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Seventy-seventh year

9192nd meeting

Tuesday, 15 November 2022, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Agyeman.	(Ghana)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil.	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Xing Jisheng
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Mr. Mythen
	Kenya.	Ms. Nyakoe
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation.	Mr. Polyanskiy
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America.	Mr. Mills

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Bathily.

Mr. Bathily: Mr. President, I thank you for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on recent developments in Libya.

Since my last briefing to the Council on 24 October (see S/PV.9162), I have pursued my consultations with Libyan stakeholders from all regions of the country, which I had initiated upon arriving in Tripoli in mid-October. During the reporting period, I engaged repeatedly with members of the Presidential Council, the High Council of State, and other key actors in the political, economic and security spheres, recalling that it was their moral and political responsibility to work actively towards bringing the country back to peace and stability through a Libyan-Libyan solution to the crisis.

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

On 5 November in Tripoli, at the invitation of the Government, I attended a simulation exercise on securing national elections. While I welcome such a plan as encouraging, the holding of elections requires

more sustained efforts in all areas, by all actors and in all regions. For its part, UNSMIL continues to provide technical assistance to the High National Elections Commission to maintain readiness for elections once political, legal and security conditions are met.

Yesterday I led a joint mission to Sebha, in Libya's south, with my deputy and resident humanitarian coordinator during which I had the opportunity to meet local officials, tribal leaders, academics and civil society organizations. This visit follows earlier visits I conducted to the east and west of the country, which I reported on previously.

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

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

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

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

I am pleased to report some progress on the security track. On 27 October in Sirte, I convened a meeting of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, which brought the Commission's activity back on track. At that joint meeting, the first for many months, the Commission agreed to establish a subcommittee for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of armed groups, which is expected to focus on mapping and classifying armed groups in Libya as a key pre-DDR step.

Meanwhile, the ceasefire continues to hold despite the ongoing escalatory rhetoric and a build-up of forces on both sides. All parties must refrain from any steps that could undermine the ceasefire. In that regard, I would like to urge the Council to impress upon all actors that any recourse to violence and intimidation will not be accepted and that there can be no military solution to the Libya crisis. Delaying tactics aimed at postponing the elections indefinitely will only deepen the crisis. I am concerned about the lack of progress in the implementation of the Commission's action plan for the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces. The Libyan parties need to renew their focus on kick-starting the withdrawal process, in line with the action plan. Pending the Libyan authorities' approval required for the UNSMIL ceasefire monitors' deployment to Sirte, the monitors continue to operate from Tripoli. They did not report any ceasefire violations during the reporting period.

On the economic front, the lack of accountability, transparency and equity in the allocation of resources remains a key cause of tensions. I therefore welcome the Council's emphasis, in resolution 2656 (2022), on the importance of establishing a Libyan-led mechanism that brings together stakeholders from across the country to set spending priorities and ensure that oil and gas revenues are managed transparently and equitably, with effective Libyan oversight. On 9 November, the co-Chairs of the Economic Working Group of the International Follow-Up Committee on Libya

resumed consultations and agreed on the urgency of supporting related initiatives by Libyan institutions and assisting them in harmonizing proposals for temporary mechanisms until an elected Government is in place or a national budget is agreed on.

The human rights situation in Libya remains alarming. UNSMIL continues to document enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and ill-treatment in detention facilities across the country. Since October, dozens of detainees in Mitiga prison have reportedly started a hunger strike to protest the conditions in their detention. The authorities have refused to issue detention certificates, which prevents families from receiving the allowances and salaries of their detained relatives. Human rights violations against migrants and asylum-seekers continue with impunity. I want to reiterate how urgent it is to find rights-based alternatives to detention. Migrants and refugees crossing the central Mediterranean from Libya continue to be intercepted by Libyan authorities, made to disembark in Libya and sent to detention centres where they suffer serious human rights abuses. We reiterate our call to the Libyan authorities and neighbouring countries to uphold international standards related to safe search-and-rescue practices and ensure that people who are intercepted are able to disembark in a place of safety. On the humanitarian front, I am pleased to report a continuing 57 per cent decrease since 2020 in the number of internally displaced persons in Libya, which now stands at 134,787. The Libyan authorities should accelerate their efforts to find durable solutions for all who are still internally displaced.

Women remain concerned about their ability to actively engage in the awaited elections, both as voters and candidates. Online violence against women has been on the rise. UNSMIL has been supporting women's groups in leading a unified campaign against that kind of violence. I call for continued and consistent efforts to improve women's rights and incorporate related measures into the law of the land. I am glad to note the active and positive participation of women and young people in my interactions with Libyans at the grass-roots level.

In the coming weeks and months, UNSMIL will endeavour to facilitate a conversation between the key institutional players in Libya as a step towards overcoming their differences and moving forward towards the organization of free and fair elections. We will also strengthen our engagement with relevant

segments of the general citizenry, as their legitimate voices need to be heard and will be paramount in ensuring that the country can find a way out of the crisis. The accompanying support and pressure from the Council, in particular, and the international community, as a whole, speaking with a united voice under the coordination of the United Nations, are likely to reap positive results.

The President: I thank Mr. Bathily for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), for his briefing on the current situation in the country. I would like to take this opportunity to express our support for his mediation efforts.

The situation in Libya remains extremely tense. Despite the relative calm on the ground, the current status quo is extremely unstable. Realistically, we do not yet see an end to the dual-power period, nor are there any prospects for the holding of inclusive, nationwide elections or for unifying the organs of Government. Progress on the Constitution track is also very modest. Meanwhile, under pressure from the diverging interests of external players, the situation again threatens to spiral out of control. We believe that the current situation in Libya demands the Security Council's undiminished attention to the issue, which is why we insisted on convening today's meeting. At this juncture, our priority is maintaining the ceasefire regime and facilitating the quest for compromise among the main political players in Libya. Given the recent troubling reports from Tripoli, that is particularly urgent. We underscore the unacceptability of creating obstacles to the Government's work and urge Libyan leaders to show restraint and refrain from taking escalatory steps.

We reaffirm our approach to eliminating the foreign military presence in Libya through a coordinated, balanced, gradual and step-by-step withdrawal of all non-Libyan armed groups and military units, without exception, with the aim of maintaining the balance of power and preventing the escalation that might be triggered by a sudden security vacuum. The international community should coordinate its assistance to Libyans, and in that regard, UNSMIL is

one of the main mediators. Key players in Libya and its neighbours should not have a dual agenda.

One of the main reasons for the protracted Libyan crisis has been the consistent policy of our Western colleagues, who pay lip service to their commitment to a political settlement but continue exploiting the turbulence in Libya for their own interests. The energy factor plays an important role in that connection. There is no mistaking the fact that Western capitals are paying increasingly greater attention to Libyan hydrocarbons and their extraction and transit. Moreover, Libya is known for its low-cost oil production, which is of high quality and located close to European markets. It is not a coincidence that in every statement by Western officials on Libya the importance of unimpeded access to Libyan natural resources is always mentioned in one way or another, or that the force majeure declared this summer on a number of Libyan oil fields resulted in a disproportionately negative reaction from those same officials.

That comes as no surprise, as the goal of turning Libya into a gas station to meet the energy needs of our Western colleagues was devised not yesterday but in 2011, when Libyan statehood was destroyed as a result of the aggression of NATO countries. It is clear that the United States Administration continues to view the political process in Libya solely through the prism of its own economic interests, including by preventing price hikes on the so-called black gold. Accordingly, Washington's main efforts are aimed not at a genuine settlement of the Libyan crisis but rather at preserving the situation so that it does not deteriorate and undermine the supply of energy resources from that North African country to the European market. In the understanding of our American colleagues, that is the main task of the Libyan authorities.

Furthermore, we cannot exclude the existence of a number of agreements reached behind the scenes with third countries on the export of Libyan oil. Essentially, Washington does not care who extracts it or on what legal grounds — its ultimate goal is to squeeze Russia out of the world energy market. A similar policy is being pursued in relation to other oil-producing countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

The Libyan economy is more than 90 per cent dependent on oil exports. According to the Libyan National Oil Corporation, the country's hydrocarbon production has already reached 1.2 million barrels per

day, which is projected to increase to 2 million barrels per day. The largest oil reserves in Africa could provide Libya with enough funds to quickly restore the country.

Nevertheless, in the context of political instability and the disunity among key financial institutions, those oil revenues do not always make it into the country's budget but remain in foreign bank accounts. It is important to ensure that those funds are used for the benefit of ordinary Libyans, rather than ending up in the pockets of a small number of businesspeople, including foreigners.

However, such a scenario does not fit into the priorities of our Western colleagues, which is why, unfortunately, we continue to see the machinations behind the scenes, the creation of various non-transparent configurations, the fomenting of divisions among political actors and the attempts to impose external choices on the Libyan people.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Representative Bathily for taking time away from his important engagement with Libyan stakeholders to brief the Security Council today. I welcome his continued engagement with all Libyan stakeholders, including women and young people, across the country.

Let me once again express the United Kingdom's support for Special Representative Bathily and his efforts to reinvigorate Libya's stalled political process. Stability in Libya can be achieved only through a United Nations-facilitated, Libyan-led and Libyan-owned process that leads to parliamentary and presidential elections as soon as feasible. All Libyan parties have an obligation to work with Special Representative Bathily to achieve that and deliver elections for the Libyan people.

We are concerned by reports that armed groups prevented a meeting of the High State Council in Tripoli yesterday. Any attempt to obstruct civilian institutions from carrying out their responsibilities is unacceptable.

The United Kingdom reaffirms our commitment to working with Libya and our international partners to secure peace, stability and prosperity for Libya. The unanimous adoption of the 12-month renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya was a welcome demonstration of the Council's support, and I look forward to engaging with Special

Representative Bathily again during the mandated Council meeting to be held next month.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I also wish to start by thanking Special Representative Bathily for his briefing. Norway is encouraged to see that he has been able to consult with a broad range of actors all over Libya since he arrived in the country. His message to the various parties about the importance of agreeing on a constitutional framework for holding free and fair elections is critical, and we call on all parties to reach such an agreement as soon as possible. Fulfilling the will of the Libyan people is more important than securing personal positions and privileges.

The full implementation of the ceasefire agreement reached in 2020, including the withdrawal of foreign fighters, mercenaries and foreign forces, is also of the utmost importance for Libya's stability and the security of its people.

Let me also reiterate Norway's deep concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Libya. Civil society representatives and human rights defenders must be protected. We also continue to be deeply concerned by the reports of violations and abuses of international law, including conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detention, abductions and the reported use of torture. Greater efforts are urgently needed to end those violations and abuses.

Finally, let me again express Norway's full support for the United Nations presence in Libya, especially that of Special Representative Bathily. We continue to urge all actors to engage constructively with him in the political process.

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I thank Special Representative Bathily for his update this morning. We continue to support his efforts to reach a sustainable and peaceful Libyan-led and Libyan-owned solution to the current crisis.

We reiterate our calls for Libyan leaders to come together and agree on a constitutional basis for the holding of free, fair and inclusive elections as soon as possible. The ultimate goal should be the establishment of a unified Libyan Government that serves all Libyans and brings to a close the protracted transition period.

We are encouraged by the Special Representative's commitment to an inclusive approach and process. We continue to urge meaningful engagement with civil society, including women and young people, which is

all the more essential against the alarming backdrop of the shrinking civil society space in Libya.

We welcome the meeting last month of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in Sirte and the agreement to establish a subcommittee on armed groups. We echo calls for the full and expeditious implementation of the October 2020 ceasefire agreement and the maintenance of prevailing calm on the ground.

Finally, we welcome the unanimous adoption last month of the one-year renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), which was a critical step that enables the Special Representative to fulfil his mandate with predictability and stability. Resolution 2656 (2022) contains key elements, including on women's participation, accountability, human rights and the protection of civilians.

Libyans deserve the collective support of both the members of the Security Council around this table and the broader international community. We encourage all actors to use their influence and good offices to avoid a deepening of tensions between Libyan parties and to put Libyans first. The appointment of Special Representative Bathily, coupled with the substantive renewal of UNSMIL's mandate, should provide us with the opportunity and momentum to achieve that.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Bathily for his update on the current situation in Libya. We welcome his efforts to engage all parties to reach an agreement on a constitutional framework for presidential and parliamentary elections and a timeline for a vote. We call on all Libyan leaders to meaningfully participate in a process that leads Libya to free and fair elections as soon as possible. There is no other viable path to unified governance. In the lead-up to elections, it is imperative that Libya continue to make progress on the implementation of the 2020 ceasefire agreement, particularly the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries. All must commit to reducing tensions that could lead to renewed widespread violence. It is also imperative that Libya's leaders embrace a transparency mechanism that catalogues in detail the State's oil revenues and the allocation of those funds to ensure that they are used for the benefit of the Libyan people.

Before I conclude, let me respond to the accusations of the Russian representative this morning. The United States rejects accusations that access to Libyan oil

reserves is somehow the cause of the political impasse in Libya today. We are dismayed that a member of the Security Council that is an active participant in the conflict today and is violating the Charter of the United Nations by invading and occupying its neighbour continues to shift the focus of the Council with unfounded conspiracy theories. It is simply a failed attempt to shield itself from legitimate criticism. Libya's leaders must shoulder the responsibility of achieving sustainable peace, good governance and, ultimately, prosperity for the people of Libya. And the United States stands ready to support them.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his briefing and welcome the Libyan delegation to this meeting.

Brazil considers it important for the Security Council to continue to keep the situation in Libya under close scrutiny. We are aware that the growing numbers of Council meetings are not necessarily helpful to our ability to discharge our collective responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations. But we should be careful not to send a message of neglect with regard to certain files, particularly the Libyan one, while we give other items on the Council's agenda comparatively more space. The heightened tensions yesterday in Tripoli around a meeting of the High State Council emphasize the importance of closely monitoring the situation in Libya. We will focus our remarks on one key aspect of the situation in Libya, which is the international community's approach to the country.

First of all, Brazil has taken note of the willingness of a number of actors, neighbouring countries and regional organizations to collaborate with Libyan stakeholders in the pursuit of peace and stability. We would therefore like to remind the Council of the important role that the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) can play in response to Libyans' request for the mobilization and coordination of international efforts and goodwill for the country's benefit. In that regard, we also want to highlight the importance of a coherent, integrated and strategic approach to peacebuilding in Libya, in full respect for Libyan sovereignty and peacebuilding priorities. Given the close relationship between the situations in Libya and the Sahel, as well as the current engagement of the region with the Peacebuilding Commission, we further emphasize the importance of regional coordination, including among

the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the United Nations missions operating in the Sahel and the PBC.

The international attitudes to Libya, however, have not been uniformly positive. On the contrary, some countries seem to have been fuelling the very protracted threat of armed conflict that we in the Council have been discussing for so long. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups, the withdrawal of foreign troops and the unification of military and security institutions are but a few areas where foreign actions can actually be an obstacle to peace and national reconciliation in Libya when they are not undertaken under the auspices of relevant United Nations bodies such as the PBC. The same is true for the ongoing political standstill. We reiterate that the political transition in Libya must be Libyan-led and Libyan-owned, including with regard to an agreement on a legal basis and timeline for elections. At the same time, we acknowledge that the African Union is well positioned to assist Libyan stakeholders in pursuing intra-Libyan dialogue, including on national reconciliation free from interference motivated by foreign interests.

All countries must fully respect Libya's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity. They must also abide by the measures authorized by the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter. We therefore echo the concerns about the effectiveness of the arms embargo, whose failings appear to be a direct consequence of pressure based on narrow political interests from outside Libya. The same goes for the freezing of Libyan assets abroad, whose active management in foreign countries contravenes the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to working for the goal of a truly Libyan-led and -owned peaceful political transition, which we consider a necessary condition for peace and stability in Libya, together with progress in the security and economic sectors, all of which should be led from within Libya, with the participation of Libyan stakeholders.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing.

France's priorities concerning Libya remain unchanged. Our goal continues to be a unified Libyan Government capable of holding presidential and legislative elections throughout the country. Libyans have a right to security and sovereignty, and the ceasefire

agreement must therefore be fully implemented. In coordination with the United Nations, France will continue to support dialogue between the security actors in the east and west, with a view to the formation of a unified Libyan army capable of controlling its borders. France will also continue to demand that the arms embargo be respected and that all foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries be withdrawn from Libyan territory. Libyans have the right to choose their leaders. In the face of foreign interference, a new and credible political road map for the concurrent holding of presidential and parliamentary elections throughout Libya is paramount. It should include strong guarantees, both political and financial, so as to ensure the effective holding of elections. All Libyans have a right to prosperity. A fair and transparent redistribution of income for the benefit of the entire population is crucial. The human rights violations perpetrated in Libya by human traffickers and militia members are shocking. Impunity must end. Greater cooperation between the Libyan authorities and the International Criminal Court is essential. France welcomed the recent visit to Libya by Prosecutor Karim Khan.

The Council's adoption on 28 October of resolution 2656 (2022), with a robust one-year mandate for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, should contribute constructively to Mr. Bathily's mediation efforts. France will continue to support him in those efforts with a view to achieving a stable, sovereign and united Libya.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his update on the situation on the ground and his active efforts. Albania fully supports his crucial mediation role in Libya.

Albania is deeply concerned about the stark polarization of the actors involved in Libya. Avoiding an escalation of violence and any clashes must remain a priority. All the parties should show calm and restraint and truly commit to the United Nations-led mediations. The long-standing Libyan crisis of legitimacy affects all Libyan institutions and defines the course of developments. It is high time to restore democratic legitimacy through elections — the only way for the country to move forward.

The time is long-overdue for Libyan leaders to set aside their political divergences, engage in serious dialogue and deliver on their citizens' most important request: to prepare and organize free, fair and credible

elections. That is the obstacle in the current deadlock that continues to stand in the way of our hope for tomorrow. Libyan actors who obstruct the political process simply to cling to power must be held to account.

Let us not forget that instability in Libya and the role of foreign forces and mercenaries in the country — which should be withdrawn — have repercussions beyond the country. It is essential that all international efforts in support of the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned stabilization process remain firmly anchored to the strong leadership of the United Nations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. However, the keys must remain in the hands of the Libyan political leaders.

We agree with the assessment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the deteriorating human rights situation, which affects the freedom of expression and hampers civil society. Harassment campaigns against civil-society representatives must stop, and detainees must be released.

Let me conclude by reiterating the need and urgency to see all Libyan stakeholders come to an agreement and finalize the constitutional and legal framework for holding the elections. There is no time to buy for anyone — only time to waste or lose. The Libyan people deserve a future in a stable country with a unified Government that is able to play a role in leading the country to stability, security and prosperity, based on an open and cohesive society in which everyone benefits equally from the country's national resources.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abdoulaye Bathily for his briefing today.

We have met on a monthly basis to hear updates from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. However, it is a matter of concern that the political stalemate continues and there is still no agreement between the parties on a constitutional framework for holding elections in Libya. The continued political stalemate could risk undermining the gains made in Libya since the signing of the ceasefire agreement in October 2020. The immediate priority is therefore to resolve all outstanding issues on establishing a constitutional framework for holding presidential and parliamentary elections. Holding elections at the earliest opportunity in a free, fair, inclusive and credible manner is an urgent imperative.

The frequent mobilizations of armed groups and the clashes between them bring into focus the dangers posed by the continued presence of foreign forces and mercenaries in Libya, which is a violation of Libya's ceasefire agreement of 2020 and of Security Council resolutions. Violations of Council resolutions, in particular of their provisions concerning the arms embargo, continue without regard for peace and stability in Libya and the region. Accordingly, the Panel of Experts on Libya of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) has noted that

“[t]he remainder of the training provided by [Türkiye] to the Government of National Unity Affiliated Forces is military or naval in nature and thus a violation of paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011)”. (*S/2022/427, para. 77*)

In view of that, we note that Türkiye signed yet another military agreement on 25 October. We call on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to examine whether that action by Türkiye violates paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011) and to inform the Council accordingly.

We are also concerned about the resurgence of terrorist activity in Libya, and we reiterate that terrorist groups and affiliated entities must not be allowed to operate unchallenged in Libya. Given the fact that terrorism emanating from Libya is bound to have cascading effects in the Sahel region, it is therefore important for the international community to address it at its current stage in order to prevent it from having collateral consequences on the wider African continent.

In conclusion, the political process in Libya should be fully Libyan-led and Libyan-owned, without any imposition or external interference. For its part, India remains committed to supporting Libya and the Libyan people in their endeavour to seek lasting peace and stability.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Special Representative, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, for his informative briefing, and we affirm the support of the United Arab Emirates for his mandate and the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to find a lasting solution in the country. We also welcome Ambassador Taher Elsonni to this meeting.

In the context of our discussion today, we would like to focus on the following three issues.

First, the international community must take a unified approach that is consistent with the Libyan people's desire to find a Libyan-led solution, and it must support them in that pursuit. It is therefore necessary to build on the consensus and unity reflected in the Security Council's renewal of the UNSMIL mandate in resolution 2656 (2022) and seriously consider reactivating United Nations initiatives, particularly the Berlin Conference, in a way that includes all the parties concerned, above all the Libyans themselves. Along with those efforts, we must keep in mind that the Special Representative needs to be given sufficient time and space to work with all parties and partners in Libya in order to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Libyan issue. That means that the Council should discuss the Libyan dossier according to the schedule outlined in resolution 2656 (2022) in order to give the Special Representative the opportunity to exercise his good offices.

Secondly, it is imperative to take the necessary steps to conclude a definitive agreement on a constitutional framework for holding the parliamentary and presidential elections. It is also imperative to take those steps as soon as possible in order to meet the aspirations of the Libyan people, bring the transitional stages to a conclusion and achieve sustainable political stability.

Thirdly, we welcome the Special Representative's efforts to bring together the members of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, which recently met in Sirte. In that regard, we underscore the importance of maintaining the permanent ceasefire agreement, committing to de-escalation and preventing a military build-up. We also call for concrete steps to be taken towards unifying military institutions, and we reiterate our calls for the withdrawal of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries in order to ensure that clashes do not reoccur.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reiterates its support for the United Nations and international efforts to achieve peace, stability and reconciliation in Libya in a way that meets the aspirations and hopes of the brotherly Libyan people.

Mr. Xing Jisheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Bathily, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing and welcome the Permanent Representative of Libya to today's meeting.

The political process in Libya has been stalled for some time, and instability and uncertainty on various levels have undermined the security situation. It is imperative for all the parties to remain calm, advance towards a political solution, refrain from taking any action that could escalate tensions and maintain the hard-won peace.

The 5+5 Joint Military Commission plays an important role in maintaining the ceasefire, among other things. China welcomes the recent meeting held by the Commission in Sirte and encourages all parties to continue to strengthen their communication through the Commission in order to prevent any misunderstandings. The general consensus among all the parties is that the political transition should be completed as soon as possible.

Currently, all the parties in Libya have reached consensus on most elements of the constitutional framework required for holding elections. The House of Representatives and the High Council of State recently indicated that they would resume their dialogue. China hopes that the political will of all the parties in Libya can be translated into practical actions and that, through the good offices of the United Nations and on the basis of the work accomplished to date, an agreement will be reached as soon as possible on the outstanding issues with respect to the constitutional framework for the electoral process in order to create the conditions necessary for holding elections as soon as possible.

Since he took office, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abdoulaye Bathily has worked actively to make extensive contacts with all the parties in Libya. China hopes that progress in the political process will be achieved as soon as possible through the good offices of the Special Representative. China supports the League of Arab States, the African Union and other regional organizations in playing a constructive role in Libya's political process.

External interference is a major reason for the protracted crisis in Libya. Adhering to the principle of Libyan-led and Libyan-owned is the only way for Libya to achieve peace and stability. The international community should hand over the leadership of the Libyan issue to the Libyan people and avoid imposing external solutions. All foreign fighters and mercenaries in Libya should withdraw from the country as soon as possible in a balanced and orderly manner in accordance with the will of the Libyan people. In that

process, the relevant parties should take the concerns of the neighbouring countries fully into account, strengthen communication and consultation and carry out coordinated regional actions to prevent increasing security risks in the region.

Mr. De La Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative Abdoulaye Bathily for his briefing. We have taken note of the outcomes of his recent meetings, and we reiterate our full support for his efforts. I welcome the Permanent Representative of Libya to this meeting.

Given the lack of progress on the main outstanding issues regarding the stabilization of Libya, particularly since the postponement of the elections last December, the Security Council should consider the circumstances required to effectively assist in bringing about peace in the country. Since the beginning of the conflict, the Council has put in place a vast array of measures, including sanctions, an arms embargo and authorizations to combat the trafficking of migrants and illicit arms transfers, among other things. With the establishment of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in 2011, it also sought to facilitate a political process led by the Libyan parties themselves to find a lasting solution to the conflict.

Despite all such steps, weapons and foreign fighters continue to fuel the violence. Migrants are shipwrecked in the Mediterranean every month and suffer abuses at the hands of militias and Government agencies.

It is also striking that some of those responsible for obstructing the political process have managed to consolidate their positions to such an extent that they have become interlocutors accepted by the international community. In that way, we have reached a paradox: to get out of the current political impasse, we depend, to a large extent, on the will of actors who benefit the most from the status quo.

We view with particular concern the unwarranted interference in Libyan affairs by various countries, which use opportunistic partnerships with some national political actors to advance their geostrategic interests. We believe that such machinations deepen the fragmentation of the country and undermine the Special Representative's chances of success. We therefore call on all States with influence in the Libyan conflict to refrain from actions that run counter to Security Council resolutions and to maintain an ongoing dialogue with

UNSMIL. The strict observance of the arms embargo is particularly important.

My country will continue to defend the right of the Libyan people to determine their future. To achieve that, it is essential to reach agreements that make it possible to organize general elections as soon as possible. The electoral process must include all components of Libyan society in taking decisions regarding the country's future. The full and equal participation of women and young people, whether as voters and/or candidates, is crucial in moving towards a more inclusive political system.

Finally, we are aware of the risk of regional fragmentation, which has threatened Libya since 2011. We therefore urge the actors, with the support of the Special Representative and through dialogue, to find a means of organization that addresses the legitimate regional concerns without jeopardizing the unity of the country. As we said before, a united and prosperous Libya is key to the security and stability of the entire region.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ghana.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely, Gabon, Ghana and Kenya.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, for his briefing. We welcome the participation of Ambassador Taher Elsonni, Permanent Representative of Libya.

When the Security Council met on 24 October for a briefing on the situation in Libya (see S/PV.9162), we welcomed the stability and space that a substantive year-long renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya would provide the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to meaningfully engage in the peace process. We also subsequently welcomed the 60-day reporting requirement that the Security Council requested of the Secretary-General in resolution 2656 (2022). We still believe that it would be more meaningful to allow sufficient space for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to engage in depth in the peace process. A briefing based on such a process would thereafter help us to hold a more impactful discussion on the situation in Libya.

That notwithstanding, we acknowledge the updates provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-

General today, and we encourage his continued efforts in reaching out to all parties and stakeholders and helping them to coalesce their commitment and action towards peace in Libya.

We acknowledge the magnitude of work that lies ahead in view of the continued political stalemate. We urge that, as mediation continues, national dialogue and comprehensive and inclusive national reconciliation be mainstreamed throughout the peace process. The African Union and our Governments remain on hand to support Libya in that regard.

The members of the A3 are concerned about the recurrent outbreaks of violence among rival armed groups in and around Tripoli, which continue to claim lives and injure many people. We call on all armed groups to cease their violence, especially within areas of civilian residence and activities. We also call on all Libyan leaders, particularly those under whose control the armed groups fall, to exercise maximum restraint in their utterances, which influence the conduct of those armed groups.

Foreign forces and fighters, as well as mercenaries, in Libya are a key contributor to the standoff between armed militias. Their continued presence in Libya is in direct contravention of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2656 (2022). They also continue to constitute a grave security threat to the neighbouring States and the Sahel region.

We therefore demand their immediate withdrawal. We also emphasize that such a withdrawal should be done in close coordination with neighbouring States and with the corresponding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to prevent the export of conflict into the region. In that regard, we support the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement of October 2020 and the 5+5 Joint Military Commission action plan of 8 October 2021.

We urge the political leaders and the people of Libya to understand that there cannot be a military solution to the conflict. It is critical that they commit to the political process, which must ensure that all interest groups in society, including women and young people, are meaningfully involved.

We encourage continued dialogue to help address all impediments to holding free, fair and transparent elections, as desired by the Libyans, in order to have a credible, unified Government, duly elected by the

people. Such elections cannot be achieved other than on a firm constitutional basis. We therefore urge the United Nations and other international partners, working through the Organization, to extend technical support for the development of the constitutional framework.

We encourage similar efforts for the economic development of Libya through the reunification of economic institutions. In that regard, we call for more attention to be paid to ensuring that the oil sector, as the economic mainstay of Libya, is safeguarded against undue political and foreign interference.

Our meeting in October was in the wake of the horrifying washing-up of bodies of 15 migrants in Sabratha. We continue to wake up to a steady increase in the number of African migrants facing untold atrocities while crossing the Mediterranean to Europe. This month alone about 600 migrants were stranded on the Mediterranean for two weeks in search and rescue vessels. Among them were children travelling alone and sick people, yet they were being denied disembarkation by some European Governments.

While vulnerable people are being turned away at borders, there is a growing appetite to fund African border and migration management programmes without corresponding systems of accountability. Channels of information-sharing in support of such cooperation are also wanting in transparency. We call for closer monitoring by the United Nations of the resources and information channels used in that regard, and we will be expecting more information necessary to better address that issue.

We reiterate our demand that refugees, migrants and asylum seekers be treated with dignity as a basic requirement of international law and consistent with our call in all other conflict situations worldwide.

Finally, we reaffirm our respect for Libya's territorial integrity and sovereignty and our support for a truly Libyan-led and Libyan-owned peace process.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Elsonni (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to your skilful stewardship of the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily for his briefing. We welcome the various visits that he has made

in Libya and his meetings with many stakeholders, to whom he listened.

It has been less than three weeks since the previous briefing on Libya (see S/PV.9162), and just a few days since the briefing by the Prosecutor General of the International Criminal Court (see S/PV.9187). There is therefore not much to talk about or new developments in the current political situation that we can report. Accordingly, my statement today will be brief.

We would recall that the Libyan people are tired of these many meetings and statements without achieving concrete results. Some would even say that these meetings and statements are like news releases with some briefings and political analysis without a solution. We hope that the situation will soon change.

We listened to Mr. Bathily's briefing and the statements by Council members, all of which confirm the importance of acting quickly in order to emerge from the current stalemate and the political impasse in my country. In that context, we would like to reiterate the importance of the Security Council and the international community respecting the voice of the Libyan people and their desire to emerge from the conflict and bring about stability. As stated in most of our previous statements, the solution in Libya needs us to act simultaneously on the following four issues.

First, all forms of foreign interference in Libyan affairs, direct or indirect, must cease. Those interventions have only exacerbated the state of division and dispersion in my country. We have seen that many States are currently proposing solutions according to their desires. To those we say, let the solution be Libyan-owned and by the Libyan people and their leaders and respect national initiatives to reach that solution.

Secondly, there is a need to put an end to all foreign presence on Libyan territories regardless of its name or form, and put an end to all armed groups and outlawed militias while supporting the Joint Military

Commission as a nucleus for building a united Libyan army under civilian leadership and with a monopoly on weapons by the State.

Thirdly, national efforts must be supported to emerge from the cycle of conflict through genuine and comprehensive national reconciliation. Such reconciliation could bring about stability and prosperity for the Libyan people and restore confidence among all Libyans regardless of their affiliation.

Fourthly, mistakes of the past must not be repeated while expecting different results. There is a need to respond to the will of the Libyan people who want to put an end to all transition phases and all political bodies that currently exist. That starts with supporting consensus efforts based on a Constitution and electoral laws that guarantee non-exclusion and non-marginalization in order to hold general elections as soon as possible and use all capacities available to make that happen.

As we have reiterated a number of times, elections are not a solution in and of themselves, and yet they are one of the most important paths towards ending the current crisis and putting an end to the crisis of legitimacy, so that we can find radical solutions to the remaining challenges accumulated over the years, most important a separation of powers, the fair distribution of wealth and achieving security and military stability throughout Libya's territory.

In conclusion, we reiterate that there is no military solution to the Libyan crisis. We call on everyone to support the deadlines that we have mentioned and take prompt steps to support the voice of the Libyan people and the national will to find a solution.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.