



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9270th meeting

Monday, 27 February 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mrs. Frazier (Malta)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China	Mr. Dai Bing
Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon	Mr. Biang
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
Japan	Mr. Ishikane
Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mr. Wood

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 for Libya 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: On 17 February, Libya celebrated the twelfth anniversary of the 2011 revolution. Libyans commemorated it by voicing their determination to achieve a better future. They renewed their demands for peace, long-term stability and prosperity. Yet the political process remains protracted and falls short of the aspirations of the Libyan people, who seek to elect their leaders and reinvigorate their political institutions. In short, Libyans are impatient. They question the will and desire of the current interim political actors to hold inclusive and transparent elections in 2023.

Since my most recent briefing, on 16 December 2022 (see S/PV.9223), I have continued my extensive consultations with Libyans throughout the country, with all the stakeholders from different segments of society, as well as regional and international partners on the way to overcome the current political impasse. My consultations in Libya included all key political and security figures, civil society representatives, including women and youth, representatives of cultural components and tribal leaders, as well as senior government officials and members of the House of Representatives and the High State Council. I have also received and reviewed many oral and written proposals from Libyans on ways to address the political impasse. Before traveling to New York, I engaged with the President of the Presidential Council, Prime Minister Al Dabiba, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the High State Council and Field Marshal Haftar.

In an effort to expand the scope of my consultations, I undertook, after my first visit to the region on 2 December 2022, a new tour of the region and of European capitals and met with partners in Algiers, Tunis, Brazzaville, Rabat, Rome, Cairo, Paris, London, Berlin, Moscow and Washington, D.C., and I consulted with the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China. I shared my concerns about the current state of the political process and stressed the need to put an end to the repeated transitional arrangements, which only serve the interests of the proponents of the status quo. I encouraged all my interlocutors to speak with one voice and recalled that their respective interests could only be met through a peaceful, stable and prosperous Libya. I am pleased to report that, by and large, all regional and international partners agreed on the necessity to hold inclusive and transparent elections in 2023.

On 8 February, the House of Representatives adopted the thirteenth constitutional amendment to the 2011 Constitutional Declaration, which was published in the official gazette. This amendment is yet to be endorsed by the High State Council. Despite repeated attempts by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the High State Council and their delegations to agree on a constitutional basis for elections, disagreements persist. The thirteenth constitutional amendment, which has been signed and was published in the official gazette a few days ago, is controversial within the Libyan political class and general citizenry. Moreover, it does not address key contentious issues, such as the eligibility criteria for presidential candidates, does not stipulate a clear road map and timelines to realize inclusive elections in 2023, and adds additional contentious issues such as the regional representation in the Senate.

Libya's political class is going through a major legitimacy crisis. Indeed, we could say that most institutions lost their legitimacy years ago. Resolving the legitimacy crisis should therefore be a priority for all political actors willing to change the status quo. To date, the House of Representatives and the High State Council have been unable to agree on a consensus constitutional basis for elections. Meanwhile, the realization of presidential and legislative elections requires a broader national consensus, which involves the buy-in and participation of a wider range of stakeholders, including national institutions, political figures, security actors, tribal forces and other stakeholders.

Based on article 64 of the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement, and building on agreements previously reached among Libyan stakeholders, I have therefore decided to launch an initiative aimed at enabling presidential and legislative elections to be organized and held in 2023. In that regard, I plan to establish a high-level steering panel for Libya. The proposed mechanism will bring together all the relevant Libyan stakeholders, including representatives of political institutions, major political figures, tribal leaders, civil-society organizations, security actors and representatives of women and young people. In addition to facilitating the adoption of a legal framework and time-bound road map for the holding of elections in 2023, the proposed panel will also provide a platform for advancing consensus on related matters, such as election security and the adoption of a code of conduct for all candidates.

On 12 January, I was pleased to participate in the closing session of the preparatory meeting for a national reconciliation conference to be convened by the African Union and Libya's Presidential Council in Tripoli later this year. The meeting brought together more than 100 participants, including prominent political, tribal and religious figures and representatives from across the country's political spectrum. I commend the Presidential Council and the African Union for their efforts. Reconciliation is a long-term process that should be inclusive, victim-centred, rights-based and grounded in transitional justice principles. I encourage the Presidential Council, with the support of the African Union, to implement the necessary steps for an inclusive national reconciliation conference in Libya, and I emphasize the continuing United Nations support for Libyan partners and the African Union.

The 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) has continued to make progress in implementing the ceasefire agreement. I am pleased to report that the ceasefire has continued to hold and there have been no violations recorded since my previous briefing. The security situation, however, remains fragile. On 15 and 16 January, I chaired a two-day meeting with the Military Commission in Sirte with Libyan and United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) ceasefire monitors. I am pleased to report that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission endorsed the terms of reference for its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration joint technical subcommittee, which will be mandated with the categorization of armed groups, pursuant to the fourth provision of the ceasefire agreement.

Encouraging steps were also taken to set the conditions for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process once the political environment is conducive to that. The Commission decided to launch a dialogue with representatives of armed groups to discuss ways to secure a conducive environment for elections, among other issues. UNSMIL, jointly with the 5+5 JMC and at its request, plans to facilitate a dialogue with representatives of armed groups in the coming weeks.

On 7 and 8 February, I chaired a two-day meeting in Cairo bringing together the 5+5 JMC and the liaison committees of Libya, the Sudan and the Niger. With the support of UNSMIL advisers, the participants developed and endorsed an integrated mechanism for joint coordination and information-sharing among the three countries to facilitate the process of the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters. I am planning to conduct visits to those two neighbouring countries and Chad, whose representatives were unable to attend the previous meeting, to discuss and encourage their authorities to further support the implementation of the action plan for the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries.

With regard to the economic track, the management of the country's resources remains a serious concern for all Libyans. The use of Libya's resources, particularly the prioritization of expenditures, the continued lack of basic services, the absence of accountability and demands for the equitable distribution of resources must be fully addressed. I reiterate the importance and urgency of establishing a Libyan-led mechanism that brings together stakeholders from across the country to agree on spending priorities and ensure that oil and gas revenues are managed in a transparent and equitable manner, in line with resolution 2656 (2022). Reunifying and reforming the Central Bank are also key to maintaining accountability and promoting the economic welfare of the country. To that end, the co-Chairs of the Economic Working Group of the Berlin International Follow-up Committee on Libya have continued to engage with Libyan institutions to advance discussions on an agreement for a temporary expenditure and oversight mechanism. In order to achieve sustainable progress, advancing the economic track must remain an integral part of the political dialogue with Libyan stakeholders and the Libyan people.

Regrettably, the already limited civic space in Libya continues to be further restricted, silencing the voices of civil-society groups and activists. I have been alarmed

by the wave of arrests of women human rights defenders accused of offending Libya's traditions, following the activation of the anti-cybercrime law on 17 February. February also marks more than a year since four civil-society actors were arbitrarily arrested and detained, while peacefully exercising their fundamental right to freedom of expression, on a pretext of protecting Libyan culture and values. In late December 2022 they were sentenced to three years' imprisonment. I reiterate my calls on the Libyan authorities to end their crackdown on civil society, protect and promote the civic space and cease interfering in the work of civil-society organizations.

In all my consultations with women and civil-society organizations, they continue to call for a greater role in the ongoing political and reconciliation processes. They demand to have their voices heard and for full representation in all institutions. I reiterate that women must be meaningfully represented in all political and reconciliation processes, as well as in civil society, cultural components and groups and communities of young people and vulnerable people. On a more positive note, on 6 February, a draft law on combating violence against women was officially submitted to the House of Representatives. I acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Libyan experts who developed the bill, which is essential to ensuring women's fundamental right to live free from violence.

In conclusion, and as Libyans have just been celebrating the twelfth anniversary of the 17 February revolution, it is our mandate to support them in their aspirations to realize their goals for a stable country led by authorities dedicated to the people's welfare. Inclusive and transparent national elections to be held in 2023 are a key step in that direction. I reiterate my request that the Council express its support for my suggested way forward to fulfil the aspirations of the Libyan people.

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.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): Let me start by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his briefing, as well as his extensive consultations on the situation in Libya and for outlining his plan for the political process. And in response to his remarks today, I would like to tell him that United Kingdom supports the establishment

of a high-level steering panel for Libya. I welcome his commitment to reinvigorating the political process to deliver elections for Libya and its people.

To deliver parliamentary and presidential elections, Libyan power holders must compromise and agree on the conditions for elections. Potential spoilers must also be brought into an agreement in order to ensure that elections results are respected. The United Kingdom thanks Egypt for its efforts to support discussions between the House of Representatives and the High State Council. It is now time to build on those efforts and broaden the political negotiations in order to deliver sustainable progress towards elections. Elections will not mean the end of the political process. The groundwork must also be laid for long-term stability, including the finalization of a Constitution facilitated by the elected Government, and a continued cycle of future elections that respect term lengths.

Political developments must also be supported by effective security and economic tracks. Transparent and accountable economic processes and public institutions that serve all Libyan people through the fair distribution of resources and the provision of and investment in public services are required. I call on all Libyan parties to enact those elements of good governance. As co-Chair of the Security Working Group of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya, the United Kingdom will continue to support efforts for the joint working and eventual unification of Libya's militaries into one State military that is accountable to an elected Government and able to comprehensively tackle Libya's security challenges. Libya must also see the full implementation of the October 2020 ceasefire and the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries as soon as possible.

This is a seminal moment for Libya. We have a clear opportunity to advance long-term stability and meet the expectations of the country. I urge all Libyans, as well as the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and the Security Council, to grasp it. Through inclusive dialogue and compromise, Libyan actors have an opportunity to finally deliver the security and prosperity that the Libyan people deserve.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative Abdoulaye Bathily for his briefing and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya in today's meeting. As this is the first time that Switzerland is taking the

floor on this topic, I would like to express our full support for the efforts of the Special Representative and the United Nations to support a resumption of the intra-Libyan dialogue.

Switzerland is committed to peace and stability in Libya, both in the Security Council and as co-Chair of the Working Group on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights of the Berlin process. That is why in December we supported the Special Representative in a digital human rights dialogue that included more than 300 participants from all over Libya. We have also hosted several United Nations meetings on Libya in the past and remain available to act as a host State. I would now like to make three points about the current situation in Libya.

First, more than a year after the postponement of the elections, it is essential to restore the legitimacy of Libya's institutions. In that regard, Switzerland welcomes the Special Representative's presentation of an alternative mechanism to lead the country to free and fair elections. We call on all Libyan actors to engage constructively in the implementation of that plan. We believe firmly that a coherent international approach, including by relaunching the Berlin process, is essential. We would also like to point out that the Security Council recognized the role of the process in adopting resolution 2510 (2020), in which it endorses the conclusions of the 2020 Berlin Conference.

Secondly, every effort must be made to create an environment conducive to ensuring that the members of Libyan society in all their diversity can fully exercise their political and civil rights in future elections. Increasing the number of women who run for political office will be an important factor in achieving that. In that regard, we are concerned about the acts of violence committed against women participating in public life and political processes. It is essential for women who are candidates for political office, as well as elected representatives, to be able to contribute to political processes at all levels without threats or reprisals.

Thirdly, Switzerland wishes to express its concern about the restrictions that have been imposed on civil society, including bureaucratic restrictions. In particular, we are concerned about the reports of arrests carried out recently under the new cybercrime law. Those new developments are taking place against the backdrop of a shrinking civil-society space, specifically as a result of increased surveillance by

security agencies. We also welcome the efforts to reunify the Civil Society Commission, which is an essential condition for establishing a safe, democratic and unrestricted space for Libyan civil society and international organizations operating in Libya.

Last October, the Security Council unanimously renewed the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (see S/PV.9173). We will need to show the same unity to support the implementation of the new proposals of the Special Representative with regard to the upcoming elections in Libya. Let us preserve this unity and coherence in order to ensure the much-needed support for the Libyan people on their path to peace and democracy.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his briefing.

Japan fully supports the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and Special Representative Bathily in their tireless efforts to engage with a diverse range of Libyan interlocutors from all regions and segments of society, including the political, military and economic sectors as well as civil society, in particular women's and youth groups. We also express our wholehearted support for United Nations efforts to bring together all partners, including regional actors, and all concerned across the international community.

To overcome the present and long-standing political stalemate in Libya, it is of foremost importance that the Security Council be united in calling upon all Libyan parties to join Mr. Bathily's efforts — above all, his new initiative to set up a the high-level steering panel to facilitate elections in 2023, which Japan welcomes. This is a matter of great urgency. The risk of destabilization will be higher if more time passes without progress. The Council should not allow the political actors to waste time for their own profit.

Japan echoes UNSMIL's statement of 5 January, which encourages Libyan political leaders to swiftly agree on complete, final and time-bound arrangements for the holding of elections in Libya in 2023. It is critically important for the people of Libya to unite under a Government that they can trust and take back the future into their own hands.

We welcome recent positive developments on the security track, including the resumption of the 5+5 Joint Military Committee's activities. We strongly hope that this will advance the implementation of the ceasefire

agreement, in particular the joint work between the international ceasefire monitoring team and Libyan monitors launched on 15 January. At the same time, Japan encourages Libyans and the international community to continue working together to further implement the ceasefire agreement in order to bring stability to the country. Areas requiring sustained attention include the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign forces and foreign fighters; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and security sector reform.

The continued efforts to unify key governance institutions in Libya, including the Central Bank of Libya, are also critical. Japan highly appreciates and expresses support for UNSMIL as it plays its role in advancing these efforts. This process is an essential step to ensure the fair distribution of revenues from Libya's natural resources. These resources should serve as the wealth of the whole Libyan nation, contributing to the country's national budget in a transparent manner.

To conclude, let me reiterate Japan's firm commitment to making continued efforts to bring all Libyans together to stabilize Libya. As a Council member, and in my capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Sanctions committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, I am looking forward to cooperating with all partners.

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

We appreciate the information provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on his recent engagement with Member States as part of his consultations on the Libyan file. We recognize the importance of input from regional actors. However, we recall that the Security Council remains the appropriate forum for discussing amendments to the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), if needed, and for providing guidance to the Special Representative on its implementation. As set out in resolution 2542 (2020), that mandate, with regard to the political track, continues to be that of mediating between the Libyan parties and offering them the Mission's good offices. This should ensure a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political transition.

Brazil therefore trusts that the Special Representative's proposal for a road map towards elections in 2023 is primarily the outcome of his

engagement with the Libyan parties. Given the seriousness of the fragmentation of Government structures, as well as the increasing challenges to the authority of the different Libyan political actors following the expiration of the transitional period in 2022, we hope that the Special Representative's road map will pave the way for the Libyan people to agree on a way forward as soon as possible. The road map should contribute to an environment where Libyan actors, without foreign interference, can set aside their differences and move towards elections, in order to unify the Government and restore the legitimacy of Libyan institutions.

We commend the Special Representative's idea of fostering a new intra-Libyan dialogue involving all Libyan stakeholders, with the objective of overcoming the political deadlock between the High Council of State and the House of Representatives. It is our expectation that new formulas proposed to address the crisis in Libya take into account the legitimate interests of all relevant Libyan parties.

I would like to draw the Security Council's attention to one of the conclusions drawn by the Panel of Experts that assists the Council in implementing the Libya sanctions regime. In its most recent report, the Panel stated that,

“The arms embargo remains totally ineffective. Member States supporting parties to the conflict control the logistics flow and supply chains to those parties and continue to violate the arms embargo with impunity”.

Brazil has repeatedly emphasized the need for both respect and enforcement of the arms embargo on Libya, in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner. We reiterate our calls upon Member States to respect their obligation to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of weapons and related material to Libya. Ultimately, the repeated violations of the arms embargo embolden political adversaries within Libya.

The lack of clarity about the precise organizational structure of the official security apparatus in Libya contributes to the difficulties in enforcing the arms embargo. We urge the Libyan authorities to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and provide the sanctions committee with updated and detailed information on the organization of their security institutions.

Knowing the affiliations of armed branches under Government authority is important to ensure appropriate accountability mechanisms for violations of human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law. Private and public actors responsible for such violations must be held accountable.

Finally, Brazil reiterates the need for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya, as well as for strategies for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of local armed militias into Libyan society. We commend the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Committee to that effect, hoping for the implementation of the several agreements recently announced.

To conclude, Brazil recalls the role that the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) can play, upon Libyan request, to convene all relevant actors, particularly neighbouring countries, and help to promote in Libya an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to security sector reform and institution-building more broadly. The Security Council expressly acknowledged this case-specific role for the PBC when it adopted resolution 2647 (2022), which is the basis of UNSMIL's current mandate, last year. As a United Nations intergovernmental advisory body with the ability to support political dialogue in post-conflict situations, the PBC can channel towards Libya the support of other countries, whose only vested interest in Libyan affairs is to build and sustain peace, with full respect for Libyan sovereignty and peacebuilding priorities.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we thank the Special Representative, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, for his informative briefing and welcome Ambassador Elsonni to today's meeting.

We would also like to stress the support of the United Arab Emirates for the proposal of the Special Representative in relation to the High Level Steering Group for Libya. We hope that the panel will achieve the desired goals and consensus to which the Libyans aspire. In order for those steps to succeed and be reflected on the ground, they need collective support from the international community free from geopolitical effects. They also require unlimited Libyan cooperation. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of consulting and coordinating with Libyans on the proposal.

Twelve years have passed since the 17 February anniversary that was an opportunity for transformation

to a new phase in Libya. Regrettably, it has been met with complex divisions and alliances as well as intense civil strife among Libyans. Therefore, the anniversary offers an important opportunity to remember the suffering and difficulties endured by that brotherly Arab country and to learn lessons from the past, turn the page on it and put national interests above all other considerations.

Libya was only a few steps away from holding elections. For reasons that are known to all, the date of the elections was postponed. Since then, the parties concerned have carried out successive consultations to reach consensus on a constitutional basis. That has not only prolonged the process and made it repetitive, but it has also taken a turn that does not serve the national interests of the Libyan people. Therefore, we do not see a way out of that political impasse other than coming together in support of Mr. Bathily's efforts towards enabling Libyans to reach a Libyan-owned political settlement leading to the holding of simultaneous parliamentary and presidential elections this year that are accepted by all Libyan parties and that result in the establishment of a unified Government.

We commend the important role played by Libya's neighbouring countries, particularly Egypt, in bringing diverging views closer together with the support of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). We also stress the need to promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of Libyan women in the political process, including in the transitional process leading to the elections and beyond. We also emphasize the need to ensure the protection of women and girls against violence, including online.

We further stress the importance of involving youth in the political process, considering their pivotal role in establishing and sustaining peace. We therefore welcome the inclusiveness of the mechanism proposed by the Special Representative to strengthen the participation of women and youth.

In conjunction with the efforts made to reach a comprehensive political settlement that ends the transitional period, we must continue advancing along the path of comprehensive and just national reconciliation to ensure sustainable peace and stability in Libya.

Accordingly, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its support for the efforts of the Libyan Presidential Council, the African Union and UNSMIL through

the preparatory forum for the National Reconciliation Conference. We look forward to the next steps in the implementation of the national reconciliation strategy with the participation of all parties.

Continuing to respect the ceasefire agreement is essential for maintaining stability throughout Libya. It is encouraging that the meetings of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission are continuing with the participation of representatives from neighbouring countries, as well as local and international ceasefire monitors, under the auspices of UNSMIL. Their efforts must be accompanied by the implementation of the remaining elements of the ceasefire agreement and by taking serious steps on the ground towards unifying the military institutions in Libya.

We support the efforts aimed at creating a joint military force as a base for achieving unity. The United Arab Emirates also reiterates its request for a simultaneous, phased, gradual and balanced withdrawal of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries in order to achieve peace and stability in Libya. We welcome the establishment of a joint coordination mechanism for collecting and exchanging data on the matter.

To ensure security throughout Libya, combating terrorism and maintaining the gains made in countering extremism must remain a priority. Furthermore, the measures and tools adopted by the Council should not impede the national efforts of Libyan forces to address security threats, especially in southern Libya.

We also note that restoring stability in Libya will support the security and stability of all countries in the region, especially of neighbouring countries. As such, we support regional efforts aimed at addressing irregular migration, while taking into account Libyan and African concerns. The international community must provide support to origin and transit countries alike to address the root causes of migration.

Despite the many challenges facing Libya and the efforts made by the relevant authorities to keep pace and address those challenges, more steps must be taken to improve the programme of disclosure, transparency and governance, especially with regard to expenditure. That will ensure the equitable distribution of resources, the preservation of vital institutions and the protection of the wealth of the Libyan people to ensure that it is preserved for future generations. That is particularly important in the context of the Secretary-General's

reference in his report (S/2023/76) to the exploitation by terrorist groups, such as Da'esh, of the current situation on the ground to generate revenue through the smuggling of oil.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates underscores its solidarity with the Libyan people and supports their endeavours to live in a safe and prosperous country that is full of opportunities and ensures a peaceful and prosperous future.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his briefing, mediation efforts and especially his inclusive approach towards lasting peace in Libya. We are encouraged by the vision he shared today, welcome it and believe that a sustainable Libyan-owned political process, under United Nations auspices, is the right path for the Libyan people, the country and the entire region. That initiative is a very timely and long-awaited opportunity to help the country break the current deadlock, abandon hopeless power rivalry and put an end to zero-sum political games. The status quo, otherwise a protracted political stalemate, is not an option nor is it sustainable.

Libyans want change, and change starts with elections, through the expression of free will to put an end to a decade-long crisis and bring back legitimacy to the Libyan institutions. It is our duty to support Libyans in their aspirations and expectations for a future in security, with national reconciliation and respect for human rights, prosperity and democracy. It is therefore essential for the Security Council and the international community to show unity and speak to the Libyan people and all stakeholders there with one voice.

On the security front, we hope that the United Nations can soon fully deploy the operational ceasefire monitoring team in Sirte to underpin better security prospects. We welcome the recent meeting of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the liaison committees from neighbouring countries with the participation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

While we fully reiterate our full support for the implementation of the October 2020 ceasefire, we believe that the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries remains crucial to peace and security in Libya.

Albania remains deeply worried about the systematic human rights violations in Libya and the

continued reduction of civic space. We deeply regret that, during its most recent visit, the United Nations Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya did not have full access in the country. We echo its call on the Libyan authorities to take decisive steps to provide justice and redress to the vast number of victims suffering from long-standing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Addressing impunity and strengthening accountability remain crucial to the future of the country. Every step backwards or evidence of unwillingness to achieve justice and put an end to impunity is a step backwards in the national reconciliation process and premonitory to serious future challenges.

A new Libya needs the contribution of everyone, including women and young people.

Libyans sit on an immense national wealth. If properly and responsibly managed, they can put the country on the path to rapid development and welfare. It is therefore up to the Libyans to make it a blessing, not a curse. A fair and transparent management of the country's wealth is rightfully a main concern for the people, and it is an imperative to have everyone benefit equally from it.

Albania supports the ongoing efforts aimed at ensuring financial transparency and managing the country's resources in an equitable manner. It is crucial to overcome the current critical issues concerning the distribution of oil resources in the country.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate Albania's full support for the proposal of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and our full commitment in support of this renewed momentum for the future Libya and its people.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely, Gabon, Ghana and my country, Mozambique.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, for his briefing, and we welcome the participation of Ambassador Taher Elsonni, Permanent Representative of Libya, in today's meeting. We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Bathily, for his tireless efforts to find a lasting solution to the political and security crisis in Libya.

The A3 statement will focus on the following areas: the reconciliation process, the political process, the role of foreign forces, combatants and interests, the arms embargo and the humanitarian situation. The A3 welcomes the communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), adopted on 1 February, on the situation in Libya, through which the AU has once again demonstrated its commitment to a stable and prosperous Libya, in particular with regard to the national reconciliation process in coordination with the Presidential Council.

(*spoke in English*)

The A3 wishes to reaffirm its position that the peace process in Libya must be Libyan-led and Libyan-owned, guided by an inclusive dialogue conducive to national reconciliation. We urge the various segments of Libyan society to engage in the talks in good faith, and we look forward to the establishment of the country's constitution and electoral framework required for the prompt holding of elections so that the Libyan people can freely choose their leaders. In that regard, we commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for seeking the views of Libyans from all segments of society, regional actors and international partners towards developing a possible way out of the impasse, including by considering possible innovative alternatives in order to move forward while preserving the spirit of the process.

In commending the efforts of Special Representative Bathily, the A3 wishes to draw attention to the fact that he cannot succeed if Libyan political actors do not place the interests of Libyans above all other considerations. The people of Libya deserve better, and they are calling for elections as a way out. However, we are cognizant of the fact that elections are not a means to an end, but can be a catalyst towards sustainable peace and security in Libya.

We are in favour of any alternative solution proposed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with the greater involvement of the African Union and the Presidential Council so as to get the country out of the political impasse and organize elections during the year 2023, as ardently desired by the Libyan people.

In that regard, we pledge our support for Special Representative Bathily's plan to set up a high-level panel for the elections that is aimed at bringing all the relevant Libyan stakeholder together and to enable them to reach consensus on the election process for the

presidential and parliamentary elections before the end of 2023.

We note in particular that the high-level panel for the elections will seek to address some of the gaps that have been lingered in the past by, first, finalizing the constitutional and legal basis for the elections, taking into account the work already done by the House of Representatives and the High State Council through trust-building among the relevant stakeholders; secondly, creating a road map with clear steps towards the elections; thirdly, agreeing on the parameters for ensuring the security of the electoral process; and fourthly and finally, promoting the adoption of a code of conduct for all actors in the political process, among others.

The A3 would also like to call on foreign interests in Libya to consider the interests of Libyans first by stopping their support to various factions in this conflict, which exacerbates the situation. The Libyan people are saying “enough is enough” and that we should give peace a chance. That clarion call should be a matter of the utmost urgency.

We would like to recall the Secretary-General’s statement at the African Union Summit, held on 18 and 19 February in Addis Ababa, in which he stated his priority for both the United Nations and the African Union: “There is no alternative to elections. They remain the only credible pathway to legitimate, unified governance.” We want to pledge our support to the Secretary-General’s vision in that regard. Libya is an African country, and the populations of the continent are the most affected by its instability. It is therefore legitimate for the African Union to be fully engaged at all stages of the resolution of the Libyan crisis. As the A3, we reiterate our call for African solutions to African problems. In that regard, we urge the involvement of the African Union and encourage its active engagement in all aspects of the process in Libya, especially with regard to reconciliation and the electoral and political processes. In that context, the A3 commends the support and facilitation efforts being made by Libya’s neighbours and by regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, as well as the African Union High-Level Committee for Libya, with the aim of sustaining a Libyan-owned and Libyan-led political process.

We are encouraged by the recent meeting of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the liaison committees

of the integrated mechanism for joint coordination and data exchange to facilitate the full withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign forces, as well as foreign fighters, from Libya. The presence of those foreign forces on Libyan soil undermines Libya’s territorial integrity and ownership of the peace process. Their departure is essential to a favourable environment conducive to the advancement of the ongoing political process and leading to the holding of elections in the course of this year.

We want to point to the catalytic effect of the Libyan conflict on the Sahel and its consequences for the security situation in the wider region, which continues to deteriorate as terrorism spreads in West African countries and beyond. We must remember that the peace process in Libya is inextricably linked to the stability of the region. Consultations with neighbouring States and the region are therefore essential. International support should also be extended to cross-border cooperation in the fight against arms trafficking, smuggling and trafficking in persons, among other issues. We further urge that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts be focused not only on Libya but also undertaken through a collaborative approach with neighbouring States and regional organizations.

Cross-border cooperation must also take into account the enabling environment that the conflict offers for the development of terrorism. There is a need for an inclusive attitude to security-sector reform and the DDR efforts in Libya by taking a regional approach, as well as by integrating the capacity-building and counter-terrorism support extended to countries in the region. We note the relatively stable security situation in Libya and call on all the parties to continue showing restraint by fully complying with the 2020 ceasefire agreement in order to preserve the current relative peace and security.

(spoke in French)

The A3 is deeply concerned by the continued violations of the arms embargo, which threaten to undo the significant progress achieved so far in the transition process in Libya. In that regard, we call on the international community to respect resolution 1970 (2011) of 26 February 2011.

The humanitarian situation in Libya is also a matter of deep concern to the A3. In our view, the situation of internally displaced persons, asylum seekers,

migrants and refugees is disastrous. Gabon, Ghana and Mozambique urgently call for all migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to be treated with dignity throughout the country, especially along the Libyan coast. We also call for thorough investigations into the mistreatment of migrants and refugees and for those responsible for that inhumane treatment to be identified, tried and convicted. The Libyan authorities and international humanitarian actors must take the necessary measures to ensure the safety and protection of populations in need, in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law.

We should not conclude without reaffirming that all measures regarding Libya's frozen assets must be taken in consultation with the Libyan authorities in order to ensure the safekeeping of those assets until they are returned to the Libyan people. We reiterate our call for full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and national unity of Libya, in accordance with resolution 2656 (2022). Those are the basic conditions necessary for the holding of free and fair elections, which will bring order, peace and stability to Libya.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Bathily, for his briefing and welcome the Permanent Representative of Libya, Ambassador Elsonni, to today's meeting.

We regret that more than a year has passed since the postponement of presidential and legislative elections in Libya. We welcome the resumption of talks between the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the High State Council on 5 January. We recognize the rapprochement brought about thanks to Mr. Bathily's efforts since his appointment — in particular his engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including members of Libyan civil society, women and young people.

Those consultation processes drive the political process forward and allow for a better understanding of the Libyan people's aspirations for peace and stability in their country. It is a priority for the parties to agree, as soon as possible, on the constitutional basis for holding transparent and inclusive national elections that will satisfy the Libyan people's desire to return to democracy and lay the foundations for the country's development and reconstruction.

On security, Ecuador supports the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in its work on the maintenance

of the October 2020 ceasefire agreement, as well as in the implementation of the October 2021 action plan. The removal of the foreign military presence in Libya is paramount. The recent approval and establishment of an integrated coordination and data-sharing mechanism by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the liaison committees of Libya, the Sudan and the Niger to facilitate the total withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters from the country is commendable. Such an achievement — namely, the total withdrawal of mercenaries — constitutes an important step towards achieving peace and stability in Libya, as well as contributing to the creation of a favourable environment for the political process and the holding of elections this year.

Ecuador condemns the deterioration of civic space in Libya. Reports of abuses against civil society, including the arbitrary arrest of activists and human rights defenders, are a matter of concern. The right of individuals to exercise their freedom of expression and to carry out their activities without hindrance must be guaranteed.

The humanitarian and human rights situation of migrants and refugees in Libya is also of concern. We call on the Libyan authorities to take effective measures to address the plight of migrants and refugees and to dismantle criminal and human trafficking networks. Likewise, it is imperative to ensure that the perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law be brought to justice.

We reject violence against women. We deeply regret that the agreement between the United Nations and the Libyan Ministry of Women's Affairs that sought to ensure the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has been annulled. We call for the strengthening of women's participation in the political arena, as their involvement in all peace processes is proven to be indispensable.

Justice cannot be neglected if true peace is what we seek. We are encouraged by the actions being taken towards the creation of a law on transitional justice and national reconciliation and hope that it can be implemented as soon as possible. We call on the Government of Libya to fulfil its obligation to cooperate with the International Criminal Court and the Office of the Prosecutor in accordance with resolution 1970 (2011). The cooperation of the Libyan Government is an essential condition for the successful prosecution of

those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed on its territory since February 2011.

My delegation echoes the Security Council's press release of 20 December reiterating the call on the international community to support the work of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Bathily, in his consultations with the various Libyan stakeholders and international partners.

In conclusion, we express our respect for Libya's sovereignty and territorial integrity and urge the Libyan parties to work constructively with Special Representative Bathily to find a solution to break the political deadlock.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Bathily for his briefing and welcome the Permanent Representative of Libya, Ambassador Elsonni, to today's meeting.

In connection to Mr. Bathily's briefing and recent developments in Libya, I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, we must support efforts aimed at achieving progress in the political process in Libya. The momentum of dialogue and consultations among the various parties in the country has recently picked up speed. The House of Representatives and the High State Council held multiple rounds of dialogue, while Egypt and other countries in the region have played an active role in mediation. At the same time, however, the parties in Libya have yet to reach agreement on key issues such as the constitutional basis for elections and the political deadlock continues. All parties in Libya must truly proceed from the interests of the country and its people and bridge the current political divide as soon as possible in order to create a political environment conducive to the reconstruction and development of the Libyan State. The top priority now is to step up consultations on the basis of previous dialogue outcomes and swiftly come to an agreement on outstanding points of divergence so that elections can be held as soon as possible.

Secondly, we must support the good offices and mediation efforts of Special Representative Bathily. China commends him for his extensive and in-depth engagement with all parties in Libya after taking office. While attending a meeting of the African Union (AU) a few days ago, Secretary-General Guterres underscored

that the United Nations remains committed to promoting Libyan-led and Libyan-owned solutions. The Security Council should support Special Representative Bathily in delivering on that commitment and scaling up his mediation efforts. The international community must support Libya's political process, promote Libya's political settlement and earnestly safeguard Libya's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The concerns of all parties in Libya must be taken into account and any externally imposed solutions that could complicate the situation in the country should be avoided.

Thirdly, we must support the Libyan national reconciliation process. It is the only path along which the country's wounds can be healed and consensus on reconstruction and development built. A high-level meeting on Libya was held during the recent AU summit where the decision was taken to support Libya in holding a national reconciliation conference. China highly appreciates the efforts of the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya, led by President Sassou-Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo. We look forward to the holding of a successful conference, which will inject new impetus into Libya's political transition, as well as its security, stability, reconstruction and development. China supports the AU in playing a greater role and sharing its best practices in national reconciliation.

Fourthly, we should fully support efforts to silence the guns in Libya. We welcome the fact that, under the auspices of Mr. Bathily, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission has held several meetings in order to promote ongoing efforts, including with regard to the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the unification of the security agencies. All parties in the countries should remain engaged with the Commission in order to resolve differences and avoid actions that may escalate the situation. Foreign fighters and mercenaries are major challenges to Libya's security. China welcomes the establishment of relevant coordination mechanisms between Libya and neighbouring countries and supports a swift withdrawal, in a balanced and orderly manner, so as to avoid increased regional security risks.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): We thank Special Representative Bathily for his briefing on the situation in Libya. We welcome his strong leadership and fully support the proposed elections-enabling mechanism, as outlined in his remarks. The United States is 100 per cent committed to helping him to succeed.

The status quo in Libya is not stable, with heightened risks of partition, energy disruptions, further political strife and violence. The only viable path to a durable peace in Libya is enabling the Libyan people to choose their own leaders in national elections. We welcome the progress Libyans have made in the Egypt-hosted constitutional track, in which Libyan leaders resolved many issues needed to hold elections. We thank the Government of Egypt for its efforts and important contributions to realizing our shared goal of holding presidential and parliamentary elections.

Now it is time to build on those achievements and move forward with the United Nations-facilitated effort to secure broad political consensus and enable successful elections in Libya. Full unified support from the Council and other international stakeholders will be critical as Special Representative Bathily works to implement an elections-enabling mechanism. Building political will among all Libya's leaders to make the hard decisions and move elections forward remains a challenge. Now is the time to restore momentum.

The United States endorses action by Special Representative Bathily and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to directly address the electoral process via a United Nations-facilitated elections-enabling mechanism that will secure resolution of the issues that stand in the way of elections in Libya. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General outlined an inclusive process that keeps key institutions and leaders at the table. However, there is no room for spoilers seeking to thwart the will of the Libyan people. The United States will continue to support the professional and impartial work of the High National Elections Commission. We welcome UNSMIL's technical assistance to the Commission and call on all Libyans to back it and conform to its directives.

Progress on the political track must be accompanied by progress on the economic and security tracks. We believe that cooperation and compromise on one track will reinforce progress on the others through confidence-building and transparency. The development of a revenue-management mechanism and progress in reunifying Libya's Central Bank will provide transparency and accountability so that the people of Libya can see how Libya's wealth is being spent.

The commitment to east-west security cooperation, perhaps through a joint unit, would be a welcome signal

of progress and confirmation that the Libyan people can manage their own security. Libyans are calling for the departure of foreign fighters and mercenaries. Those forces must withdraw from Libya immediately. Wagner Group mercenaries are particularly problematic and must withdraw.

As we aim to make progress on those fronts at the same time, the United States is deeply concerned by the plight of migrants in Libya. We are saddened by the continued loss of life on the Mediterranean Sea and appalled by the inhumane treatment of migrants detained in official and unofficial detention centres. We call for respect for the human rights of migrants. We support the continued work of the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya and call on Libyan leaders to cooperate fully with it and humanitarian organizations.

It is long past time for elections and an end to politics by force, graft and coercion. Libyans deserve to choose their own leaders in a Government that leads to peace, stability and prosperity. The United States stands ready to support the United Nations leadership of Special Representative Bathily in order to help Libya achieve those goals.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative for his briefing and welcome the presence here of the Libyan Permanent Representative.

Libya and its people deserve better than the impasse to which their political class has condemned them. They deserve better than a country where foreign forces, mercenaries and militias are entrenching their presence and tightening their grip in defiance of Libyan sovereignty, integrity, stability and unity. Twelve years after the February 2011 revolution, they deserve better than a society in which democratic space and fundamental freedoms are under threat.

Libyans also deserve better than a country in which access to power and public funds is an end in itself rather than a means to serve economic development and the public interest. The population expects a fair and transparent redistribution of oil revenues for the benefit of all Libyan regions.

Libya deserves better than to be the scene of repeated and unpunished crimes and human rights violations, the first victims of which are migrants and refugees, who are abandoned to human trafficking and militias. France's priorities remain unchanged in that

regard. Political legitimacy must be restored in Libya. That requires a relaunch of the electoral process.

Millions of Libyans are waiting to participate in simultaneous, inclusive, credible and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections. A unified Libyan Government is needed to organize those elections throughout the country in order to control its borders and to govern everywhere and for everyone. An agreement on a legal basis and a new political road map is also essential. In particular, it will be important to ensure a level playing field for candidates. Corruption and intimidation should not be used as campaign tools. France therefore fully supports the efforts and proposals of the Special Representative to achieve those objective, in particular the creation of a high-level steering panel for Libya in order to facilitate the organization of elections.

The October 2020 ceasefire agreement is a valuable achievement for Libya and regional stability. France will continue to defend its full implementation, in coordination with the United Nations. The determined work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in that regard must be fully supported, particularly in the creation of a unified Libyan army and the process of dismantling and reintegrating the militias. France has therefore decided to allocate \$100,000 to finance the efforts of the Special Representative in order to support the work of the Commission.

France will also continue to demand compliance with the arms embargo and the withdrawal of all foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libyan territory, in cooperation with Libya's neighbours. France also recalls its commitment to the preservation of the consensus in Libya on countering terrorism and radical Islamism.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, for his briefing. We listened attentively to his new proposals and will analyse them with great care.

We are paying very close attention to developments in the former Jamahiriya. Those development are undoubtedly having an impact on the stability and the security situation in the region and throughout the African continent. Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts there, it has not yet been possible to achieve

the desired pace of initiatives to fully restore Libyan statehood. After the failure to hold elections in December 2021 and the expiration of the road map of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in June 2022, the political process in the country is still stagnating. The already difficult relations between the west and east of Libya are further complicated by the existence of the two parallel Governments and the duplication of many State institutions and mechanisms.

A solution to that situation could be the organization of national elections. We underscore our fundamental support for the efforts of Mr. Bathily to organize an inclusive and transparent electoral process. Nonetheless, we caution against organizing them too hastily. Badly prepared national elections are hardly likely to be a panacea for all of Libya's outstanding problems. Moreover, it would be counterproductive to discard the achievements already made by the House of Representatives and the High State Council, in which so much work has been invested. In particular, we thank our Egyptian colleagues for their efforts. We also believe that one key to guaranteeing the elections' success is the involvement of all the leading political forces in Libya, including representatives of the former Government.

We were pleased with the efforts of the African Union and President Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo to promote the inter-Libyan reconciliation process. We believe that the initiative to organize a national reconciliation conference is extremely timely. Furthermore, it is perfectly in line with the principle of African solutions to African problems. For our part, we once again affirm our readiness to provide all possible assistance in that regard.

We believe that further progress towards peace requires the coordinated efforts of all international and regional stakeholders. It is largely thanks to the schism among them that the political stalemate has continued. The Libyan parties' attempts to manipulate and exercise unilateral influence on the situation on the ground will not help to reach a political solution and will only deepen the country's divide. Attempts to establish separate mechanisms to manage the settlement of the Libyan issue, as per usual without Libyan ownership, are very unlikely to advance things, as the Libyans themselves have been saying for a long time. We have no illusions about the added value of such formats.

The fact is that a political settlement itself is only the beginning. Libyans face the daunting task of rebuilding the country and revitalizing its economy, which was destroyed by the NATO countries' illegal intervention in 2011. The export of hydrocarbons, whose revenue is vital to Libyans, has a key role to play in that regard. In that connection, we feel compelled to point to the duplicity of some Western countries, which are playing that card to serve their own geopolitical and commercial interests. Washington's relentless activity on the Libyan track is quite clear, something that its high-ranking officials' many public statements and visits to the country attest to. The only problem is that their real goal is obviously preserving the status quo whereby Libya continues to be a stable exporter of oil to international markets. We hope that the Libyan people are wise enough not to fall into the same trap in which many other countries in the Middle East and North Africa have found themselves.

We reaffirm our continued support for United Nations efforts to finding an acceptable solution to the crisis in the country. We see the active work of UNSMIL as a key element in that international framework. We welcome the resumption of the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) through the mediation of Mr. Bathily and the help of the Egyptian authorities. The fact is that the turbulence in Libya is not over. We are alarmed by the reports of sporadic fighting among armed groups in some regions of Libya. Against that backdrop, the work of the JMC is key to improving coordination among the parties on the military track and forming a unified security architecture. Dropping the ball in that extremely sensitive area could lead to an escalation of armed clashes and a repetition of the unfortunate scenarios of 2019. Another important issue is the elimination of any foreign military presence in Libya. Our position is well known. We are in favour of a synchronized, balanced and gradual withdrawal of all non-Libyan armed groups and military units, without exception.

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

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his briefing, and I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya in today's meeting.

The situation in Libya is one that continues to warrant the international community's focus and support, and it

remains equally crucial for the international community to speak and act with one voice. Libya continues to find itself at a political impasse, and we are concerned about the fact that the situation in Libya is still marred by political polarization. We are encouraged by the Special Representative's efforts towards inclusivity and his consultations with a broad range of actors to address the stalemate. We note the Special Representative's recent message that there is a growing convergence of opinion among Libyan actors regarding the holding of elections this year. We strongly support his work, including his commitment to establishing a high-level steering panel and his calls for a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process under United Nations auspices.

We reiterate that the Libyan people have the right to choose their own leadership through free, fair and inclusive elections that can take place during the current year. Progress towards agreement on a legal and constitutional basis for those elections is paramount. We call on all parties to engage with the Special Representative constructively and in good faith in order to overcome their political and institutional divisions and bring much-needed stability to the country. In doing so, human rights must also be protected. Malta also emphasizes the importance of an inclusive political process that allows for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, civil-society organizations and young people.

One consequence of the continued political uncertainty is that the security situation remains fragile. While the ceasefire continues to hold and the continued work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission plays a crucial role in that, violent clashes persist. All Libyan actors have a responsibility to refrain from escalatory actions and prioritize the protection of civilians.

We are equally concerned about the continued presence of foreign fighters, foreign forces and mercenaries in Libya. That continues to pose a serious challenge to the safety and security of Libyans and undermines efforts to unify the country's security and military institutions. Their full withdrawal should be prioritized in any political process. On that note, we welcome the 5+5 Joint Military Commission's approval, in conjunction with liaison committees from Libya, the Sudan and the Niger, to establish an integrated mechanism for joint coordination and data-exchange to facilitate the full withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters from Libya. That is an additional important step towards achieving stability and fostering a favourable

climate for the political process. Unfortunately, that stability has been further undermined by the proliferation of weapons under the control of various State and non-State actors. We underline the need for the full implementation of the arms embargo, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions. In that context, we also emphasize the role of European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI.

On the socioeconomic front, large segments of the Libyan population continue to face increasingly difficult living conditions. In that regard, we welcome the recent convening of the Economic Working Group of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya and its efforts to make progress towards reunifying and reforming the Central Bank of Libya. A unified Central Bank will enable the consolidation of monetary policy, consistent Government funding and greater direct foreign investment. Transparent and accountable public finances, coupled with the equitable management of national resources, are measures that can ameliorate the economic situation for all the people of Libya.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate Malta's support for all efforts that seek to secure a peaceful, stable and prosperous present and future for all Libyans. We can all do our bit to help Libya along the path to developing its full potential both for the benefit and well-being of its people and for the benefit of stability in the region as a whole.

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, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on joining the Security Council and on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I would also like to welcome the Council's other newly elected members — Mozambique, Switzerland, Ecuador and Japan— and I wish them all every success. I also thank Mr. Bathily for his important briefing, which we followed attentively. We also welcome the efforts he has made since assuming his position, including his many meetings within and outside Libya with political forces and stakeholders to move forward the political process and put an end to the current impasse.

Today we mark 12 years since the Council adopted resolution 1973 (2011), on putting Libya under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, using the

slogan of protecting civilians. Nevertheless, today we are still suffering the consequences of the negative interventions by some countries and their deviation from that slogan. They took advantage of the Libyan people's dream of change, which has led us to where we are today. Unfortunately, even to this very day, we are still speaking about resolutions, initiatives, proposals and ways to end the crisis. It was important for me to give this introduction to remind the Council that the blame should not be placed solely on Libyans, and that all of us must shoulder the responsibilities.

However, today we are trying to view positively and optimistically the current attempts to reach a regional and international agreement. We have seen a convergence of viewpoints among many parties that were previously contradictory. We are also seeing the emergence of many initiatives and proposals that are all geared towards the same objective, which is, to complete the democratic process and hold elections as soon as possible. We therefore call on Council members today to support the national will and respond to the call of millions of Libyans who are fed up with the status quo and look forward to ending the conflict, division and chaos as well as achieving safety and stability. I assure the Council that the Libyan people, despite their loss of trust in the international community over the years, are closely following Council meetings and looking forward to any decisions that may come out of them.

We reaffirm the importance of directing all efforts and initiatives towards garnering national consensus around a fair and impartial constitutional basis and non-discriminatory electoral laws that give everyone an opportunity to participate. A clear timetable and favourable conditions should be put in place for the presidential and parliamentary elections, letting the Libyan people decide. That will ensure the end to all the transition periods and prevent us from repeating the mistakes of the past.

In that regard, we would like to remind the Secretary-General, Mr. Bathily, his team and the Council that, when presenting solutions for mediation, they should carefully examine the previous experiences led by the United Nations in my country over many years and learn lessons from them, because we cannot tolerate any further road maps, transitional periods or new paths. We have the Skhirat agreement and the Geneva agreement, and I believe it is now high time to change the course of action. Therefore, any new mechanism should focus solely on addressing the points

of contention and setting a timetable for completing the impeded constitutional and electoral path so as to ensure that the presidential and parliamentary elections are held by the end of this year. To put it simply, do not repeat the same mistakes and expect different results — as this illness cannot be treated by the same medicine that failed to cure repeatedly in the past.

We reiterate the importance of ownership and leadership by Libyans of any political process, the process that can lead the country to stability and state authority, free from any foreign dictates. Therefore, we call on the Council to support genuine national efforts that are currently seeking to address challenges and develop a comprehensive Libyan solution while completing all fragile transitional phases. In that context, we reaffirm that the Presidential Council and the Government of National Unity are harnessing all potential through State institutions, various commissions and in cooperation with United Nations bodies, as well as the High Electoral Commission, to support the election process and complete that national process. We also reiterate our call to the United Nations henceforth to provide assistance in a more effective and serious manner to support the election process and to send its teams to assess the needs and to coordinate with the Government and the High Electoral Commission to prepare for the upcoming in good time. That will send the message to all that the international community is serious about holding free, fair and transparent elections, which everybody is looking for, without doubting their outcomes.

Speaking of Libyan ownership, Libyan leadership and national sovereignty leads us to talk about the military path. We commend the continuous efforts of the Joint Military Commission, which dissociated itself from the political controversy. Therefore, we call on the Council members to support its efforts that target the unification of the military institution in a professional and effective manner while establishing the mechanisms for putting an end to all kinds of foreign presence on Libyan territory, irrespective of their names. That is a sovereign call by all Libyans without which the national will remains stolen and captive by others. Therefore, we recall the importance of supporting efforts that will draw a comprehensive strategy and a time-bound plan to ensure the integration of all active forces on the ground across the country to build non-politicized security and military institutions that enjoy a national doctrine of a civilian State and the rule of law.

In relation to the sanctions dossier, we would like to recall once again our repeated calls on the Council that have been supported by a number of its members on many occasions, namely, that the sanctions regime, which is more than 12 years old now, should be reviewed and amended. That will enable Libya to manage its frozen assets, at least for now, so that they do not lose their value. The losses have been ascertained in reports by unbiased international institutions. We also request the Council to take a strong and decisive position as to any attempt to undermine frozen Libyan assets and funds of the Libyan Investment Authority, regardless of the pretexts and justifications, because efforts continue to lay hands on the wealth of Libyans. We will not allow that to happen. In the same context, we call for heeding our request to delist some citizens now on sanctions lists, either for humanitarian reasons or because the reason for listing them no longer exists after all these years. That request would prove the support of the international community for the efforts at achieving national reconciliation and rebuilding trust among Libyans.

Libya is not isolated from the situation in the world. Let us work together for the stability of Libya. We understand the concerns of our neighbours and the region. We stress that, whatever happens, Libya is working to restore its active role at the regional and international levels by promoting joint cooperation and solidarity on an equal footing and on the basis of respecting Libya's sovereignty and territorial unity. Therefore, we look forward to a serious and more effective role from the Council to correct mistakes of the past and to reveal spoilers, whether individuals, entities or even States. Some of them are still trying to abort the political process and put Libya back in a state chaos, because they fear losing their authority or for the people to regain the authority from them through the free democratic and direct path.

In conclusion, we call on Council members to participate actively in supporting all efforts to implement national reconciliation and transitional justice. Those are two essential paths that go hand in hand but were unfortunately undermined over the past years, although they constitute the principal foundation to bring about success in any political solution that can lead to stability of the country. In that regard, we would like to thank the African Union for its support of the Presidential Council on that dossier, as we have started to witness encouraging steps during

this period. We have followed the proceedings of the Preparatory Committee of the National Reconciliation Conference in Tripoli, which included members of all political trends and affiliations. Despite the challenges faced by that path, it is high time to build bridges of trust and stop recalling wounds of the past. We have to look forward for putting an end to all controversies about existing negative aspects while establishing the principles of transitional justice, honesty, being apologetic, tolerance and compensation. There is also a need to reveal the fate of missing persons and for the

return of all refugees and displaced persons. We must work together to lead the country towards safety and move from chaos and conflict to stability and peace. It is high time to start the development and reconstruction period and to end all manifestations of destruction.

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 11.50 a.m.