displaced persons in Libya, since 2020, which now stands at 134,787. Efforts by Libyan authorities to find durable solutions for all those who remain internally displaced should be accelerated.

Mr. President,

Women remain concerned with their ability to actively engage in the awaited elections both as voters and candidates. Online violence against women has been on the rise in the country. UNSMIL is supporting women's groups in leading a unified campaign against this form of violence. I call for continued and consistent efforts to improve women's rights and to incorporate such measures in the laws of the land. I am glad to note the active and positive participation of women and young people in my interactions with Libyans at the grassroots levels.

Mr. President,

In the next weeks and months, UNSMIL will endeavour to facilitate a conversation between the key institutional players in Libya as a step towards overcoming their differences and moving forward towards the organisation of free and fair elections. We will also strengthen our engagement with relevant segments of the general citizenry as their legitimate voices need to be heard. Their voices will be paramount on the way out of this crisis.

The accompanying support, and pressure, from this Council in particular, and the international community at large, speaking with a united voice, under the coordination of the United Nations is likely to reap positive results.

I thank you for your attention.