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# Security Council

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## United Nations Support Mission in Libya

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2510 \(2020\)](#), [2542 \(2020\)](#), [2570 \(2021\)](#), [2647 \(2022\)](#) and [2656 \(2022\)](#), covers political, security and economic developments in Libya. It provides an overview of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the country and the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) since the issuance of the previous report ([S/2023/248](#)) on 5 April 2023.

#### II. Political and security-related developments

2. During the reporting period, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of UNSMIL continued to engage with Libyan actors to identify a consensual pathway towards the holding of inclusive presidential and legislative elections, in line with his elections-enabling initiative announced in February 2023.

3. On 6 June, the House of Representatives and High State Council joint committee, referred to as the “6+6” committee, which was established following the adoption of constitutional amendment No. 13 to finalize the constitutional and legislative framework for holding elections, concluded its work in Bouznika, Morocco. Throughout the process, UNSMIL provided electoral, constitutional and gender expertise to the 12 members of the joint committee. The draft laws on the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections were announced on the same day.

4. On 7 June, UNSMIL issued a statement in which it took note of the outcome of the work of the 6+6 committee. The Mission underlined the need for greater buy-in and support from a broad range of Libyan institutions and stakeholders. Meanwhile, the High National Elections Commission called for the draft laws mentioned in the Bouznika agreement to be amended before promulgation by the House of Representatives. On 25 July, the House of Representatives approved the 6+6 committee’s draft electoral laws and a road map that paves the way for the selection of a new interim government, including a new prime minister, mandated to oversee the electoral process. The House of Representatives referred the documents to the High State Council for a vote.

5. On 16 May, during a session chaired by the First Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, members voted to relieve the Prime Minister-designate nominated



by the House of Representatives, Fathi Bashagha, of his functions and to launch an investigation into his performance. Oussama Hamad, then serving as the Minister of Finance in the “government” led by Mr. Bashagha, was designated as caretaker to replace Mr. Bashagha. Subsequently, on 30 May, the Second Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hadi al-Saghir, submitted his resignation, citing difficulties in carrying out his duties with the means at his disposal. On the same day, the House of Representatives appointed Musbah Douma as the new Second Deputy Speaker by acclamation.

6. On 24 June, Mr. Hamad threatened to seize control of revenues from hydrocarbon sales and shut down oil and gas production in response to the alleged diversion of funds and non-delivery of services by the Government of National Unity. On 3 July, General Khalifa Haftar warned of consequences should a mechanism for the equitable distribution of public revenues not be established.

7. On 6 July, the Presidential Council established a high committee on financial oversight, a mechanism comprising representatives of the Presidential Council, the House of Representatives, the High State Council, the Government of National Unity, the Libyan National Army, the Central Bank of Libya, the National Audit Bureau, the Administrative Control Authority and the National Oil Corporation, to ensure transparency in public spending and the fair distribution of resources. On 20 July, the committee held its first meeting in Sirte. The President of the Presidential Council, Mohamed Younis Menfi, called for the safeguarding of public funds to create a suitable environment for elections to be held and to ensure the fair distribution of resources during the transitional period. A second meeting was held, in Tripoli, on 26 July.

8. On 13 July, the Fil and Shararah oilfields were closed temporarily by tribes in protest against the arbitrary detention of the former Minister of Finance, Faraj Boumtari, on 11 July. On 15 July, Mr. Boumtari was released and the oilfields resumed production.

9. The overall security situation in Tripoli and the western region remained tense, although no violations of the ceasefire agreement were reported. Starting in May, the Government of National Unity launched several operations allegedly targeting illicit trafficking in drugs, arms, fuel and migrants in cities along the western coastal road, mainly in Zawiyah and surrounding areas, which carried a risk of escalation. Sporadic clashes between major armed groups were also reported in Tripoli during the reporting period.

10. While the situation in eastern Libya remained relatively stable, the situation in southern Libya was negatively affected by organized crime and clashes between criminal networks and the Libyan National Army. The outbreak of the conflict in the Sudan, on 15 April, raised concerns over a potential spillover into Libya. While there has not been any large-scale displacement of people into Libya, the United Nations country team has contingency plans in place should the situation deteriorate at the southern border of Libya.

## **A. Implementation of the intra-Libyan dialogue tracks**

11. From 21 May to 5 June, at the request of the 6+6 committee, UNSMIL deployed a team to Bouznika, Morocco, to provide electoral, constitutional and gender expertise during talks aimed at finalizing the constitutional and legislative framework for presidential and parliamentary elections.

12. On 6 June, the 6+6 committee announced that it had finalized the draft laws on presidential and parliamentary elections. On 7 June, UNSMIL issued a statement in

which it took note of the outcome of the work of the 6+6 committee and underscored the need for greater buy-in from Libyan institutions and stakeholders. On 9 June, the 6+6 committee indicated that it would submit the outcome of its work to the House of Representatives in accordance with constitutional amendment No. 13.

13. On 12 June, the High National Elections Commission conveyed in writing to the two chambers a list of technical shortcomings and inconsistencies to be addressed in the draft laws before they could be promulgated. In particular, it highlighted implementation challenges related to holding three elections in one day, namely the presidential elections and the elections to the House of Representatives and the Senate, claiming that it could lead to “chaos and electoral fraud”.

14. In early July, a draft road map on the forming of a new interim government was circulated in the House of Representatives and High State Council. On 11 July, 34 of the 56 members present during a session of the High State Council reportedly voted to endorse the draft road map. A group of High State Council members questioned the validity of the vote.

15. On 26 July, UNSMIL warned against unilateral initiatives being taken and stated that the Special Representative was intensifying his engagement with major stakeholders to ensure that the draft laws could be implemented and enable successful elections to be held without delay. In response, the House of Representatives spokesperson rejected the allegation that the decision of the House had launched the process for nominating candidates for Prime Minister and stressed that the road map had been referred to the High State Council for its endorsement only.

16. In accordance with his elections-enabling initiative, the Special Representative intensified his good offices, with the aim of convening major stakeholders or their trusted representatives to reach a final settlement on the most contentious issues contained in those draft electoral laws through an inclusive political agreement. Those issues included proposals with regard to the eligibility of dual nationals to run in the presidential elections; the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections sequentially, one after the other; making the holding of parliamentary elections dependent on the success of the presidential elections; and establishing a new interim executive before holding elections.

17. On the security track, UNSMIL continued to support the efforts of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the implementation of the 2020 ceasefire agreement. On 7 April, the Special Representative chaired a meeting, in Benghazi, bringing together, for the first time, the Commission and leaders of armed groups from eastern, western and southern Libya. The meeting built on similar engagements, held in Tripoli and Tunis in March, aimed at enhancing confidence among military and security leaders in support of the political process and creating a security environment conducive to the holding of free and fair elections. On 9 April, UNSMIL facilitated a meeting, in Sabha, of security and military actors operating in the southern region. The meeting concluded with participants committing to creating a security environment conducive to peaceful elections in Libya. In a public statement, they also committed to rejecting fighting and all forms of violence in Libya, addressing the challenges facing internally displaced persons and supporting national reconciliation. On 17 and 18 July, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and two Chiefs of Staff met in Paris.

18. On the economic track, on 6 July, the Presidential Council established a high committee on financial oversight, with a view to improving transparent, equitable and accountable resource management during the transitional period. The technical-level collaboration and coordination that began in December 2022 between the western and eastern branches of the Central Bank of Libya continued. However, progress towards unifying the two branches of the Central Bank, as recommended by the United

Nations-facilitated international audit in 2021, remained impeded by the divisions prevailing in the country.

## **B. International Follow-up Committee on Libya of the Berlin process**

19. The International Follow-up Committee on Libya of the Berlin process and its working groups continued to serve as the overall framework for international support for the intra-Libyan dialogue tracks.

20. On 22 May, the Co-Chairs of the working group on international humanitarian law and human rights – namely Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Switzerland and the United Nations – held a high-level plenary session with the Presidential Council, in Tripoli, which was focused on making human rights the central element of the political and national reconciliation process in Libya. The Presidential Council and the working group signed a declaration of intent on further strengthening collaboration and establishing a regular and inclusive dialogue to advance human rights in Libya.

21. On 24 May, a plenary meeting of the security working group was held in hybrid format. The meeting was co-chaired by Türkiye and the United Nations and attended by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and members of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya. The Commission provided updates on its efforts to engage with security actors across Libya so as to enable a secure environment for elections; the implementation of its action plan for the withdrawal of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya; the possible impact of the conflict in the Sudan on the border security of Libya; and the issue of irregular migration.

22. On 25 July, a plenary session of the security working group was held in Benghazi. The 5+5 Joint Military Commission and members of the working group took stock of the progress made to implement the ceasefire agreement of October 2020, including with regard to the withdrawal of foreign mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces from Libyan territory and the establishment of a joint military force.

## **C. International and regional engagement**

23. The Special Representative continued his engagement with regional and international actors to mobilize support towards Libyan-led and Libyan-owned solutions to the current political stalemate. On 30 April, the Special Representative met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, in Riyadh. Discussions centred on measures required to support the unity of Libyan institutions and to achieve a Libyan-owned pathway towards the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections. On 14 June, the Special Representative attended a regional consultative forum on the development of the Sahel, held in Niamey and organized by the High-level Independent Panel on Security and Development in the Sahel. He highlighted the interconnectedness of the crisis in Libya and the wider region and emphasized the need for strong regional coordination. He also continued to actively engage the diplomatic community in Libya, including by giving a briefing to members of the diplomatic community from African countries. On the margins of the meeting of the security working group, held in Benghazi on 25 July, the Special Representative also met with the ambassadors of Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Tunisia and Türkiye.

24. On 19 May, the thirty-second regular session of the Council of the League of Arab States was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Libya was represented by the President

of the Presidential Council. In its final resolutions, the League expressed support for United Nations efforts to support Libyans in finding a comprehensive political settlement, encouraged the House of Representatives and High State Council to swiftly finalize the electoral laws and expressed full support for the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission. It also stressed the importance of a Libyan-Libyan solution and reiterated support for the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections in order to end the political deadlock.

25. On 19 and 20 July, the Congo, in its capacity as chair of the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya, hosted a meeting of the African Union and the Libyan Presidential Council, in Brazzaville, with the aim of establishing a preparatory committee for a national conference on reconciliation. The Special Representative called for efforts towards advancing the reconciliation process and emphasized the need for transparent and inclusive elections.

#### **D. Situation in the western region**

26. During the reporting period, the security situation along the western coastal road deteriorated. On 26 April, civil unrest erupted in Zawiyah, triggered by a video in which a young man was shown being subjected to torture by a criminal gang. In protest, a youth-led movement in Zawiyah blocked access to critical infrastructure and threatened civil disobedience if the Government of National Unity failed to take decisive action against local networks involved in illicit economic activities.

27. On 29 April, following consultations between local community representatives and the Chief of General Staff of the Libyan Army, Mohammed al-Haddad, a newly established “committee of 15”, composed of elders, notables and security actors, developed a security plan for the city of Zawiyah, which included the reopening of the Zawiyah Security Directorate and the deployment of a joint force at strategic locations along the western coastal road and in the city itself.

28. Between 25 May and mid-July, the Government of National Unity carried out an estimated 25 to 30 air raids, using uncrewed aerial vehicles, in Zawiyah and the neighbouring towns of Zuwarah, Ujaylat and Surman, reportedly targeting criminal activities such as illicit trafficking in drugs, arms, fuel and humans. On 29 May, the Ministry of Defence reported that the air raids had resulted in the destruction of seven boats intended to be used for trafficking in persons, six warehouses for trafficking in drugs, weapons and equipment used by “criminal gangs” and nine tanks for fuel smuggling. As a result of the air raids, seven civilians, including a child, were reportedly injured and a medical clinic destroyed. Some eastern leaders described the raids as politically motivated, arguing that they only targeted groups that were not aligned with the Prime Minister, Mr. Abdulhamid Al Dabiba.

29. A fragile calm prevailed in Tripoli, occasionally interrupted by clashes between major armed groups. On 28 May, clashes erupted in densely populated areas following the alleged arrest of a member of the 444th Brigade by the Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism. On 6 June, the Prime Minister issued a decree merging several Tripoli-based armed groups under his command and control as the National Agency for Support Forces. The Presidential Council, along with other institutions and stakeholders, expressed opposition to the decree.

#### **E. Situation in the eastern region**

30. From 31 May to 3 June, the Libyan National Army launched a joint security operation targeting human trafficking and drug smuggling networks in the wider

Tubruq area, near the border between Libya and Egypt. Operations were also targeted at irregular migrants, including those in transit or residing in Libya. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that 14,500 migrants, most of them Egyptians, had been forcibly expelled to Egypt and around 400 non-Egyptian nationals had been taken to detention centres in eastern Libya.

## **F. Situation in the southern region**

31. The outbreak of hostilities in the Sudan raised concern about a possible spillover into Libya, including a possible influx of refugees and cross-border movements of Sudanese armed elements. In response, the Libyan National Army General Command closed the country's borders with Chad and the Sudan and ordered the deployment of reinforcements in the south-east and south-west border areas. On 27 April, in anticipation of a potential influx of refugees, an emergency room was established in Kufrah municipality, bringing together security actors to support the coordination of aid. Allegations that the Libyan National Army was reportedly providing support to the Rapid Support Forces were denied by both parties.

32. The Libyan National Army continued its efforts to assert control over vital infrastructure, such as oil facilities, water pumps and basins of the Great Man-Made River, and gold and mineral mining areas in the central and southern regions. On 7 May, a Libyan National Army delegation led by Saddam Haftar, the son of General Haftar, conducted a tour of the southern region, which was described by the media office of the Libyan National Army General Command as an inspection visit to identify challenges and ways forward to secure the oilfields.

## **G. Violent extremist organizations**

33. The porosity of the southern borders, combined with the inability of the authorities to effectively control remote areas of the southern region, continue to make the country a haven for criminal networks and violent extremist organizations. Concerns remain that the crisis in the Sudan and instability in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel may further enable the operations of those groups in Libya.

## **H. Economic situation**

34. Oil production in Libya was sustained at around 1.2 million barrels per day. The National Oil Corporation engaged with international investors with the objective of securing investments in production capacity that would enable an increase in oil production to 2 million barrels per day and raise gas production from 2.6 billion to 4 billion cubic feet per day over the next three to five years, in accordance with the Corporation's operational and development plan for the period 2023 to 2027 and as approved by the Supreme Energy Council of Libya on 29 March.

35. Growth in real gross domestic product is projected to be 17.9 per cent in 2023, owing mainly to a potential increase in oil production to 1.4 million barrels per day and growth in the non-hydrocarbon sector. Unemployment in Libya remains at 20 per cent, with youth unemployment at 50 per cent.

36. On 24 May, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund concluded its Article IV consultation with Libya. In a press release, the Board stated that the economy of Libya was heavily reliant on oil and gas production. The Board encouraged the authorities of Libya to enhance transparency, strengthen institutions

and address corruption in order to promote stronger, more inclusive private sector-led growth and diversification away from hydrocarbons.

37. On 15 June, the Speaker of the House of Representatives announced the establishment of a committee tasked with developing a new concept note on restructuring the State's general budget, including with regard to the fair distribution of revenues from the sale of natural resources. The committee is to be chaired by the Head of the National Oil Corporation. In response, the Prime Minister issued a decree establishing an oversight committee under the Government of National Unity.

### **III. Other activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya**

#### **A. Electoral support**

38. UNSMIL and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued to support the High National Elections Commission in enhancing its technical readiness to organize elections once an agreement on the legal framework has been reached. The Commission is estimated to require approximately 170 days following the finalization of the electoral laws to organize the first round of elections.

39. On 2 May, the Board of Commissioners of the High National Elections Commission sent a letter to the Government of National Unity requesting 170 million Libyan dinars (equivalent to \$35 million) for the upcoming electoral process. The amount included 145 million Libyan dinars (\$30 million) for the operational budget to hold two rounds of parliamentary and presidential elections simultaneously and 25 million Libyan dinars (\$5 million) for the procurement of electronic voter identification devices. On 14 May, the President of the Presidential Council, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance visited the Commission to discuss electoral preparations and expressed their support for the proposed budget.

40. On 21 and 22 May, the High National Elections Commission organized a regional conference, in Tripoli, on enhancing the participation of women in elections. The Minister of Women's Affairs, Houria al-Turman, took part in the event, alongside representatives of the national and regional electoral authorities of 12 Arab countries. The conference was part of the ongoing support provided to the Commission by UNSMIL, UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to increase the participation of women in all phases of the electoral cycle. During the conference, the Commission shared preliminary results from the "eMonitor plus" platform, through which online violence against women in the context of elections is monitored. Participants discussed the potential adoption of an electoral system based on proportional representation, with closed lists and a quota of seats for women in the parliament. They also highlighted the need to advocate with national authorities for the adoption of gender-sensitive legislation, the inclusion of women in legislative drafting committees and the establishment of a women's support unit in all electoral management bodies.

41. Following a request from the Prime Minister for additional United Nations technical assistance on elections, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, in cooperation with UNDP, deployed an electoral technical mission to Libya, from 1 to 8 June.

42. With regard to local elections, UNDP provided technical assistance to the Central Committee for Local Elections on drafting training manuals, guidelines and operational plans and developed a logistics and distribution plan for electoral materials. In addition, UNDP supported engagement between the Central Committee

and civil society organizations and other electoral stakeholders by raising public awareness through videos and media campaigns. On 27 May, local elections were held in Zuwarah and Daraj municipalities.

43. On 30 May, the House of Representatives issued a statement announcing its intention to amend relevant laws to transfer the duties associated with implementing local elections from the Central Committee for Local Elections to the High National Elections Commission. The Commission is redefining its structure so as to be able to respond to the new demand. In the meantime, local elections in the west of the country continued to be implemented by the Central Committee and by a parallel authority in eastern Libya.

## **B. Human rights, transitional justice and the rule of law**

44. Restrictions on civic space and excessive control by authorities and security actors over civil society actors increased during the reporting period. On 22 May, the Government of National Unity issued a decision establishing a committee to regulate civil society organizations on the basis of Law No. 19 of 2001, a restrictive law providing for State control over civil society activities. On 25 May, the General Authority of Endowments and Islamic Affairs issued a decree establishing a programme entitled “Guardians of Virtue” and creating national and local commissions to monitor and track what were described as “destructive beliefs and intellectual and moral deviations” and to “rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of moral deviations”. In late April, the Internal Security Agency introduced a gender-discriminatory restrictive procedure pursuant to which Libyan women travelling alone and departing from airports in the western region were required to provide information on the reasons why they were travelling abroad without a male companion, which could have the effect of restricting their right to freedom of movement.

### **1. Rule of law**

45. On 27 April, five new judges of the Supreme Court, who had been appointed by the House of Representatives, took their oath of office before the Speaker of the House, in accordance with House of Representatives resolution No. 5 of 2023, in which the authority of the House to appoint new justices was stipulated. On 3 May, the General Assembly of the Supreme Court, based in Tripoli, refused to accept the new judges, asserting that they should first have been nominated by the General Assembly of the Supreme Court, in accordance with Law No. 6 of 1982 and the executive regulations of 2004, by which the General Assembly of the Supreme Court has the authority to nominate new justices before their appointment by the House. A few weeks later, the Presidency of the Supreme Court accepted the five judges and allowed them to sit on civil panels.

46. On 22 April, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that current European Union sanctions, including a visa ban and the freezing of assets, against the daughter of the late former leader of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi, Aisha Muammar Gaddafi, must be lifted.

47. UNSMIL continued to provide capacity-building assistance on the rule of law to Libyan institutions. From 2 to 8 May, UNSMIL, in cooperation with UNDP, UN-Women and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, provided training, in Benghazi, for 48 female lawyers from Benghazi, Bayda’ and Ajdabiya. The training was focused on international standards on human rights and criminal justice and the Libyan code of ethics for lawyers, as well as on combating violence against women and conflict-related sexual violence. Separately,

the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provided support to strengthen the capacity of the family and child protection units of the police.

## **2. Unlawful deprivation of liberty, detention and torture**

48. UNSMIL continued to receive reports of enforced disappearances and the prolonged arbitrary detention of Libyans and non-Libyans in prisons and detention centres across the country. The Mission also continued to receive reports of men and women detainees in all parts of Libya being subjected to ill-treatment, sexual violence, torture or sexual exploitation in exchange for water, food or other essential items.

49. At least 25 foreign women and their 38 children remain in prolonged detention in Judaydah prison, in Tripoli, and Kuwayfiyah prison, in Benghazi, owing to their alleged links to Da'esh. On 30 May, UNSMIL met with five of the detainees in Judaydah prison and engaged with the authorities to address the situation of the women and children in detention, including to ensure due process, access to justice, possible relocation and education for the children. The United Nations continued to seek increased access to the facilities to provide essential life-saving services and facilitate voluntary repatriation or other solutions, in accordance with the principle of non-refoulement.

50. During the reporting period, the Tripoli- and Benghazi-based Internal Security Agencies arbitrarily detained several individuals, most of whose whereabouts remain unknown. The Internal Security Agencies' practice of extracting forced confessions from individuals in their custody and publishing them on social media continued, in violation of the country's laws and international human rights law.

51. According to official statistics provided by the Ministry of Justice, on 5 May, 19,103 persons, including 216 women, were deprived of their liberty in 28 official prisons under the Ministry's authority. An estimated 29 per cent of those persons were in pretrial detention and many remained in prolonged detention with limited or delayed access to justice. Thousands of others, including Libyans, migrants and asylum-seekers, including women and children, remain in unofficial places of detention under the control of armed groups.

## **3. Migrants and refugees**

52. The humanitarian situation, human rights and protection of migrants and refugees remained of serious concern. On 1 May, the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration announced a countrywide campaign to arrest migrants. Under the campaign, the homes and workplaces of migrants were raided and thousands of migrants, including pregnant women and children, were arrested and arbitrarily detained. Hundreds of people, including women and children, were forcibly deported across the borders into Chad, Egypt, the Niger, the Sudan and Tunisia without legal review.

53. On 29 May, the Libyan Special Naval Forces, under the control of the Libyan National Army, reportedly intercepted a large fishing boat, off the coast of Tubruq in eastern Libya, that was suspected of involvement in human trafficking. On 14 June, a fishing boat carrying several hundred migrants from Tubruq to Italy capsized and sank off the coast of Greece. The Greek authorities rescued an estimated 100 people, while hundreds of others remain missing. The survivors, mainly young men, reported that women and children had been in the hull of the boat.

54. Libya continues to be both a country of destination and transit for migrants and asylum-seekers. According to IOM, the number of migrants in Libya stood at 706,062

in February 2023, up from 635,051 in January 2022. Meanwhile, the number of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya increased during the reporting period. As at 1 July 2023, 8,496 individuals, including women and children, have been intercepted and returned to Libya since the start of the year. An additional 780 people were reported dead and 944 missing between 1 January and 1 July. Migrants and refugees who disembarked at Libyan ports to which United Nations humanitarian agencies have access received basic emergency relief items, as well as health-care services and protection. Most of the migrants were subsequently transferred to detention centres, to which the United Nations has limited access.

55. The United Nations continued to observe the prolonged detention of migrant children with no judicial process, in violation of the country's obligations under international human rights law. Detained migrant children were released only if they had guaranteed durable solutions in place, namely voluntary humanitarian return facilitated by IOM or resettlement or evacuation to a third country facilitated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UNSMIL verified 24 cases of abduction of children from the Sudan, where they had been registered as asylum-seekers and subsequently trafficked to Libya. Monitoring by UNSMIL indicated that these children were subjected to further human rights violations in Libya, including forced labour in military camps without payment. UNICEF provided technical support and training for 10 social workers assigned by the Ministry of Social Affairs to monitor and follow up on the situation and provided life-saving services for children in detention centres.

56. In July, following clashes between residents and migrants in Sfax, Tunisia, hundreds of migrants, including children and expectant mothers, were forcibly transported to a deserted area on the border between Tunisia and Libya and abandoned without food or water. By the end of July, United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies in Libya and Tunisia had scaled up their assistance to support refugees and asylum-seekers in need.

#### **4. Groups in vulnerable situations**

57. UNSMIL continued to follow incidents of forced evictions and illegal demolitions in the historic city centre of Benghazi, including in central neighbourhoods and the Hesperides archaeological site. At least 100 individuals were forcibly evicted from their homes with limited or no compensation. On 8 May, residents of the historic city centre demonstrated against the demolitions and forced evictions. At least three individuals were arrested by the Tareq Bin Ziyad Brigade and released shortly afterwards, while several others were reportedly threatened. Separately, in Tripoli, UNSMIL received reports of possible evictions in Abu Salim municipality of 350 internally displaced families from the east and followed up with the relevant authorities to find durable solutions for them.

58. On 4 May, four Tunisian women detainees, allegedly linked to Da'esh, were repatriated with their five children from Judaydah prison in Tripoli to Tunisia. The women had been acquitted by a Mitiga court in March 2023. Nine others had been convicted and sentenced to 12 years in prison. Seven of those sentenced were held in prison with their children aged between 7 and 16 years.

#### **5. Transitional justice and rights-based reconciliation**

59. On 11 May, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court gave a briefing to the Security Council on the Court's progress in prosecuting alleged crimes against humanity committed in Libya. The Prosecutor stated that four warrants had been issued by judges of the Court, while applications had been submitted for two additional warrants.

60. From 12 to 15 May, UNSMIL held consultations with more than 70 victims of human rights violations, in Benghazi. Participants included women, young people and internally displaced persons, as well as human rights activists and legal actors. The consultations were conducted as part of Human Rights Council-mandated activities aimed at better understanding the needs and demands of victims, informing them of ongoing transitional justice efforts, enabling them to conduct advocacy concerning their rights and raising awareness of the importance of victims' participation and representation in future transitional justice mechanisms (see Human Rights Council resolution 50/23). Separately, from 13 to 15 June, UNSMIL organized a workshop on international best practices for investigating grave human rights violations and crimes against humanity, with a focus on Tarhunah. The workshop brought together judicial forensics and criminal justice actors working to investigate grave human rights violations that had occurred in the town.

## **6. Human rights due diligence policy**

61. On 12 April, UNSMIL organized a meeting of the human rights due diligence policy task force to update participating United Nations country team members on the human rights situation in Libya. Participants endorsed the updated standard operating procedures, a set of forms for the vetting, screening and reporting of incidents and a set of key messages on United Nations human rights due diligence policy.

## **C. Security sector**

### **1. Support for Libyan planning for interim security arrangements and the unification of security forces**

62. UNSMIL continued to advance discussions on the pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process with the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, civil society organizations and the international community.

63. On 16 May, UNSMIL organized a workshop on the role of civil society in supporting national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration institutions. The workshop, which was attended by 16 civil society organizations, enabled a dialogue to be initiated between civil society and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration stakeholders in Libya to discuss key concerns, including with regard to the demilitarization of residential areas.

64. On 19 May, UNSMIL chaired a technical-level workshop on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, in Tunis. Officials from Germany, Japan, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the European Union, together with representatives of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations, discussed recent developments in the field of pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. At the meeting, the need to ensure interlinkages between the security working group of the Berlin process and other related working groups, such as the working group on international humanitarian law and human rights, was stressed and the importance of civil society in the pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process was emphasized.

65. On 22 and 23 May, UNSMIL, along with the Libya Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, held a consultative dialogue on security challenges and possible solutions with regard to the participation of women in elections. The two-day dialogue was attended by 30 participants, including representatives of the clergy, civil society and the Ministries of the Interior and Defence, and women candidates. Participants concluded that to achieve an inclusive political process, there was a need to address obstacles to the political participation of women, such as cultural norms and religious

denominations, the activities of armed groups, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, legislative gaps in the protection of women candidates and the role of the media in propagating hate speech against women.

66. On 27 and 28 May, UNSMIL, with the support of the standing capacity on security sector reform and governance, held consultations, in Benghazi, with the National Security Council, members of the House of Representatives and civil society to share information on the United Nations policy on security sector reform and security sector governance. The important role of civil society within security sector governance structures was underscored at the meeting.

## **2. Arms and ammunition management**

67. From 8 to 10 April, the Mine Action Service of UNSMIL, together with the Libyan Mine Action Centre, conducted quality assurance of under-rubble clearance operations on a destroyed ammunition storage area in Misrata, which were being implemented by the HALO Trust, an international mine action NGO. The assessment was conducted as part of a joint quality assurance process.

68. On 30 May, the Mine Action Service of UNSMIL and the Libyan Mine Action Centre convened a coordination meeting of implementing partners in the mine action sector. The meetings, attended by eight implementing partner organizations and key donors, contributed to building synergies in mine action operations and improving international coordination.

69. On 2 May, the Mine Action Service of UNSMIL and the Libyan Mine Action Centre commemorated the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, in Libya. The United Nations highlighted the critical importance of mine action in Libya for lasting peace, reconciliation, human rights and sustainable development. Participants called for an end to the indiscriminate use of weapons in civilian areas during armed conflict, which remains the primary cause of recontamination of previously demined areas with explosive remnants of war in Libya.

## **3. Implementation of the ceasefire agreement**

70. No ceasefire violations were recorded during the reporting period. UNSMIL continued to support the establishment of an effective Libyan ceasefire monitoring mechanism able to coordinate, monitor and assess progress on the withdrawal of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries and assist in Libyan efforts to implement the provisions of the ceasefire agreement, de-escalate tensions and build mutual trust among relevant Libyan actors.

71. UNSMIL continued to provide technical assistance to the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the Libyan monitors. From 15 to 17 June, the Mission organized a workshop, held in Tunis, for Libyan monitors and 5+5 Joint Military Commission focal points on technical assistance for the operational plan for the departure of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries, including criteria for identifying the strategic assembly areas to gather and prepare for the departure of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries and reporting templates for the authorities to register movements and departures. UNSMIL ceasefire monitors continued to support the Libyan liaison committee in its work with the liaison committees of Chad, the Niger and the Sudan.

72. The outbreak of fighting in the Sudan has significantly slowed down efforts aimed at achieving the full withdrawal of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya. Despite significant civilian movements from the Sudan into neighbouring countries, as at 29 May, no movement of fighters had been observed

between Libya and the Sudan. Meanwhile, on 14 May, the Union des forces patriotiques pour la refondation, an opposition group from the Niger based in southern Libya, announced in a press conference that it would lay down its arms unconditionally.

## **D. Empowerment of women**

73. Following the adoption of constitutional amendment No. 13, in March, which provides for a 20 per cent quota for women in the House of Representatives, UNSMIL engaged with women's civil society groups and women representatives of the House of Representatives, the High State Council, municipalities and political parties to hear their views regarding the representation of women in the National Assembly. Women's groups from the three regions of Libya engaged with decision-makers and the members of the 6+6 committee to convey their aspirations for an electoral law that ensures the meaningful representation of women in the National Assembly. In addition, concerted efforts between various stakeholders resulted in the drafting by the 6+6 committee of a gender-sensitive parliamentary electoral law providing for quotas for women and the guaranteed representation of women in electoral lists. However, it was stipulated in that draft law that only 6 of the 90 seats in the Senate would be reserved for women.

## **E. Youth and peace and security**

74. Following a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) consultative workshop on human security, held in Sabha in February, UNFPA, UNDP and the World Food Programme developed a joint action plan for interventions targeting that municipality. Furthermore, on 21 May, the Special Representative met with a group of youth leaders and activists in Misrata to hear their views on the current political challenges.

75. As part of the Human Rights 75 initiative, UNSMIL promoted and distributed copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UNSMIL further promoted the concept of the Model United Nations simulation among youth groups and student unions to raise awareness of the Human Rights 75 initiative and the concepts of international relations and diplomacy. UNSMIL also supported youth groups and student unions across the country to hold local dialogues on political rights and reconciliation.

76. The working group on youth, co-chaired by UNFPA and the Ministry of Youth, continued to coordinate with the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to strengthen youth participation in political, socioeconomic and peacebuilding processes. In partnership with the African Development Bank, UNDP launched a programme to support youth empowerment and entrepreneurship, as part of a local peacebuilding programme in the east of Libya. Separately, Libyan young people participated in a climate landscape analysis for children study, launched by UNICEF in May, during which they demanded specific actions be taken on climate adaptation and mitigation.

## **F. Coordination of international assistance**

77. The first quarter of 2023 saw an increase in access constraints reported by humanitarian and development partners, with high levels of bureaucratic and administrative impediments. Interference in the work of humanitarian and development partners persisted in all parts of the country, with a noticeable increase in oversight by security actors, in particular of NGOs, including incidents involving

the brief detention of NGO staff. International and local NGOs continued to face uncertainty owing to the lack of a legal framework regulating their registration and work in the country. No improvement has been reported in the issuance of visas for international staff of international NGOs during the reporting period.

78. On 26 June, the United Nations in Libya launched its results report for 2022, in which it highlighted key results obtained during the final year of the United Nations Strategic Framework for Libya for the period 2019 to 2022. In 2022, the United Nations implemented 108 projects in 28 locations, including 75 nationally implemented projects that supported improved core government functions, stimulated economic recovery and built capacity for the delivery of quality social services to the benefit of thousands of people across the country.

79. On 13 July, a high-level event was held on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2023 to 2025 with the Government of National Unity and development partners, with a focus on a shared commitment to funding and financing prioritized programmes in the Cooperation Framework.

## **G. Humanitarian, peacebuilding and development support**

80. To date, the humanitarian impact in Libya of the conflict in the Sudan has been limited. According to an emergency tracking update by IOM on Libya, as at 3 July, close to 2,800 individuals – Sudanese and third-country nationals – had arrived in Kufrah from the Sudan and through Chad; the arrivals were assessed as being mainly part of seasonal migration. To ensure preparedness, the United Nations country team, led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, prepared a six-month contingency plan, and Libya was included in the United Nations regional response for the Sudan.

81. On 28 May, a delegation including the Deputy Special Representative, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator visited Sabha to update and exchange with mayors, international NGOs, United Nations implementing partners and civil society organizations on peacebuilding and development support in southern Libya. The delegation also met with local security actors who committed to supporting the work, safety and security of United Nations staff and its implementing partners.

82. With the Ministries of Planning and Local Governance, and in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, UNDP launched a local peacebuilding programme for southern Libya. The programme is focused on boosting development efforts by strengthening trust between citizens, State institutions and among communities, promoting alternative livelihood opportunities and improving local institutions' capacity to deliver enhanced priority services.

83. Furthermore, in response to a measles outbreak in Sabha in February 2023, UNICEF procured vaccines for 50,000 children, as well as 300,000 vitamin A capsules. The vaccination campaign was held in the second week of June.

## **IV. Deployment of the Mission and security arrangements**

84. The United Nations maintained an average presence of around 183 international staff members in Libya and 10 international staff members in Tunisia. UNSMIL international staff in Tripoli continued to be accommodated at the Oea compound, protected by the United Nations Guard Unit, with a troop strength of 234. In Benghazi, staff continued to operate from the United Nations hub. Discussions are

ongoing with regard to establishing safe and secure office premises in Sirte and Sabha to enable the deployment of UNSMIL ceasefire monitors to Sirte and enhance United Nations development programmes in the central and southern regions.

85. The security situation remains complex, with a high threat level. The use of heavy weapons by armed groups continued to pose significant security challenges, with disputes often escalating into clashes, which continue to pose a general threat to the population and to United Nations activities in Tripoli. In addition, foreign fighters, mercenaries and violent extremist organizations remain a threat to the relatively stable security situation in the eastern and southern regions. In this operating context, the United Nations in Libya maintained a robust security presence in Tripoli and continued its engagement with Libyan security actors and international partners.

86. The annual United Nations Guard Unit rotation was conducted in two phases, on 12 and 19 May 2023. A total of 228 troops departed, while 234 troops arrived as incoming contingent.

## **V. Implementation of the recommendations of the 2021 independent strategic review**

87. Throughout the reporting period, UNSMIL made efforts to implement the recommendations outlined in the independent strategic review by prioritizing recruitment and the redistribution of resources. The Mission specifically targeted a reduction in staff vacancies and enhanced mission support, while also evaluating the integrated security workforce structure and initiating measures to enhance staff well-being. In addition, UNSMIL intensified its efforts to promote coordination and coherence among the four dialogue tracks, namely on political, economic, security and human rights and humanitarian concerns.

88. The Mission advanced on initiatives aimed at enhancing integration through the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. UNSMIL and the United Nations country team, with the support of the Folke Bernadotte Academy and the United Nations Secretariat, strengthened its utilization of the United Nations integration methodology and the integration and assessment planning policy. The objective was to foster collaboration and maximize the effectiveness of United Nations efforts through collective action.

## **VI. Observations and recommendations**

89. The political process in Libya has reached a critical stage. It is now crucial that all relevant Libyan institutions and actors demonstrate their stated commitment to conducting elections and make the necessary compromises to achieve an electoral framework that can be implemented and resolve all contested issues.

90. The resolution to the crisis in Libya must be led and owned by the Libyan people themselves. The United Nations, represented by my Special Representative, will maintain its engagement with Libyan stakeholders to facilitate discussions and ensure a sustainable path towards peace and stability. It is crucial that regional and other organizations, such as the African Union, the European Union and the League of Arab States, as well as concerned Member States, continue to provide support to the efforts of the United Nations. This collective support is essential to ensure a unified and coordinated approach in assisting the Libyan people. It is paramount that the international community speaks with a unified voice, including within the Security Council, to demonstrate its backing for the Libyan people's democratic aspirations.

91. The people of Libya have expressed their strong desire for free, credible and democratic elections, and it is now overdue for their leaders to attentively listen to their voices and act accordingly. I take note of the efforts of the 6+6 House of Representatives and High State Council joint committee to develop draft electoral laws for presidential and parliamentary elections to be held as soon as possible. As noted by my Special Representative, key issues remain contested in the draft laws, thus requiring political agreement among the major stakeholders and key constituencies across the Libyan political spectrum. My Special Representative will intensify negotiations and convene major stakeholders in order to reach an inclusive political agreement that would enable the holding of successful elections.

92. The holding of the first plenary meetings in Libya, of the security working group of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya is an important step that demonstrates increased confidence between the eastern and western sides, owing in large part to the ongoing efforts of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission. Nevertheless, large-scale operations conducted by the Government of National Unity, in Zawiyah and other key cities along the western coastal road, aimed at addressing illicit trafficking activities, as well as sporadic clashes in Tripoli, demonstrate that the security situation remains fragile. Proportional, legal and accountable use of force should be maintained when carrying out such operations. In addition, the authorities must protect civilians as a top priority.

93. The outbreak of fighting in the Sudan in April, and the possible humanitarian and security ramifications for the neighbouring countries, including Libya, remain of great concern. It is critical that all efforts be made to limit the destabilizing impact of the fighting in the Sudan on neighbouring countries, including Libya. Meanwhile, the United Nations country team has stepped up its preparedness to respond to a possible increase in humanitarian and protection needs along the borders between the Sudan and Libya.

94. The increased restrictions on civic space and the excessive control by authorities and security actors over civil society and people in Libya are alarming. The recent series of restrictive measures, including on the work of civil society organizations and on fundamental freedoms and rights, in particular on women's freedom of movement, are particularly concerning. Any framework regulating the activities of civil society must be in line with the human rights obligations of Libya under domestic and international law. The new restrictions on women's freedom of movement highlight how hard-won gains in women's rights can be eroded and undermined and may pave the way for further erosion on their rights and freedoms. These new restrictions also run counter to the goal of inclusive elections and national reconciliation in which women and civil society have a vital role to play. I urge the Libyan institutions to reconsider these new measures.

95. The humanitarian situation, human rights and protection of migrants and refugees remain of serious concern, in particular following countrywide raids leading to mass arbitrary arrests and forced expulsions, which I firmly condemn. Collective expulsions violate the country's obligations under international law, including the principle of non-refoulement. I call upon the Libyan authorities to urgently provide unrestricted access to all detention centres where migrants and refugees, including children, are being detained.

96. The signing of a declaration of intent between the Presidential Council and the working group on international humanitarian law and human rights, in Tripoli on 22 May, aimed at further strengthening collaboration and establishing a regular inclusive dialogue in view of advancing human rights in Libya, is welcome. I encourage the Libyan authorities to demonstrate continued commitment to this cause.

97. Implementing a nationwide reconciliation process characterized by transparency, inclusivity and active participation paves the way for sustainable peace. In this regard, I welcome the continued efforts of the African Union and the Congo to support the Presidential Council of Libya to advance national reconciliation.

98. I welcome the decision by the Presidential Council to establish a high committee on financial oversight to address fundamental issues of transparency with regard to the spending of public funds and the fair distribution of resources. This inclusive approach should help to facilitate a level playing field for all candidates in the elections.

99. I thank my Special Representative, the Mission leadership, the staff of UNSMIL and the United Nations country team for their dedicated efforts and support to the Libyan people. I reiterate my gratitude to the United Nations Guard Unit in Libya, generously provided by the Government of Nepal.

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