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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
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High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Technical assistance and capacity-building

Technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in Libya

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 56/16, on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in Libya, and provides an overview of the technical assistance and capacity-building that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights carried out, in cooperation with the Libyan authorities, over the period from April 2024 to May 2025. The report presents the main human rights challenges in Libya in the context of the implementation of resolution 56/16, and concludes with a set of recommendations addressed to the Libyan authorities and the international community.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 56/16, on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in Libya, in which the Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to Libya as provided for by the Council in its resolution 52/41. In resolution 52/41, the Council had requested OHCHR, in close consultation with the Libyan authorities, to provide technical assistance and capacity-building with a view to improving further the situation of human rights, to assist the country in the implementation of its international human rights obligations and commitments, taking into account the work done by the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, its reports and recommendations, where applicable, and to support Libya in promoting and protecting human rights, preventing violations and ensuring accountability for violations and abuses of human rights, in accordance with a national plan. The Council further requested OHCHR to present to it at its sixtieth session a report on the implementation of resolution 56/16, to be followed by an interactive dialogue.

2. The report covers the period from April 2024 to May 2025 and outlines the technical assistance and capacity-building support provided to Libyan authorities by OHCHR, in cooperation with the Human Rights, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice Service of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The report presents the main human rights challenges in Libya in the context of the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 56/16. It contains recommendations for Libya and the international community aimed at strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

II. Human rights challenges in the context of the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 56/16

3. In line with the request by the Human Rights Council that OHCHR continue to support efforts to improve the human rights situation in Libya by promoting and protecting human rights and preventing violations, as provided for in Council resolutions 56/16 and 52/41, the Office continued its technical assistance and capacity-building support in cooperation with UNSMIL. This support was developed to respond to the prevailing human rights situation. Despite enhanced engagement with the Libyan authorities on technical assistance and capacity-building efforts and the granting of partial access to some places of detention throughout Libya, the situation continued to be characterized by the human rights challenges set out in the following sections, information on which was gathered and verified by UNSMIL in accordance with OHCHR methodology. These challenges must be addressed, including through commitment from the Libyan authorities to advance justice and accountability for violations and abuses, to ensure the sustainability of technical assistance and capacity-building efforts.

4. The present overview of human rights challenges is not exhaustive, given the focus of the mandate on technical assistance and capacity-building and given the challenges encountered in monitoring and reporting on violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law in Libya.

A. Transitional justice and reconciliation

5. During the reporting period, progress on establishing a comprehensive legal framework for the reconciliation and transitional justice process in Libya that was aligned with its international obligations continued to stall owing to the ongoing dispute between the Presidency Council and the House of Representatives over the draft law on reconciliation. A national reconciliation conference, planned to be held in Sirte in April 2024 with the support of the African Union, was postponed indefinitely. Agreement on a draft text of the reconciliation law was reached in December 2024. On 7 January 2025, however, the House

of Representatives voted to amend the text of the draft law, a move that the Presidency Council rejected in a statement on 9 January 2025.¹

6. On 14 February 2025, a charter for peace and national reconciliation in Libya was signed at a meeting in Addis Ababa organized by the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya, with representatives of the Government of National Unity, the Presidency Council, the House of Representatives, the High Council of State and Saif al-Islam Gaddafi. The charter was based on a draft proposed by the African Union and finalized on 27 January 2025 in Zintan. A group of members of the High Council of State issued a statement on 15 February rejecting the charter and calling on the African Union to lead a consensus-based national reconciliation process.

7. Intensified efforts are necessary to unify stakeholders and foster consensus for a Libyan-led reconciliation process that can deliver on victims' long-standing demands for truth, justice and reparations for past and ongoing violations and abuses of human rights.

B. Arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and human rights violations in the context of the deprivation of liberty

8. Abductions, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrests and detentions, forced confessions and torture, ill-treatment and unlawful killings in detention facilities continued to be perpetrated with impunity by law enforcement agencies, security agencies and armed actors across the country, creating a climate of fear. In western Libya, these practices were allegedly perpetrated by the Tripoli branch of the Internal Security Agency, the Stability Support Apparatus, the Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism, forces of the Ministry of Interior and pro-government forces in Misratah. In eastern and southern Libya, these violations were allegedly perpetrated by the Benghazi branch of the Internal Security Agency and by groups under the command of the Libyan National Army.

9. In January 2025, videos – recorded in 2022 and 2023 – surfaced on social media from the Gernada prison, south-east of Bayda' in eastern Libya, showing dozens of Libyan and foreign detainees being subjected to ill-treatment and torture, including by members of forces affiliated with the Libyan National Army. In May 2025, videos also emerged showing Ibrahim al-Dersi, a member of the House of Representatives who had been forcibly disappeared on 16 May 2024, being detained in chains and bearing signs of torture.

10. Between March 2024 and February 2025, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, documented 17 deaths in custody across official and unofficial places of detention in western, eastern and southern Libya. The deaths occurred shortly after detention, indicating severe abuse and neglect, and resulted from torture, denial of medical care, and degrading treatment. Victims included persons with disabilities, political activists and members of the Sufi community, several of whom were accused of "sorcery". In western Libya, deaths took place at detention facilities controlled by security services affiliated with the Government of National Unity, including the Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism and the Judicial Police. In southern and eastern Libya, the deaths occurred at unofficial detention facilities controlled by the Benghazi branch of the Internal Security Agency, the General Directorate for Security Operations, and the Criminal Investigation Department. In multiple cases, families were denied forensic reports and received minimal or no official explanation, suggesting a deliberate effort to conceal the truth and operate beyond judicial oversight. Recurring deaths in places of deprivation of liberty controlled by the same security actors appear to reveal a pattern of violations and neglect in such facilities across the country.

11. Following the killing in May 2025 of the commander of the Stability Support Apparatus, Abdulghani al-Kikli, an extensive network of official and unofficial detention facilities in the Abu Salim neighbourhood of Tripoli was exposed. Testimonies of survivors, victims' families and other sources corroborated previous findings of the Independent Fact-

¹ [S/2025/223](#), para. 47.

Finding Mission on Libya,² confirming the existence of numerous unofficial detention sites where dozens were held in inhumane conditions and subjected to torture, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killing. In the aftermath, the Ministry of Interior broadcasted several video “confessions”, reportedly extracted under coercion, from alleged members of the Stability Support Apparatus who admitted to committing or witnessing serious crimes. Numerous unidentified bodies were reportedly found in locations previously controlled by the Stability Support Apparatus, including in hospital refrigerators and mass graves. Videos from four detention facilities, verified by UNSMIL, also emerged showing instruments of torture and conditions of detention amounting to torture or ill-treatment, including cells where detainees were forced to sleep standing. These developments further underscore the urgent need to seal all sites to enable thorough investigations and preservation of evidence for future accountability efforts.

C. Situation of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

12. From March 2025, there was a marked increase in hate speech, disinformation and misinformation targeting migrants, refugees and persons seeking international protection,³ driven by government officials and amplified on social media.⁴ Disinformation about migrant resettlement in Libya sparked demonstrations, and arbitrary arrests, raids and violent attacks were carried out by the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration, the Criminal Investigation Department and other security forces targeting migrant communities across Libya. The Tripoli branch of the Internal Security Agency led a smear campaign targeting international non-governmental organizations and humanitarian aid workers supporting migrants, with at least 10 organizations subsequently suspending operations and activities and several of their staff members being summoned and interrogated. The suspensions severely affected access for migrants and refugees to essential services, exposing affected communities to heightened risks of violence, exploitation and abuse. Three migrants reportedly died as a result of the denial of medical care following the collapse of the health referral system.

13. On 7 and 8 February 2025, two mass graves containing 93 bodies were found in the Wahat and Kufrah districts, following anti-trafficking raids by the Libyan authorities. These raids also led to what the Libyan authorities described as the “rescue” of 344 migrants from trafficking hubs, where migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers had been subjected to severe abuse, including killings, sexual violence, and torture for ransom. However, the individuals were then transferred to official detention facilities controlled by the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration, from where numerous reports of violations have emerged. On 13 May 2025, the General Authority for the Search for and Identification of Missing Persons announced the discovery of a mass grave containing 30 bodies along the shores of Misratah in western Libya. Although the location of the mass grave suggested that the victims were migrants, their identities remained unconfirmed at the time of writing the present report. The discovery of mass graves in eastern and western Libya served as a reminder of the ongoing, systematic violence experienced by migrants and refugees in Libya.

14. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers continued to be at a heightened risk of violations and abuses at disembarkation points, in detention and at borders, amid ongoing pressure from the European Union and its member States to stem migration across the Mediterranean Sea. According to the International Organization for Migration, over the period from 31 March 2024 to 31 May 2025, approximately 27,264 migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers were intercepted while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea from the coast of Libya, with 787 persons reported dead and 987 missing. The Ministry of Interior and

² A/HRC/50/63, para. 39; and A/HRC/52/83, para. 61. See also the conference room paper of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya on its detailed findings (available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session52/list-reports>), paras. 179 and 214.

³ S/2025/223, para. 45. See also <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/statement-united-nations-libya-warns-against-misinformation-and-hate-speech> and <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/special-representative-secretary-general-hanna-s-tetteh-person-remarks-security-council-situation>.

⁴ For example, the acting Minister of Interior, Imad al-Trabelsi, issued a video statement on Facebook on 9 February 2025.

the Libyan Border Guard also continued to intercept migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers at the borders with Algeria and Tunisia, following their collective expulsion from those countries. Following interceptions, migrants and refugees were transferred to official and unofficial detention centres where they were arbitrarily detained and reportedly subjected to violations and abuses. As at 27 May 2025, the International Organization for Migration estimated that more than 4,215 migrants and refugees were being arbitrarily detained in official detention centres in Libya, while more than 3,000 were believed to be in unofficial detention centres operated by armed groups.

D. Civic space and women's rights

15. Despite ongoing efforts to adopt a new law regulating civil society organizations, as required under article 15 of the Constitutional Declaration of 2011, the prolonged absence of a valid law has created a regulatory vacuum. The Libyan authorities continued to apply Act No. 19 of 2001, which further eroded civic space through a restrictive registration process, the denial of recognition of organizations on vague grounds and the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on operations.

16. OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, documented an increase in cases of individuals exercising their right to freedom of expression in western Libya who were targeted for their alleged political affiliations. Security actors under the nominal or actual control of the Government of National Unity repressed dissent through arbitrary arrests, detentions and intimidation, while judicial authorities failed to undertake independent investigations into these violations. Arbitrary arrests and detentions targeting political opponents and other dissenting voices also continued to be perpetrated by the Benghazi branch of the Internal Security Agency and by groups affiliated with the Libyan National Army.

17. From 12 to 14 May 2025, violent clashes erupted in Tripoli, involving intense use of heavy weaponry in densely populated civilian areas, which resulted in the deaths of several civilians and extensive damage to civilian property, including hospitals. These events sparked a wave of protests, with thousands demanding political change and the withdrawal of armed groups from the capital. Some protests were violently suppressed by security actors, including through the use of live ammunition, killing at least one protester and a police officer and injuring five others. Internet disruptions affected media coverage of the demonstrations.

18. Restrictions on youth organizations further reflected a growing trend of increased State control over civil society, contributing to shrinking civic space. On 11 November 2024, the Ministry of Youth issued a circular forbidding youth organizations from arranging trips abroad without the Ministry's prior approval. In a further circular, on 13 November 2024, the country's local youth councils were instructed to create security committees in cooperation with local security services. Youth groups criticized the circulars as unlawful and reminiscent of pre-2011 restrictions.

19. Widespread violence against women and girls and pervasive gender discrimination continued, compounded by lack of accountability, harmful societal norms and insufficient legal protection. OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, documented harassment and hate campaigns, both online and offline, targeting women, including a prominent journalist. On 7 May 2025, a draft law aimed at protecting women from violence was reconsidered by the House of Representatives. It was referred back to the legislative committee of the House of Representatives with new observations to be addressed. OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, continued to advocate for the law's adoption, including by convening stakeholders to address the observations.

E. Deterioration of the rule of law and lack of accountability

20. Attacks on judicial authorities and lawyers continued across Libya, deepening the erosion of the rule of law and accountability, which was compounded by armed groups operating with impunity. In January 2025, the Bar Association in Tripoli issued a video statement calling on the Judicial Police to cease the harassment and intimidation of defence

lawyers. OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, continued to document systematic violations of fair trial and due process guarantees, including inadequate legal representation, procedural delays and frequent adjournments of court hearings, particularly in cases involving prolonged pretrial detention.

21. Justice and accountability continued to be denied in the case of the Abu Salim prison mass killing in 1996. The third trial, scheduled for 13 May 2025 before a new panel of the Tripoli Court of Appeal, was postponed owing to violent clashes in Tripoli, delaying progress in this long-standing case.

22. The House of Representatives continued to undertake action that undermined the separation of powers and judicial independence in Libya. Despite the declaration by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court, in a decision of 6 March 2023, that the creation of a new constitutional court in Benghazi under Act No. 5 of 2023 was unconstitutional, the House of Representatives swore in eight judges to the new court on 23 September 2024, without disclosing the criteria for their selection or their affiliations. On 30 October 2024, the Presidency Council challenged the establishment of the court and subsequent judicial appointments, accusing the House of Representatives of exceeding its powers and undermining the rule of law.

23. On 4 October 2024, the International Criminal Court unsealed arrest warrants for six Libyan individuals allegedly responsible for war crimes committed in Tarhunah.⁵ One of the six individuals was arrested by the Libyan authorities in November 2024, but his whereabouts remain unknown. On 12 May 2025, the International Criminal Court received a declaration by the Government of Libya under article 12 (3) of the Rome Statute, accepting the Court's jurisdiction with respect to alleged crimes in its territory from 2011 to the end of 2027.⁶ On 16 May 2025, the House of Representatives rejected the declaration.

III. Main achievements in technical cooperation and capacity-building in Libya

24. During the reporting period, OHCHR, in close cooperation with UNSMIL, provided technical assistance and capacity-building support to the Libyan authorities and other stakeholders, responding to the human rights challenges outlined above. In a significant shift, as of June 2024, the authorities in eastern Libya agreed to cooperate with OHCHR and UNSMIL on technical assistance and capacity-building efforts and to permit access to eastern Libya in addition to partial access to some places of detention. The authorities in western Libya continued their engagement and permitted partial access to some detention facilities in the western region. The relevant authorities and other stakeholders from southern Libya also participated in several activities in other locations. Access to both western and eastern Libya allowed OHCHR, in close cooperation with UNSMIL, to broaden the geographical scope and impact of the work mandated by the Council.

25. Despite this positive development, and the potential impact of activities in both eastern and western Libya, the Council's mandate was implemented amid ongoing serious human rights challenges throughout Libya, as detailed above. The country's political impasse and volatile security situation continued to deepen, marked by violent clashes by armed groups and militias and the undermining of efforts towards national reconciliation. Furthermore, the liquidity situation in relation to the regular budget of the United Nations Secretariat continued to severely constrain the capacity of OHCHR to sustain core operations. As a result, OHCHR and UNSMIL were unable to provide the full extent of technical assistance requested by the Council, leading to a narrowing of its scope and effectiveness. To overcome some of these challenges, some activities were carried out in collaboration with other United Nations and national partners.

⁵ See <https://www.icc-cpi.int/situations/libya>. The Security Council, in its resolution 1970 (2011) of 26 February 2011, had decided to refer the situation in Libya since 15 February 2011 to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

⁶ See <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/libya-accepts-icc-jurisdiction-over-alleged-crimes-2011-end-2027>.

26. Upon the adoption by the Human Rights Council of its resolution 56/16, OHCHR and UNSMIL conducted a mapping exercise to ascertain the technical assistance and capacity-building needs of the Libyan authorities and other stakeholders, building on the support previously provided. Three areas were identified, namely improving detention conditions and standards, reforming criminal and military justice and creating an enabling environment for transitional justice and reconciliation. Subsequently, OHCHR and the UNSMIL Human Rights, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice Service, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and other partners, implemented a total of 20 activities for technical assistance and capacity-building in these areas, reaching 373 participants, of whom 49 were women, from numerous Libyan institutions across the country. The authorities and other stakeholders were requested to consider gender balance when nominating participants for activities.

A. Improving detention conditions and standards

1. Western Libya

27. On 10 and 11 September 2024, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, organized training in Tripoli on the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and their implementation within the Libyan correctional system. Supported by the Ministry of Justice, the Judicial Police and the Office of the Attorney General, 31 officials, including 16 women, participated in the training. The aim of the training was to discuss measures to improve detention conditions in western Libya and align national legislation with international standards, highlighting issues faced by female detainees and exploring local and national solutions. Participants discussed the need to review Act No. 5 of 2005 on correction and rehabilitation institutions to align it with international standards. However, addressing systemic violations in places of detention and their root causes requires sustained engagement, evaluations and broader institutional reforms, including vetting and the establishment of an oversight body to monitor detention conditions. These issues formed the focus of the subsequent related activity.

28. Building on previous achievements,⁷ efforts continued to assist the Libyan authorities to establish a national preventive mechanism.⁸ On 1 and 2 December 2024, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, brought together 20 participants, including three women, in Tripoli, comprising government officials from several ministries and participants from academia and civil society. The aim of the workshop was to follow up on efforts to establish a coordination mechanism that would regulate monitoring of places of detention. On the basis of the interministerial agreement drafted in September 2023,⁹ participants discussed a proposal to create an independent national committee to prevent violations in places of detention. This proposal requires a decision of the Presidency Council, supported by additional technical assistance to enable the committee's establishment and operationalization.

29. OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, organized a workshop at the High Judicial Institute in Tripoli on 4 and 5 December 2024, aimed at addressing detention conditions in line with international standards. Thirty-three participants, including five women, from the Judicial Police, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Attorney General, further discussed the need for legislative amendments to Act No. 5 of 2005 on correction and rehabilitation institutions to align it with the Nelson Mandela Rules and other international standards. The workshop also provided a concrete opportunity for Libyan officials tasked with overseeing detention facilities in

⁷ [A/HRC/56/70](#), paras. 27 and 28.

⁸ Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, art. 3. While Libya is not a party to the Optional Protocol, establishing a national preventive mechanism would contribute to addressing the resulting gap in the legal framework.

⁹ [A/HRC/56/70](#), para. 27.

western Libya to highlight challenges relating to prison administration and management and to formulate recommendations using a human rights-based approach.

30. Following extensive engagement with the Attorney General, the relevant authorities facilitated two visits by UNSMIL and OHCHR entailing partial access to Mitiga prison in Tripoli, which is operated by the Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism, on 19 November 2024 and 20 January 2025. Several cases of prolonged arbitrary detention, unimplemented release orders, inadequate access to lawyers and visitation, among other issues, were documented. While no private interviews were permitted during the first visit, some were allowed during the second visit. UNSMIL continued to be denied access to a section of Mitiga prison where dozens of men and women are reportedly arbitrarily held for prolonged periods.

2. Eastern Libya

31. OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, conducted five missions to Benghazi in eastern Libya, including 12 workshops and three visits to places of detention. The visits followed agreement by the eastern authorities to cooperate on technical assistance and capacity-building and to permit access to Benghazi and partial access to some detention facilities. The overarching aim of the five missions was to assist the authorities in building the capacity of the judiciary, prosecution, and security and law enforcement agencies in eastern Libya, depending on identified needs, in order to promote and protect human rights standards, monitor and investigate human rights violations, undertake criminal justice reform and improve detention conditions.

32. During the first mission, in September 2024, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, conducted two workshops. During the first, held on 21 and 22 September 2024 in partnership with the Military Academy for Strategic and Security Sciences, 17 military judges and prosecutors, including two women, were trained on national, regional and international human rights principles related to criminal justice and related mechanisms. The second workshop, held on 23 and 24 September 2024, brought together 16 military police officers (all men), overseeing various detention facilities in eastern Libya, to discuss the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules, alternatives to detention, the treatment of women detainees, prisoner safety and security, and the promotion of rehabilitation to reduce recidivism.

33. During a second mission to Benghazi, in October 2024, a series of similar workshops was delivered. On 21 and 22 October 2024, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, trained 18 military judges and prosecutors (all men), representing different jurisdictions of the military judiciary in eastern and southern Libya, on human rights principles related to criminal justice. On 23 and 24 October 2024, 22 judges and prosecutors (all men) from the military judiciary and public prosecution participated in a training on implementing the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules in the Libyan context.

34. A third mission to Benghazi took place in December 2024. At the first of two workshops, on 15 and 16 December at the Supreme Command for Security Units of the Libyan National Army, specialized training was provided for 19 judges and prosecutors (all men) who served in the eastern region's military judiciary. It focused on international human rights standards and mechanisms, criminal justice principles and fair trial guarantees. The second workshop, on 17 and 18 December 2024, brought together 15 military police officers (all men), who managed various detention facilities in Benghazi, to discuss international human rights standards related to detention, including the Nelson Mandela Rules, with the aim of improving their implementation in the military justice system in Libya.

35. The workshops in September, October and December 2024 were a step towards opening engagement with the eastern authorities on human rights standards and raising awareness on the need to align eastern military justice and detention practices with the human rights obligations of Libya. Despite their limited scale and gender representation, the workshops laid the foundation for broader technical assistance and capacity-building efforts and deepened collaboration with regional judicial, prison and military stakeholders. These engagements established OHCHR and UNSMIL as trusted partners in advancing human rights and the rule of law in eastern Libya. A key outcome of these engagements was the

agreement by the Libyan National Army to facilitate regular visits by OHCHR and UNSMIL to military prisons in eastern Libya and to hold workshops inside prisons for guards.

36. Seizing on the above agreement, OHCHR and UNSMIL undertook a fourth mission, from 8 to 13 February 2025, including visits entailing partial access to the military section of Kuwayfiah prison in Benghazi, the military section of Gernada prison in Ajdabiya and a detention centre of the Internal Security Agency in Benghazi. The National Council for Civil Liberties and Human Rights accompanied the monitoring team, as part of the efforts of OHCHR to build the monitoring capacity of the national human rights institution.

37. At the military section of Kuwayfiah prison, the monitoring team had discussions with detainees that revealed several cases of prolonged detention without charge or access to due process, forced labour, severe overcrowding, poor visitation and medical care, and harsh conditions, including for children held with their mothers. The team trained 15 military police officers and other prison staff (all men) on implementing best practices in the treatment of detainees and prison management and invited discussions on aligning Act No. 5 of 2005 on correction and rehabilitation institutions with international norms and standards on detention.

38. Similar detention conditions were observed at Gernada prison, where the monitoring team noted 24-hour surveillance inside prison cells, severe overcrowding, inadequate bedding and unsanitary conditions, alongside a lack of social, educational and rehabilitation services and inadequate medical facilities and visitation. Several detainees were interviewed privately, though access to some areas of the prison and to detainees' files was denied. The team observed that more than 200 individuals were detained without charge or were subject to unimplemented release orders. A training session was held for 10 prison officers (all men) on minimum detention standards and the purpose of detention monitoring.

39. At the detention centre of the Internal Security Agency in Benghazi, solitary confinement cells of two square metres each were observed, with 24-hour surveillance and no toilet or water facilities. Although some cells were occupied, the monitoring team was denied access to any detainees. The team conducted a training session for 25 senior officers, including three women, on human rights principles, investigation of terrorism crimes in line with human rights standards, humane treatment of prisoners and gender-sensitive approaches to detention management. Interactive discussions addressed human rights violations allegedly committed by the Internal Security Agency, including those documented in reports of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, which allowed the trainers to engage participants on best practices in the treatment of detainees and prison management. The training sessions at each detention facility enabled the introduction of human rights concepts and minimum detention standards to prison officers working in detention facilities operating far below international norms. Sustained engagement, regular evaluations and ongoing communication with prison management are essential to ensuring the impact of monitoring and training efforts. Following the mission, reports were received indicating some improvements in conditions in the places of detention visited.

40. OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, conducted a seminar on 13 February 2025 for 10 judges (all men) from the Supreme Military Court. It focused on the findings of the monitoring visits, specifically addressing cases of prolonged detention without charge or access to due process. Discussions considered the Court's potential role in overseeing release and acquittal verdicts. While judges participated constructively and showed interest in further training, they noted that monitoring the implementation of release orders fell under the remit of the Supreme Military Command of the Libyan National Army.

41. A fifth mission to Benghazi was conducted in April 2025, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, responding to requests from military prosecutors for sustained capacity-building. A two-day training programme, held on 23 and 24 April 2025, for 15 military prosecutors, legal officers, criminal investigators and intelligence officers from eastern Libya, including one woman, focused on developing and strengthening the institutional capacities of the military prosecution system by promoting human rights and implementing fair trial guarantees. Sessions focused on human rights-based criminal investigations, the prohibition of torture, enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention, the relationship between military criminal justice and human rights, and the role of transitional justice in reforming the military justice system. Discussions on prolonged detention without

charge or access to due process were largely met with denials and justifications but highlighted the importance of ongoing engagement, as military prosecutors are crucial to preventing abuses and promoting accountability in Libya.

42. Building on the training of Internal Security Agency officers in February 2025, a further two-day training was carried out, on 28 and 29 April 2025, for 11 senior officers, including two women, many of whom had attended the earlier training. Topics included human rights during arrest and detention, ethical conduct in security operations, transitional justice, and mechanisms concerning enforced disappearance. Participants again requested follow-up workshops and continued engagement with OHCHR and UNSMIL to support the integration of human rights into the operations of the Internal Security Agency. Discussions, however, often focused on the participants' perception of bias in the United Nations and the international community, rather than on human rights concerns.

43. Following each mission, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, sent letters to the relevant authorities, communicating the findings and emphasizing the need for sustained monitoring of places of detention. Despite the lack of gender inclusion, cooperation with military and judicial stakeholders through both workshops and visits to places of detention indicated a growing openness from the eastern authorities to implement human rights standards and reinforced the roles of OHCHR and UNSMIL in promoting human rights and the rule of law in Libya. Nonetheless, sustained capacity-building efforts alongside legislative and institutional reform are required to bring the administration of military justice, the treatment of detainees, and prison management into alignment with fair trial, due process and other human rights standards in Libya.

B. Reforming criminal and military justice

44. Revision of the Libyan penal and criminal procedure codes to bring them into line with the country's international human rights obligations remained a focus of technical assistance and capacity-building, although the liquidity situation of the United Nations limited the scope of work initially envisaged. Building on a seminar held in February 2024 at which consensus had been reached on finalizing a strategy for reform of the penal and criminal procedure codes,¹⁰ on 16 and 17 November 2024, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, gathered 20 participants, including two women, in Tripoli from law faculties, the Bar Association, the National Council for Civil Liberties and Human Rights and several government authorities tasked with reviewing the legislation.

45. Participants discussed the main substantive and procedural flaws in Libyan criminal law and progress on legal reforms. Considering the political deadlock and challenges in adopting legislation during the reporting period – exemplified by delays in finalizing a permanent constitution – participants agreed to focus on targeted amendments to the penal and criminal procedure codes, submitting specific proposals to the legislative authority, instead of pursuing wholesale reform at that time. In keeping with this strategy, participants proposed several measures to improve the criminal justice system, including implementing principles of restorative justice and alternatives to custodial penalties. Stakeholders agreed to continue regular meetings, supported by OHCHR and UNSMIL, to advance these partial amendments and promote programmes at law faculties for the reform of the penal and criminal procedure codes.

46. Divisions between authorities with legislative reform powers continued to hinder criminal justice reforms. Despite the Attorney General's endorsement of a reform strategy in February 2024, no unified road map was finalized during the November 2024 follow-up activity owing to persistent institutional disagreements and political divisions. Lack of institutional buy-in also stalled progress, particularly with respect to proposed amendments that would strengthen fair trial guarantees and address systemic weaknesses in the Libyan justice system. Nonetheless, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, continued to support the relevant authorities to advance the road map to reform and foster broader ownership, particularly as the Public Prosecution Office remains committed to leading these efforts and

¹⁰ Ibid., para. 29.

there remains sufficient buy-in from stakeholders to build on the groundwork laid so far. In lieu of the follow-up workshops initially envisaged, technical advice on implementing the road map to reform continued to be provided to the Office of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Justice.

C. Creating an enabling environment for transitional justice and reconciliation

47. During the reporting period, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL and the African Union, continued to advocate for the establishment of a comprehensive, rights-based and people-centred national transitional justice and reconciliation process in Libya, with the involvement of all Libyan stakeholders. Efforts continued to support the House of Representatives and the Presidency Council to reach agreement on a legislative framework grounded in inclusive dialogue, human rights and transitional justice principles. On 5 and 6 December 2024, a meeting was held in Tunis bringing together 16 participants, including two women, from the House of Representatives, the High Council of State, the Constitutional Drafting Assembly and the Presidency Council, alongside legal experts, to discuss amendments to the draft law on reconciliation that had been presented to parliament on 25 November 2024. While the amended draft was ultimately not adopted, stakeholders continue to support the role of UNSMIL in engaging directly with all relevant parties towards the adoption of a unified law.

48. Efforts to strengthen the role of civil society and local communities in achieving reconciliation and promoting human rights continued. From 24 to 26 February 2025, OHCHR and UNSMIL, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and No Peace Without Justice, convened a workshop in Tunis aimed at strengthening civil society's contribution to the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review of Libya, scheduled for November 2025. It focused on enhancing civil society's capacity to engage effectively with the review process and other international human rights mechanisms, and fostered networking and coalition-building among Libyan civil society organizations and the diplomatic community on key human rights priorities and concerns. A follow-up meeting, due to be held in June 2025, will enable further engagement between stakeholders on these concerns.

49. In August 2024, OHCHR and UNSMIL issued a joint report on killings, disappearance, sexual violence, abductions, torture, ill-treatment, forced displacement and other gross human rights violations and abuses, as well as serious violations of international humanitarian law, committed between 2013 and 2022 in the western city of Tarhunah by Kaniyat, an armed element that had emerged in 2011, including while it was aligned with the former Government of National Accord and later integrated into the Libyan National Army.¹¹ The report complemented and built upon the findings of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya in 2022 on mass graves in Tarhunah and associated atrocities.¹²

50. On 18 and 19 December 2024, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, held a workshop in Tripoli to support the Libyan authorities and other stakeholders to implement the report's recommendations and promote justice and accountability for victims. Among the 20 participants, three of whom were women, were State officials, forensic experts, the mayor of Tarhunah and representatives of victims and their families. The Military Prosecutor provided an update on investigations and challenges in pursuing accountability, while the General Authority for the Search for and Identification of Missing Persons detailed ongoing efforts to exhume and identify victims. Discussions centred on progress and challenges in implementing the report's recommendations, including the resumption of excavation in areas identified as potential mass grave sites in and around Tarhunah, the development of tailored

¹¹ OHCHR and UNSMIL, "Tarhuna: mass graves and related human rights violations and abuses in Libya", 30 August 2024.

¹² See the conference room paper of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya on its detailed findings on the situation in Tarhunah, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session50/list-reports>.

reparations programmes to address victims' needs, and national accountability efforts considering recent arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court. Following the workshop, the Office of the Prime Minister sent a letter to all relevant officials, requesting updates on steps taken to implement the report's recommendations.

51. In line with these efforts, OHCHR and UNSMIL, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, continued to implement a three-year programme, funded by the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, to address the issue of missing persons in Libya. The programme includes capacity-building for Libyan forensic institutions, support for the establishment of a national network of civil society for missing persons, family consultations and the development of tools to improve psychosocial support, legal awareness and advocacy.

52. OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, also supported efforts to foster a future reconciliation process by convening the international humanitarian law committees of armed forces in eastern and western Libya. The workshop, held in Tunis on 7 and 8 January 2025 with 17 participants, including one woman, promoted obligations under international humanitarian law and facilitated dialogue on the exchange of detainees and handover of human remains. Participants identified key challenges and obstacles to such exchanges, including lack of access to detainees in unofficial detention facilities and to those held on criminal charges, lack of resources for identifying human remains and refusal by families to provide DNA samples. The committees requested OHCHR and UNSMIL to organize a further meeting in Tunis to develop a road map towards addressing these challenges. The initiative, however, stalled after the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not agree to a meeting outside Libya, despite the committees' agreement on its necessity given the political and security context in Libya.

IV. Conclusions

53. The delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building in Libya was challenged by the current political and security situation, which continues to undermine a democratic transition and efforts to break cycles of violence and impunity for violations and abuses. In mid-May 2025, Libya narrowly avoided a return to war following the killing of the leader of the Stability Support Apparatus, a prominent State security force with a history of human rights violations.¹³ The subsequent outbreak of violence in densely populated civilian areas, which caused several civilian deaths and injuries, as well as the discovery of mass graves and other grave violations at detention sites in the aftermath, highlighted the absence of the rule of law and widespread human rights violations and abuses by security actors, with no justice or accountability for countless victims in Libya.

54. In the wake of new commitments by various Libyan authorities to build responsive institutions, reform detention and the security sector and end impunity for violations and abuses, Libya has an opportunity to advance its political and reconciliation processes, restore the rule of law and ensure accountability for violations. The technical assistance and capacity-building provided by OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, highlights the fact that respect for human rights cannot be effectively advanced without establishing a comprehensive, rights-based and people-centred national reconciliation and transitional justice process and a sustainable political settlement that address the root causes of conflict, end violations and abuses and lead to the building of legitimate institutions.

55. The liquidity situation in relation to the regular budget of the United Nations Secretariat limited the capacity of OHCHR and UNSMIL to fully discharge the mandate pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 56/16. To the extent possible within this constraint, OHCHR, in cooperation with UNSMIL, continued to assist the authorities to advance key criminal justice legislative and institutional reforms and to create a legislative framework and enabling environment for a national transitional

¹³ See [A/HRC/52/83](#).

justice and reconciliation process. Efforts to improve detention conditions and the administration of military justice focused on implementing international norms and standards, aligning national legislation with international standards on detention and creating an independent national committee for the prevention of human rights violations and abuses in places of deprivation of liberty. These efforts led to the granting of partial access to some of these places.

56. The establishment of cooperation with the eastern authorities led to their facilitation of entry to Benghazi, granting of partial access to some detention facilities in eastern Libya and engagement in technical assistance and capacity-building activities. The authorities in western Libya maintained constructive engagement with OHCHR and UNSMIL on such activities; however, they too granted only partial access to some detention facilities and, in many cases, did not respond to requests to address alleged violations.

57. Despite the fact that technical assistance and capacity-building faces significant limitations, sustained support from OHCHR and UNSMIL remains important to assist the authorities and other stakeholders to foster an environment conducive to rights-based reconciliation and prevention of and accountability for violations and abuses.

V. Recommendations

58. With a view to strengthening the effectiveness and impact of technical assistance and capacity-building support and improving the situation of human rights in Libya, OHCHR makes the recommendations set out below.

59. OHCHR recommends that the Libyan authorities:

(a) Continue to work towards the implementation of all the recommendations of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, including through increased cooperation with OHCHR and UNSMIL and the granting of full access to all locations and places of detention;

(b) Ensure accountability and justice for violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law through independent investigations and prosecutions of alleged perpetrators in accordance with fair trial standards and due process guarantees, and full cooperation with the International Criminal Court on outstanding arrest warrants and investigations;

(c) Ensure the operationalization and independent functioning of committees tasked with monitoring detention facilities, investigating violations and abuses by State security forces and affiliated armed groups and investigating deaths and violence during the clashes and protests in Tripoli in May 2025, in line with commitments by the Libyan authorities;

(d) Immediately release all arbitrarily detained individuals, close all unofficial detention centres and publicly disclose their existence;

(e) Intensify efforts to adopt enabling legislative frameworks crucial for addressing the human rights challenges in Libya, including by enacting a unified national reconciliation law, the draft law aimed at protecting women from violence, legislation regulating civil society organizations, and a revised criminal justice framework, all in alignment with the human rights obligations of Libya;

(f) With a view to holding meaningful and inclusive national elections, strengthen institutional readiness in accordance with existing legal frameworks, including by developing electoral dispute mechanisms and post-election programmes aimed at unifying institutions, with the technical assistance and capacity-building support of OHCHR and UNSMIL;

(g) Advance on recent commitments to undertake human rights-based reform of the security sector in Libya by ensuring the humane treatment of detainees, thoroughly investigating past violations and abuses, preserving evidence to support accountability efforts and prioritizing programmes that enhance the transparency and accountability of the security sector, in compliance with international standards;

(h) Reverse the erosion of civic space by preventing and refraining from acts of intimidation and reprisals against political and civil society actors and other persons at a heightened risk of human rights violations and abuses, and investigating and providing effective remedies to victims of reprisals;

(i) Promote the human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers – including by countering disinformation campaigns that spread hate speech, racism and xenophobia and supporting access to vital services for migrants in Libya – end the criminalization of irregular migration and establish alternatives to detention.

60. OHCHR recommends that the international community:

(a) Continue to provide targeted technical assistance and capacity-building support to the Libyan authorities, in line with human rights due diligence policies, focused on strengthening national capacities to implement the recommendations of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya and building on the assistance provided pursuant to previous resolutions of the Human Rights Council;

(b) Strengthen the monitoring and reporting capacity of OHCHR through additional resources to effectively respond to the prevailing human rights challenges in Libya;

(c) Provide support for the establishment of a comprehensive, rights-based and people-centred national transitional justice and reconciliation process in Libya that ensures the meaningful participation of women, cultural components, youth, civil society and victims and is led by Libya;

(d) Support wider accountability efforts, including through States' exercise, in accordance with international law, of universal jurisdiction over international crimes committed in Libya and through full cooperation with the International Criminal Court with respect to the situation, in particular through the execution of outstanding arrest warrants;

(e) Review and, if necessary, suspend cooperation with the Libyan authorities involved in gross human rights violations, including against migrants and refugees, support Libyan efforts to protect the rights of migrants and refugees, provide safe alternatives to detention and widen safe and regular pathways for migration.
