



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9306th meeting
 Tuesday, 18 April 2023, 10 a.m.
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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Nebenzia/Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	Ghana	Mr. Korbieh
	Japan	Mr. Ishikane
	Malta	Mrs. Frazier
	Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
	Switzerland	Mrs. Chanda
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2023/248)

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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

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2023/248)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): 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 wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/248, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Bathily and Mr. Kimihiro Ishikane, Permanent Representative of Japan, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya.

I now give the floor to Mr. Bathily.

Mr. Bathily: Since my previous briefing, on 27 February (see S/PV.9270), where I announced our elections-enabling initiative to allow Libyans to choose their leaders in 2023, I launched its implementation, along multiple parallel axes that together make up a comprehensive approach to achieve that goal. As indicated, our proposal is meant to enable elections in Libya this year by widening the scope of actors involved in that national issue of paramount importance. The active mobilization of all stakeholders — including the Presidential Council, the Government, the House of Representatives and the High State Council— is key to achieving consensus on political matters, security issues and questions pertaining to the participation of women and youth. The electoral process offers a unique opportunity to mobilize the entire national community

so that elections are peaceful, inclusive, free and fair and pave the way for a new dispensation for Libyans. Lessons learned elsewhere have shown that inclusive and consensus-based elections are the driver of peace and stability.

In that spirit, because of the difficulty of bringing them all together face to face in one place at this point, I engaged key Libyan political leaders through shuttle diplomacy to seek common ground and encourage them to make compromises that will clear the path to elections. I held separate meetings with President of the Presidency Council Mohamed Al-Menfi, Vice-President Abdullah Al-Lafi, Prime Minister Abdulhamid Al Dabiba, High State Council President Khaled Mishri, Speaker of the House of Representatives Aguila Saleh Issa, Libyan National Army Commander Khalifa Haftar and House of Representatives-appointed Prime Minister Fathi Bashagha. I also engaged individual political parties and coalitions of political forces, traditional leaders, notable persons and women and youth group leaders from all regions. They all expressed their readiness to discuss the parameters for the organization of elections. That action will continue and intensify, as relevant actors will need to negotiate and agree on the most contentious issues pertaining to the holding of inclusive elections this year. I welcome the commitment of those actors and call for the translation of their engagement into concrete steps on the ground.

For purposes of promoting the country's territorial integrity, furthering national reconciliation, strengthening the ceasefire and mobilizing all armed actors for election security, I facilitated the 5+5 Joint Military Commission's engagement with Libyan security and military actors, including armed groups from all three regions of Libya. At the invitation of the Commission, I facilitated meetings in Tunis, Tripoli, Benghazi and Sabha on 15 and 26 March and on 7 and 9 April. On those occasions, leaders and representatives of military units and security formations operating in western, eastern and southern Libya committed to supporting all stages of the elections, to reject violence throughout Libya, to take practical steps for the safe return of internally displaced persons and to release detainees and address the missing persons issue in the context of national reconciliation.

The meetings between military units and security formations from the east, west and south undoubtedly represent a breakthrough. Those meetings were of great symbolic value on the path to reconciling and unifying

the country. As a result of those consultations, on 8 April, Libyan National Army authorities released six detainees from western Libya as a confidence-building measure. In the same vein, on 13 April, the Chiefs of Staff of the Libyan army and the Libyan National Army respectively — Lieutenant General Al-Haddad and Lieutenant General Al-Nadhouri — met in Benghazi and affirmed their commitment to furthering the reunification of the military and supporting the electoral process. I welcome the patriotism of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and of the two Chiefs of Staff and encourage them to continue promoting national unity. I urge political actors to follow the example set by military and security leaders.

Furthermore, I held several rounds of consultations in Tripoli, Benghazi and Sabha with Libyans from all three regions, representing civil society, women, youth, political parties and notable and cultural components, to hear and amplify their views on elections and their demands for greater inclusion among Libya's leadership and institutions. That axis of engagement is also aimed at ensuring the adoption of a code of conduct that commits all candidates and stakeholders to engage in the electoral process in a constructive manner and accept the results. I in particular encouraged women and youth to continue their engagement with all actors so that their concerns are addressed in the road map to elections. It is vital for the success of elections that all parts of Libyan society are involved and have their voices heard, and that the electoral campaign provides an opportunity for peaceful competition between visions and programmes, not an occasion that triggers hate speech and violence.

Last but not least, I have offered the technical expertise and logistical support of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to the 6+6 committee of the House of Representatives and High State Council to enable its work in preparing the electoral laws. Both chambers have announced their respective members to the committee based on regional representation. Regrettably, however, the committee does not include any women. Although the committee as a whole has yet to convene, on 5 April its six High State Council members met for the first time with three of their six House of Representatives counterparts to discuss their workplans and identify priority issues to be tackled by the committee.

I am pleased to announce that, over the course of recent days, I received a positive answer from the designated committees of both the House of Representatives and the

High State Council to accept UNSMIL's support. I hope that genuine political will and wisdom will guide their deliberations. I urge the leaders of the two chambers to expedite the work of the 6+6 committee and publish a time-bound work programme. For elections to take place this year, the electoral laws must be completed in time for the High National Elections Commission to begin implementing the electoral process by early July.

Gaps and concerns being raised about constitutional amendment No. 13 will also need to be addressed by that time for a viable electoral process. The Chair of the High National Elections Commission informed me that, while awaiting the electoral laws and the provision of necessary funds, the Commission has started initial preparations for the implementation of the electoral process. I call on the Government to provide the High National Elections Commission with all necessary resources to complete its mandated tasks in a timely manner. For their part, UNSMIL and United Nations Headquarters are considering the Government's request for electoral assistance.

Besides finalizing the constitutional and legal framework for elections, a level playing field is needed so as not to give undue advantage to particular candidates and in order to engender trust in elections among all sides. I call on Libyan leaders and all relevant actors to follow their stated commitment to elections and seek tangible, mutually acceptable solutions to achieve that. I commend the Presidential Council for its efforts to establish a national financial oversight mechanism for the transparent and equitable spending of Libya's vast public resources — an important element to ensure that public funds are not used to the advantage of any side.

While the overall security situation remains tense, the ceasefire continues to hold and there were positive developments on cooperation between the Libyan army and the Libyan National Army and on the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries.

On 16 March, I co-chaired the security working group of the Berlin process, attended by the Chiefs of Staff of the Libyan army and the 5+5 Joint Military Commission. The Chiefs of Staff asked for international support to equip a planned joint military brigade to secure Libya's southern borders as a step towards the reunification of the armed forces. On the margins of that meeting, liaison committees from Libya, the Sudan, Chad and the Niger met to discuss strengthening cooperation and the exchange of information on mercenaries and fighters

from Libya's southern neighbours present in the country. UNSMIL also convened Libyan ceasefire monitors from both sides, together with focal points from the Joint Military Commission, to highlight the capacity-building needs of Libyan monitors and to discuss activating their joint operations centre.

From 29 March to 4 April, I travelled to the Sudan, Chad and the Niger to discuss with their leaders how to improve conditions for the return of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya. My interlocutors offered their support for achieving that goal while highlighting the challenges to it, which include porous borders, local and national dynamics in their countries and the varying motives for the presence of those armed elements in Libya. The withdrawals of foreign fighters should be coordinated, sequenced and synchronized to ensure that they do not become a threat to the security of their home countries. The process should also contribute to combating terrorism, illegal mining, human and drug trafficking and all the forms of criminality that affect the border areas.

The human rights situation continues to be tense. During the reporting period, the civic space has been further restricted and operations of civil-society organizations have been deemed illegal. On 27 March, the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya issued its final report (A/HRC/52/83), which expresses concern about the situation and recommends further efforts to combat impunity. Furthermore, on 15 March, the Working Group on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights of the Berlin process presented the Presidential Council with a set of principles resulting from the dialogue on human rights in order to address Libyans' concerns. I urge the Libyan authorities to live up to their human rights obligations, end impunity and provide more space for the work of civil-society organizations.

In conclusion, since my 27 February briefing to the Security Council (see S/PV.9270) there has been a new dynamic in Libya, with intensive consultations taking place among security actors. Institutional and political leaders have also acted to move the political process forward. I urge Libya's leaders to deliver on all their commitments in order to meet the people's expectation that they will be able to choose leaders this year. My interaction with the majority of the stakeholders, the citizens of Libya and their initiative all point to a new national dynamic that must be sustained and amplified. The international community should also remain mobilized and vigilant to further enable Libya's

institutions and political actors in taking action aimed at the holding of elections. All international partners should support the current momentum and speak with one voice on Libyan matters. We are seeing a historic opportunity opening up for overcoming the decade-long crisis. UNSMIL will intensify its facilitation and mediation through the multiple, interdependent and mutually reinforcing axes of our comprehensive approach in support of the realization of all political, legal and security requirements so that elections can be held this year. The people of Libya are eager to enter a new dawn of peace, stability and prosperity during their lifetime. Let us support them in achieving that legitimate aspiration.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Bathily for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Ishikane.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): In accordance with paragraph 24 (e) of resolution 1970 (2011) of 26 February 2011, I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya. The report covers the period from 17 December 2022 to 18 April 2023, during which time the Committee met once in informal consultations and conducted additional work using the silence procedure.

I would like to begin by saying that since this is my first periodic report to the Security Council, I am looking forward to working with all the members of the Committee this year. During the informal consultations held on 3 March, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on the interim report of the Panel, submitted to the Committee on 21 February in accordance with resolution 2644 (2022). After discussions, the Committee agreed to take action on one of the recommendations addressed to it. As a follow-up, the sanctions list was updated by incorporating previous changes to the list entries into the respective narrative summaries. The interim report, which highlights aspects related to the implementation of the travel ban, assets freezes, the arms embargo and measures in relation to attempts to illicitly export petroleum, including references to incidents of non-compliance, was submitted to the Security Council on 15 March.

With respect to the implementation of the arms embargo measures, the Committee received a subsequent written report on a seizure of cargo previously reported

and an attempted inspection report from the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI. The Committee also received a letter from Libya on matters related to the arms embargo. The Committee considered a request submitted by Morocco to authorize the export of explosive items and non-explosive products to Libya and concluded that the transfer did not fall within the scope of the arms embargo. In both cases the Committee received letters from the Panel of Experts with their technical inputs. During the reporting period, the Committee further received a note verbale from Malta in connection with an arms embargo exemption request previously approved and dispatched a letter to Libya requesting updated information on some aspects of the arms embargo's implementation.

In connection with the measures aimed at preventing illicit exports of petroleum from Libya, including crude oil and refined petroleum products, the Committee is considering a letter to Libya requesting updates on the focal point pursuant to resolution 2146 (2014). Regarding the assets-freeze measures, no negative decision was taken by the Committee on exemption notifications invoking paragraph 19 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011), submitted by Bahrain, Luxembourg and Switzerland. In addition, the Committee approved an exemption request submitted by Luxembourg under paragraph 19 (b) of resolution 1970 (2011). The Committee had no objection to the transfers of frozen assets from one financial institution to another requested by the Bahamas and Bahrain, respectively. The Committee responded to a note verbale from Türkiye with further queries on the scope of paragraph 27 of resolution 1973 (2011).

The Committee received three letters from Libya on various aspects of the assets freeze, one of which has been responded to while the other two remain under the Committee's consideration. The Committee is also considering the response to a note verbale from Bahrain. On 6 April, the Committee dispatched a note verbale to all Member States on the exemptions and exceptions to the assets-freeze measures. The Committee received a follow-up letter from the Panel of Experts in connection with two assets-freeze-related recommendations contained in its final report under the previous mandate (see S/2022/427). With regard to the travel ban measures, the Committee received a travel notification from Ms. Safia Farkash Al-Barassi for travel from Egypt to Switzerland under a travel exemption granted previously for unlimited travel within a six-month period for humanitarian purposes. Subsequently, the Committee

received a letter from Switzerland, as the country of destination, notifying on the matter and a communication from a representative of Ms. Safia Farkash Al-Barassi confirming her return to Egypt.

With regard to the sanctions list, the Committee received a letter from the Panel of Experts referring to a recent case of a listed individual using forged United Nations documentation in an attempt to circumvent the travel ban and assets-freeze measures imposed on him as a designated individual in Libya. The Committee is still considering a de-listing requested by Libya.

Lastly, during the reporting period, the Committee received four implementation reports, from Malta, Serbia, Japan and Switzerland.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the Committee's commitment to contributing to the promotion of peace and stability in Libya.

The President (*spoke in Russian*) I thank Ambassador Ishikane 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 and Ambassador Ishikane Kimihiro for their briefings today. I would like to focus on the political process, the role of security actors and civil society.

The United Kingdom continues to support fully Special Representative Bathily and his work in Libya. I welcome Special Representative Bathily's consultations with an inclusive set of stakeholders. All Libyans, from social leaders to civil society, have an important role to play in Libya's long-term efforts towards stability.

First, mediation, under the auspices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), is key for elections to succeed. It is vital to bind Libya's powerbrokers into an agreement that will enable the holding of elections as soon as feasible, without risking the progress achieved on peace and stability to date. Mediation should take place between those empowered to resolve key sticking points that have long delayed Libya's progress towards long-term security.

Secondly, I note positively the efforts of security actors to come together in support of delivering successful elections. Their initial commitments are welcome and

should be the foundation for more substantive political compromises that create the conditions for successful elections. Security actors also have an important role in committing to and upholding the security guarantees necessary to enable Libyans' access to safe, free and fair elections.

Finally, as Special Representative Bathily said, the crackdown on civil society is deeply concerning. Civic space must be protected to empower all Libyans to play a role in developing an open and democratic society. It is incumbent on the Libyan authorities to rapidly develop and clarify a sustainable legal mechanism that allows for freedom of association, operation and assembly, as guaranteed in the constitutional declaration. Additionally, I encourage Special Representative Bathily to continue to undertake meaningful engagement with civil society to ensure that a wider range of Libyan voices, including — as he mentioned — those of women and young people, are heard throughout the political process.

There has been a positive start already to helping Libya to find the solutions to its problems. We must continue to work together constructively to support the Libyan people to address long-standing issues. It is only through coordinated efforts, with a leading role by UNSMIL, that we can help to pave the way for elections and beyond, to ensure that Libya achieves the stability and prosperity its people deserve.

Mrs. Chanda (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative Bathily for his briefing. I would also like to thank the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya for his briefing and his work as Chair of the Committee. I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya in today's meeting.

“We care for our homeland, for civil rights, and we want our living conditions to be improved.” That is a sample of what Libyans said during the series of inclusive human rights dialogues organized by Switzerland, as co-Chair of the Working Group on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights of the Berlin process. That call by the Libyan people should not be ignored. That is why we join others in calling for free and fair elections and call on all Libyan stakeholders to engage constructively and resolutely in that process. In order to ensure that elections are held as soon as possible, the international community must consistently and unwaveringly support the Special Representative and his recent initiative. Switzerland also welcomes the

regional initiatives to promote intra-Libyan dialogue and provide support to that process.

Finally, we recall the responsibility to safeguard the participation of women in political roles, including elected women representatives, to ensure that they contribute to political processes at all levels, free from threats or reprisals.

In the light of the most recent developments in the neighbouring country of the Sudan, which will have consequences for the region, we welcome the recent progress made in Libya on the security track by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission through the establishment of a joint military force and liaison committees with neighbouring countries, and we hope that this trend will continue.

Any progress on the security track must be accompanied by progress on the political front. That is why, in order to organize free and fair elections, an environment in which the rights to freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly can be exercised is required. Switzerland is concerned about the arbitrary arrests, intimidation and harassment that are preventing civil society actors from expressing themselves freely.

Moreover, bureaucratic restrictions in the form of registration requirements are stifling and criminalizing the work of Libyan and international civil society organizations. We need to be clear on this point: civil society plays a fundamental role in promoting human rights and the rule of law, and concrete steps must be taken to protect the civil society space. For that reason, Switzerland calls for the adoption of a law on civil society organizations in Libya that complies with international law. Several proposals for such a law have already been drafted by Libyan organizations.

Finally, we would like to express our alarm that the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, mandated by the Human Rights Council, has found that it has reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed in Libya, including against migrants. The perpetrators of those crimes must be held responsible and brought to justice. Switzerland urges the Libyan authorities to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court. Migrant children, in particular unaccompanied children, are one of the most vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, they continue to be held arbitrarily, together with adults, in detention centres across the country, with limited access to basic protection, health services and legal assistance.

That injustice must stop. Switzerland firmly believes that respect for human rights is essential to achieving peace and stability in Libya, and we remain committed to working with the international community to that end.

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

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, for his very important and insightful briefing. We also thank His Excellency Mr. Kimihiro Ishikane for his very insightful briefing, and his updates as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya. We also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya, Ambassador Taher Elsonni, at today's meeting.

The A3 welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2023/248).

Our statement will address the political, security, economic and human rights issues of refugees and the situation of migrants in Libya.

On the political front, we strongly commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Bathily, for his engagement with Libyan actors in addressing the current political situation in Libya in an inclusive manner. We recognize his efforts to pave the way for inclusive and credible presidential and parliamentary elections in Libya, through dialogue with various political and security figures, Government officials, members of the House of Representatives, the High State Council, the Presidential Council, representatives of cultural components, tribal leaders and civil society in general.

(*spoke in English*)

We highlight with appreciation the initiative by Special Representative Bathily of establishing a high-level panel for elections, aimed at assisting in the organization and conduct of presidential and legislative elections in the course of the current year 2023. In that regard, we would like to encourage the collaborative approach and support that the panel would provide to the 6+6 committee so that Libyans can quickly reach consensus on contentious issues, including the development of a constitutional framework and a clear road map for the holding of inclusive elections. We call

on the parties to come up with well-defined terms of reference and timelines for the Committee for acceptance by all relevant political actors. The parties must engage constructively and in a spirit of compromise so that the elections can take place in 2023, as the Libyan people ardently wish. We also call on the parties to include women and youth in this process.

The A3 wishes to reiterate that the peace process in Libya must be Libyan-led and Libyan-owned, facilitated by the United Nations and supported by the international community, guided by an inclusive dialogue conducive to national reconciliation. The A3 wishes further to emphasize its call for the national-reconciliation process to be part of any political arrangements, as this helps in healing the political wounds among the Libyan political actors. In this regard, we welcome the critical role of the African Union, the Libyan Presidential Council, regional organizations and the neighbouring countries.

We note, in particular, the communiqué of the 1136th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council held on 1 February 2023, on the situation in Libya, which called on the Libyan stakeholders to adhere to the reconciliation process supported by the African Union and the United Nations under the umbrella of the Presidential Council in order to pave the way for the inclusive national reconciliation conference expected to take place in May 2023. We call on all political actors to participate in this conference in good faith.

In order to enable a successful Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process, the Libyan political actors must place the interests of Libyans above all considerations. They must undertake prompt steps forward to finalize the pending issues and lay the groundwork for fair, inclusive and peaceful elections. In this regard, we urge the different segments of Libyan society to engage in the talks in good faith, so that all the efforts undertaken so far will have made a meaningful contribution in the promotion of inclusiveness and sustainable peace and security in Libya.

With regard to the security situation, we take positive note that the 2020 ceasefire agreement continues to hold, despite the tense situation and security incidents in Libya. We call on the parties to continue showing restraint by fully complying with the ceasefire agreement, in order to preserve the current path conducive to lasting peace and security.

Gabon, Ghana and Mozambique strongly condemn the presence of foreign forces on Libyan soil. This

presence undermines Libya's territorial integrity and the country's ownership of the peace process. The forces' immediate departure is essential for a favourable environment conducive to the advancement of the ongoing political process leading to the holding of elections in the course of the current year. In this regard, we commend the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the liaison committees for their efforts to facilitate the full withdrawal of foreign forces, as well as foreign fighters, from Libya. We commend the efforts deployed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in engaging different regional partners on this very important matter.

We further commend the 5+5 Joint Military Commission for bringing together military and security leaders from the western, eastern and southern regions to discuss how they can contribute to an environment conducive to advancing the political process.

While we call for the full withdrawal of foreign forces and foreign fighters from Libya, we are concerned about the possible spillover effects in the Sahel and their consequences for the security situation in the region, which has continued to deteriorate as terrorism has spread in West Africa. In the context, we call for coordinated action to help manage the threat posed to stability in the Sahel by the return of those foreign fighters and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We further urge that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts be concentrated not only in Libya but also undertaken through a collaborative approach with neighbouring countries and regional organizations.

Turning to the economic situation, the A3 is concerned about the fact that the protracted conflict and ongoing political crisis in Libya continue to impact macroeconomic indicators and have a negative effect on access to essential services, including in the areas of health and education, particularly for the most vulnerable. In particular, the disruptions to oil production constrain economic growth and prevent Libyans from fully harnessing their vast natural-resources potential in order to finance development programmes and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We want to emphasize here that Libya's frozen assets belong to and are protected and preserved for Libyans. The delays in promulgating the national budget, as well as reforming and reunifying the Central Bank of Libya, are further exacerbating the problem. The situation is jeopardizing the management of Libyan wealth and

resources, which must be accountable, transparent, equitable and efficient for the benefit of the Libyan people.

With regard to human rights, the A3 strongly condemns violations of the human rights of refugees and migrants, including human trafficking, torture, sexual and gender-based violence and extortion, as presented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2023/248). We demand that refugees, migrants and asylum seekers be treated humanely as a basic requirement of international law and related legal instruments. We echo the Secretary-General's call for alternatives to detentions in order to manage migration in line with international law and international human rights law.

We reiterate our call for full respect for Libya's territorial integrity, sovereignty and national unity in line with resolution 2656 (2022). Gabon, Ghana and Mozambique reiterate their support to Mr. Bathily and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya in their efforts to de-escalate tensions and build mutual trust among the relevant Libyan actors, with a view to finding a pathway towards the holding of presidential and legislative elections conducive to lasting peace and stability in Libya.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I would like to thank Special Representative Bathily for his briefing on the situation in Libya, as well as the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) on Libya for his report.

We continue to unequivocally support the Special Representative's efforts to reach the political consensus needed for Libyans to hold elections as soon as possible. The frustration among the Libyan people over the political stalemate is evident. Powerful actors continue to undermine the path to elections. The interference has only become more public since the failure to hold elections in December 2021. It is time to build on past achievements and the current momentum by constructively engaging in the inclusive process outlined by Special Representative Bathily towards a United Nations-facilitated road map to elections as soon as is feasible. The United States urges the 6+6 committee to contribute to that United Nations-led effort by immediately addressing the remaining barriers to elections.

On sanctions, we remain concerned about the uptick in trafficking both in illicit petroleum and arms. We urge all Member States to prevent any illicit petroleum shipments outside the National Oil Corporation, which often fund destabilizing actors in Libya and steal

resources that rightly belong to the Libyan people. We also continue to support strict adherence to the arms embargo. We applaud the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI for the diversion of vessels found to contain arms and related material that could enable renewed conflict in Libya. The United States welcomes the ongoing work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission to unify Libya's security forces and fully implement the ceasefire agreement.

The withdrawal of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries remains an essential element in maintaining stability throughout Libya. The expulsion of Wagner Group mercenaries is critical. The war in Ukraine has laid bare what civilians in Libya and elsewhere in Africa have known for years, which is that the Wagner Group is a brutal organization that seeks only to advance its own interests — and those of Russia — in Africa.

With respect to human rights, the final report of the Human Rights Council's Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya (A/HRC/52/83) is dismaying. The enumerated violations and abuses of the human rights of men, women and children — and particularly migrants — are horrific, and the situation appears to be getting worse. The impunity with which State and non-State actors have operated demonstrates an utter lack of regard for the welfare of human beings in the pursuit of money and power. There must be accountability for those violations and abuses if national reconciliation is to be achieved. The people of Libya have waited long enough. It is time for Libya's leaders to show progress and demonstrate a willingness to put their nation's interests above their own.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative Bathily for his briefing.

France welcomes the recent progress achieved in the implementation of the 2020 ceasefire agreement under the auspices of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, with the two Chiefs of Staff and all security actors, under the impetus of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Libyan security actors have committed to reunifying the Libyan army and securing the holding of elections, which gives reason for hope. France welcomes the meeting of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in Tripoli, the joint visits to Tripoli and Benghazi by the Chiefs of Staff from western and eastern Libya and their initiative to establish a joint military force. That sends a strong message in terms of a unified, sovereign and stable Libya. The process must be

accompanied by the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of militias and the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya. France welcomes the establishment of liaison committees for Chad, the Niger and the Sudan to coordinate the withdrawal of African mercenaries. The stability of Libya and its neighbours is a priority for France, which will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to assist in the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission.

Libya's political class must build on the security gains made and meet the expectations of the Libyan people for 2023, which are concurrent, inclusive, credible and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections throughout the country. The electoral process should be free of corruption and intimidation and guarantee equal opportunities for all candidates. To that end, the executive must be able to organize the elections in an absolutely neutral and transparent manner. Agreement on a legal framework for the holding of elections and a new political road map are imperative, and the process should be finalized as quickly as possible. In that regard, the House of Representatives and the High Council of State have a responsibility vis-à-vis the Libyan people. France reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the Special Representative and his initiative to establish an inclusive high-level panel to oversee the holding of the elections.

Serious human rights violations are being committed in Libya. Militias and foreign mercenaries are acting with complete impunity. France condemns the forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture and sexual violence committed against both migrants and Libyans. The restrictions on freedom of expression and association are disturbing. We call on the Libyan authorities to end such violations and combat impunity for those responsible. France calls for an equitable and transparent redistribution of revenue for the benefit of the entire population. The process of reunifying the Central Bank must be accelerated. France is committed to respecting the arms embargo and will continue to support the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI. All countries operating in the Mediterranean should cooperate with IRINI and abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions. A sovereign, united, stable and democratic Libya is vital to regional stability. In order to achieve that, the legitimacy of political institutions must be restored through the holding of national elections. France reiterates its full

support for Special Representative Abdoulaye Bathily to that end.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily and Ambassador Ishikane for their briefings, and I welcome Ambassador Elsonni, the Permanent Representative of Libya, to this meeting. In the light of the Secretary-General's report (S/2023/248), I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, we need to build synergy to advance the political process. The House of Representatives and the High State Council recently announced the establishment of a joint 6+6 committee and held a meeting to discuss the constitutional framework for the holding of elections. Special Representative Bathily has been in extensive communication with the Libyan parties, while Egypt and other countries of the region have made determined efforts through their good offices and mediation work. In the current situation, there is a consensus among all the parties on the need to break the political deadlock, and synergy must be created to that end. All the Libyan parties should continue to build on their previous efforts to conduct dialogue, resolve their differences and create the conditions necessary for the holding of general elections as soon as possible. The international community should follow the principle of ensuring that the processes are Libyan-led and Libyan-owned and should address the legitimate concerns of all parties, give the political process constructive support and avoid imposing external solutions. China supports Special Representative Bathily in leading the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to continue to step up its good offices and mediation efforts to facilitate the intra-Libyan dialogue.

Secondly, we need to consolidate the peace and security mechanism. Under the chairmanship of Mr. Bathily, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission has met frequently in Tripoli and Benghazi, and the parties have actively discussed the establishment of a unified security institution. Libya and its neighbouring countries have also agreed on establishing a coordination mechanism, all of which China welcomes. At the same time, we continue to see armed clashes and security incidents in Libya. All parties should fulfil their ceasefire commitments, increase their coordination, ensure a balanced and coordinated withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries and avoid any action that might have a negative impact on Libyan stability and regional security. With the protracted fighting and turmoil, national

reconciliation is a significant key to building consensus on peace and reconstruction and on eliminating the root causes of conflict. China supports the African Union in taking the lead on convening a national reconciliation conference with Libyan parties and looks forward to its success.

Thirdly, we need to accelerate development and reconstruction. Libya recently resumed exporting oil, with increased momentum. All parties should make compromises with a view to advancing the country's overall development and make additional efforts in the areas of fiscal management, public services and the improvement of people's livelihoods. The international community should participate actively in Libya's reconstruction and provide further support for its economic recovery and development. All parties should also cease any political interference, negotiate to resolve their differences in managing the oil industry and its revenue distribution and ensure that Libya continues to manage its own oil industry and that more of its oil revenues benefit its people. Lastly, the Libyan Government has long been concerned about the loss of the use of its frozen assets. The Security Council and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya should pay more attention to that and take practical measures.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): We thank Ambassador Ishikane, the Permanent Representative of Japan, for his briefing in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, and I would like to congratulate him on assuming its chairmanship earlier this year. He can count on my delegation's support as he steers the Committee's work during our term on the Security Council. I would also like to thank Mr. Bathily, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, for his briefing. Brazil supports his goal of enabling the Libyan stakeholders to agree on the needed constitutional and legal framework for the realization of elections in Libya in 2023, as well as his approach to that goal. We further commend his commitment to the principle of national ownership in his extensive engagement with all Libyan stakeholders. We underscore the importance of the fact that under his leadership, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has continued to provide mediation and good offices across Libya in support of a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political transition, in compliance with the Mission's mandate. And I welcome the Permanent Representative of Libya to this meeting.

We are hopeful that the Special Representative's proposal to establish a high-level panel for elections will contribute to bringing all Libyan stakeholders together in a manner that fosters a genuine intra-Libyan dialogue. In our view, that dialogue should build on the progress on the constitutional framework already achieved by the House of Representatives and the High State Council, whose continued role the Council acknowledged in its latest presidential statement on Libya (S/PRST/2023/2).

The agreement between the two Libyan chambers to establish a joint 6+6 committee may well help to achieve the shared goal of holding elections in 2023. We encourage the 6+6 committee to deliver concrete and measurable results, with the necessary sense of urgency, on the remaining issues in preparation for national elections. Swift progress would help to dispel concerns that the establishment and work of the new Committee might compete with or stall the Special Representative's efforts to break the current political deadlock.

Brazil welcomes the fact that several Libyan military and security leaders from all parts of Libya have come together in meetings in Tunis, Tripoli and Benghazi over the past weeks and months under the auspices of UNSMIL. Their commitment to creating an environment conducive to elections will be key to ensuring the success of the political transition through the ballot box. We also commend their efforts towards unifying the armed forces.

The recent reinvigoration of the liaison committees with neighbouring countries by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission represents an important step towards the coordinated withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya. Given the relationship between the situation in Libya and that of the Sahel, we further emphasize the importance of regional coordination and greater coherence among United Nations actors, including UNSMIL and the missions and agencies operating in the Sahel, as well as collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission. We acknowledge the efforts of Egypt in support of the Joint Military Commission's activities.

Brazil would like to remind the Council of the role that the Peacebuilding Commission could play, at Libya's request, to help promote an integrated, strategic and coherent peacebuilding approach in the country. The Council acknowledged that role relative to the situation in Libya last year in its adoption of resolution 2656 (2022), which renewed UNSMIL's mandate. We therefore encourage the Libyan authorities to engage

with the Peacebuilding Commission in order to mobilize support for Libya's national peacebuilding priorities in full respect for its sovereignty.

Finally, Brazil remains concerned about the reports by the Panel of Experts of violations of the arms embargo established under resolution 1970 (2011). We reiterate our call for strict compliance with the terms of the arms embargo and with the sanctions regime generally. We also reiterate our commitment to Libya's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank Special Representative Bathily and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya for their briefings, and I would like to assure the Chair of our full collaboration with the work of the Committee. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya in our meeting today.

The situation in Libya continues to warrant the international community's focus and support. Despite the present calm, we remain concerned about the fragility of the situation. We are encouraged by the Special Representative's inclusive efforts and consultations with a broad range of actors to address the political stalemate. Malta supports the high-level panel for elections proposed by the Special Representative with the aim of generating the impetus and consensus needed to overcome the political impasse in Libya. We continue to urge all Libyan parties and key stakeholders to engage fully, constructively, transparently and in a spirit of compromise with the Special Representative.

We take positive note of the decision by the House of Representatives and the High State Council to task a joint 6+6 committee to finalize the constitutional and legislative framework for the elections. It is important for such efforts to be complementary and mutually supportive and to share the common objective of establishing the legal and political consensus needed to conduct free, fair, transparent, inclusive and secure elections. Malta also emphasizes the importance of gender equality and of ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all political processes. Civil-society organizations and young people also have an important role to play. In that regard, we regret the fact that there are no women on the 6+6 committee, as Mr. Bathily informed us today, and we urge him to act quickly to remedy that.

It also remains crucial for the international community to provide the necessary assistance and political support

to the United Nations and to the Libyan authorities for the holding of such elections. The continued political uncertainty continues to create a fragile and tense security situation. The 5+5 Joint Military Commission plays a crucial role in seeking to improve the situation in Libya. In that regard, we welcome its recent meetings with military and security commanders from across the country, which are essential if progress is to be made on the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of armed groups.

We are equally concerned about the continued presence of foreign fighters, foreign forces and mercenaries in Libya. Their full withdrawal should be prioritized. We welcome the continuing work to achieve that goal by the Joint Military Commission, in conjunction with liaison committees from Libya, the Sudan, and the Niger. We agree with Special Representative Bathily that the withdrawal must be efficiently coordinated so to as prevent potential ancillary problems from occurring.

Libya's stability is being further undermined by the proliferation of weapons controlled by various State and non-State actors. Malta strongly believes in the full and rigorous implementation of the sanctions mandated by resolution 1970 (2011), as well as the compliance of all Member States with the arms embargo. In that context, we emphasize the role of European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI. Malta underscores the importance of supporting further efforts to enhance Libya's capacity to ensure its security and stability. We also want to remind the Council that anyone obstructing the political process, including by providing support for armed groups in Libya, may be subject to United Nations sanctions.

As the findings of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya illustrate, the human rights situation in Libya is a cause for concern. We are alarmed by the previous cases and reports of intimidation, torture, sexual assault and murder of women human rights defenders, and we welcome the High National Elections Commission's efforts to track online violence against women. We stress that human rights must be protected in Libya and apply to all, without distinction. The continued shrinking of the civic space in Libya is equally worrisome. We call on all Libyan actors to promote freedom of expression, opinion, association and peaceful assembly.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Malta's support for all efforts that seek to secure an inclusive, peaceful, stable and prosperous present and future for all

Libyans. We call on all regional and international players to speak and act with one voice in advancing that goal.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Special Representative Bathily and Ambassador Ishikane for their comprehensive briefings. I also welcome Ambassador Elsonni to today's meeting.

Since our last briefing on Libya (see S/PV.9270), we have seen the Libyan parties take some positive and encouraging steps in conjunction with intensive engagement by Mr. Bathily. The Council has also spoken in one voice in support of Libya and the United Nations efforts in that regard, as reflected in its last presidential statement (S/PRST/2023/2).

Considering those developments, we welcome the progress achieved on the constitutional path with respect to elections and the constitutional amendment No. 13. We hope that the 6+6 joint committee meetings in Tripoli will lay the legal foundation for the elections process. We call on the parties to set a clear and serious time frame that fulfils the expectations of the brotherly people of Libya. In that regard, we commend the role of the Arab Republic of Egypt in bringing the parties' views closer together.

We reiterate the importance of prioritizing reconciliation and dialogue among Libyan parties from all regions and call on Mr. Bathily to continue his efforts and good offices to achieve that goal, including through his recent initiative to push for an inclusive political process led and owned by Libyans. We also underscore our support for the efforts of the Libyan Presidential Council aimed at achieving real national reconciliation as the main pathway towards achieving a comprehensive and just political settlement that ends all transitional stages. In that context, we stress the importance of ensuring the full, meaningful and equal participation of women in those efforts.

Establishing security remains a prerequisite to achieving political stability and creating a safe environment for holding concurrent presidential and parliamentary elections that are free, fair, transparent and inclusive. That requires a concurrent, phased, gradual and balanced withdrawal of all foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya. My country commends the efforts made by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in facilitating and holding the recent meetings of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) in Tripoli and Benghazi, in addition to the most recent meeting between the Chiefs of Staff.

All of that constitutes extremely important steps forward. We would also like to thank the members of the JMC for their devoted and patriotic spirit, which demonstrates the true Libyan will towards unifying military and security institutions, including through creating a joint military force, while continuing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts.

The international community must continue its full support for those Libyan efforts aimed at strengthening the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Libyans, in turn, must address and reject hate speech and extremist voices seeking to undermine reconciliation efforts and the recent convergence between Libyan parties. The interests of the Libyan people and the country's stability must remain above all other considerations.

It is important to safeguard the gains achieved by Libya in its fight against terrorism, including by preventing Security Council measures from hampering the efforts of Libyan forces to address security threats, especially in southern Libya. That requires the Council to give serious consideration to the sanctions regime imposed on Libya, to ensure that it fits the current reality and supports national efforts, rather than becoming a disruptive tool.

To achieve stability in Libya and the surrounding region, the international community must support the Libyan efforts aimed at addressing irregular migration and its root causes. The support must also be expanded to include countries of origin and transit, as well as those responsible for securing Libya's southern borders.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates emphasizes its support for the efforts made by Special Representative Mr. Bathily and UNSMIL towards building peace and achieving stability in Libya.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his briefing and welcome the participation of the representative of Libya at today's meeting.

Since the previous Security Council briefing on Libya (see S/PV.9270), we have witnessed some positive developments towards the long-awaited elections. While that is welcome, it is imperative that Libya and the United Nations work together to ensure that the elections are held before the end of this year. Japan fully supports Special Representative Bathily's initiative to achieve that aim by launching the Libyan high-level panel for elections. We encourage all international and regional

stakeholders to support this initiative. We highlight the fact that the initiative is aimed at bringing together all relevant Libyan actors, including representatives of political institutions and political figures, tribal leaders, civil society organizations, security actors, women and youth. That will allow the panel, once it is established, to pave the way for an inclusive, truly Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process.

At the same time, we commend the role played by Egypt in facilitating talks between the House of Representatives and the High State Council. Japan urges both entities to finalize electoral laws as soon as possible in order to bring about complete, final and time-bound arrangements for holding elections before the end of this year.

Turning to the security track, Japan commends the military and security institutions' positive engagement towards creating an environment conducive to advancing the political process and holding free and fair elections. It is also laudable that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission continues to play a positive role in moving towards the reunification of security institutions and in implementing the ceasefire agreement. In that regard, we take positive note of the recent efforts by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to further the dialogue with neighbouring countries to the south and to reach out to civil society on security sector reform.

On the economic track, we are concerned that almost no step forward has been taken in the past two months. A fair distribution of revenue through a transparent participatory process is crucial. We welcome the submission of seven human rights principles and recommendations to the President of the Presidential Council, which were prepared through dialogues in the working group on international humanitarian law and human rights.

Let me conclude by again reiterating our full support for Mr. Bathily and his Mission and for the people of Libya.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his briefing. We support his efforts in the process of enabling national elections in Libya this year through a comprehensive and inclusive approach. I also thank Ambassador Ishikane for his briefing in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011).

While we recognize the new momentum and dynamics in Libya, the overall situation remains a source of concern. We are happy to see positive developments in the security and military field, and we welcome the 5+5 Joint Military Commission meetings with military and security leaders. Every effort towards the unification of the Libyan army is a step towards national reconciliation and unity. We are particularly encouraged by the engagement of military leaders in providing support for the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections in 2023.

Unfortunately, on the political front, despite the efforts being made, the impasse continues, and so does the legitimacy crises of the institutions, leaving unanswered the hopes of millions of Libyans who want and deserve to be heard about the future of their country. The political leaders must respond to those aspirations, leave behind their narrow interests and embrace a firm path towards holding the presidential and parliamentary elections across the country in 2023. The leaders must understand that the Libyan transition must go through agreed solutions based on political will to secure the legal foundation for an environment conducive to the holding of national elections. Just like their military counterparts, they should not get locked into playing tricks that generate indefinite delays that perpetuate the unsustainable status quo. Such a process should be participatory, transparent and consensual. The involvement of women, young people, civil society and all factions of Libyan society is crucial for its credibility and outcome.

We reiterate our call for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries. Libya should build its future without any foreign interference.

Needless to say, the political deadlock is also having a detrimental impact on the Libyan economy and the well-being of the Libyan people. We reiterate our position that Libya's national resources should be used for the benefit of all Libyans and must be redistributed in a fair and equitable manner.

While Libya struggles to find the entry point to its future, the human rights situation has seriously deteriorated. War crimes and crimes against humanity such as arbitrary detention, murder, rape, enslavement, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, including against migrants, committed by State security forces and armed militia groups must be fully investigated, and those responsible must be held to

account. We reiterate our 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.

Libya needs, without delay, a responsible political process leading to free and fair elections. It needs a national reconciliation process based on the principles of transitional justice and respect for human rights and the needs of all Libyans, including victims of violations and abuses. That is the only way to help Libyans to heal the wounds of the past and chart the path ahead.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and the Permanent Representative of Japan, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, for their informative briefings. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of Libya, Ambassador Taher Elsonni, to this meeting.

Ecuador welcomes the continued efforts and initiatives of Special Representative Bathily to find a lasting solution to the political crisis and to achieve peace and stability in Libya. His extensive interactions with all parties in the country and the region are most decisive.

With regard to the most recent developments in Libya, I would like to make the following points.

First, the progress recorded on the political front is encouraging. The establishment of the joint 6+6 committee of the High State Council and the House of Representatives, as well as the initiative of the Special Representative to establish a high-level panel, are all important steps towards completing Libya's political transition and holding fair, transparent, inclusive and secure national presidential and parliamentary elections in 2023. We hope that, within a framework of cooperation and transparency, those initiatives will consolidate the progress made, resolve outstanding issues and reach agreements as soon as possible on key issues, such as the constitutional basis for elections. There is no doubt that the holding of elections represents an important path towards peace and stability, as it will allow for the establishment of legitimate public institutions that contribute to the rule of law. We therefore call for the elections to be held in a peaceful, transparent and inclusive environment that guarantees the participation of the population.

Secondly, Ecuador welcomes the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission on upholding the 2020 ceasefire agreement, as well as the discussions held and the commitments reached with various armed groups.

Thirdly, we express our deep concern about the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation, as reflected in the final report of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya. We are particularly alarmed by the continuing violations of the human rights of migrants and refugees, especially children. Libya must comply with its obligations under international law regarding the detention and return of migrants and refugees.

All those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity must be brought to justice. Truth and justice are fundamental elements for achieving peace. Cooperation from the Libyan authorities is thus indispensable in preventing impunity.

Fourthly, regarding the situation of women, we appreciate the presentation of a draft law to combat violence against women to the Committee on Women's and Children's Affairs. We hope that violence against women and girls will now cease and that their rights to participate in public and political life, including in the ongoing political and reconciliation processes, will be guaranteed. We commend the efforts of the Libyan experts in charge of drafting that law, as well as the facilitation role played by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund.

In conclusion, I reiterate Ecuador's respect for Libya's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as our support for the country in its quest for peace and stability, through an autonomous and nationally owned process.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

We are grateful to 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 also thank Ambassador Ishikane Kimihiro, Permanent Representative of Japan, for his report on the activities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

We continue to closely follow developments in the situation in Libya. The achievement of normalization

and the maintenance of stability and security in Libya are important not only for that country and its people, but also plays a key role in ensuring the continued development of North Africa as a whole. The main goal at this stage is to promote a just, lasting and sustainable settlement through a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process, without any external interference.

The cornerstone of that process is the holding of general presidential and parliamentary elections. We hope that the stated intentions of the House of Representatives and the High State Council to finalize the legal framework for the upcoming elections will materialize as scheduled — that is, by June 2023. We welcome the steps being taken to that end, including the approval of an updated version of the constitutional declaration and the establishment of the specialized joint 6+6 committee.

We call on Libyan leaders to continue to seek reasonable compromise. We emphasize that the entire spectrum of Libyan political forces, including representatives of the former Government, must be included in the electoral process in a non-discriminatory manner. That is the only way to ensure harmony within society on the outcome of the upcoming elections and avoid any further deterioration of the politico-military situation, which would be dangerous. A similar principle would also guarantee the success of the national reconciliation process. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the African Union to organize a pan-Libyan conference.

Of equal importance is cooperation on the security track. We welcome the outcome of the most recent meeting of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in Benghazi, Libya, during which participants reaffirmed their readiness to provide as much support as possible to ensure the security of the upcoming elections. Besides that, we note how essential it is to ramp up efforts to create the conditions needed to integrate the country's disparate military components into a unified Libyan army. That will take a great deal of energy and political will. We also support the ongoing work to eliminate the foreign military presence in Libya, including the establishment of liaison subcommittees with Libya's neighbours under the auspices of the Joint Military Commission. Our position on the issue has not changed. The withdrawal of all non-Libyan armed forces, groups and military units must be carried out in a synchronized, balanced, gradual and phased manner in order to maintain a balance of forces on the ground.

We want to emphasize the particular importance of coordinating the consolidated good-faith efforts of the international community aimed at putting an end to this protracted conflict. The role of the United Nations and its key tool, UNSMIL, are more important than ever in resolving the crisis. We once again express our support for Mr. Bathily in his tireless efforts to find acceptable ways out of the internal political impasse, advance the political dialogue in a meaningful way and assist in holding inclusive, representative and transparent elections as soon as possible. At the same time, we believe that a political settlement in Libya should not create an arena for international competition. That is first and foremost because the Libyan people need to be able to finally emerge from the crisis provoked by the NATO aggression in 2011 and put an end to all forms of foreign interference. We therefore consider any unilateral initiatives aimed at creating parallel formats for a settlement without the participation of Libya itself and other stakeholders to be counterproductive.

Unfortunately, the situation is not helped by the short-sighted policies of various international actors that continue to use the pretext of their commitment to reach a political settlement to exploit Libya's instability for their own interests, not least among them the energy sector. We believe that all issues related to the control of oil infrastructure and export operations should be resolved by the Libyans themselves. We should take a similar approach to safeguarding Libya's frozen assets, which in future should be used for the benefit of the Libyan people. The key players in that regard must not be allowed to have a double agenda. We want to remind the Council that both the revenue from the sale of hydrocarbons and the frozen assets are intended for fostering economic recovery and improving the lives of ordinary people, and we call on all our colleagues on the Council to approach the settlement of the Libyan issue in that spirit.

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, Mr. President, on presiding over the Security Council this month and to thank you for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank Ambassador Ishikane, Permanent Representative of Japan, in his new capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution

1970 (2011) concerning Libya, for his briefing. I wish him every success. I also thank Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily for his briefing, his efforts during the reporting period and his many meetings within and outside Libya. In addition, we align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Mozambique on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council.

Almost a year ago, we made a statement to the Council (see S/PV.9047) in which we tried to convey the voice of Libyan citizens by directly posing their questions to Council members. Today I want to try once again to honestly convey their voices as well as I can, in the hope that members can find convincing answers to their questions. Last year we said that our people believe that many of the members have made the same statements again and again with no effective or real result, and that frequently nothing new is said. That is sadly the opinion of most of our citizens, regardless of their affiliation, especially as they follow current events and wonder what to expect next. And that is why many of them keep asking me to remind Council members of their moral responsibility vis-à-vis the events that have unfolded in Libya since 2011. Just to show that nothing has changed, I want to cite part of my statement from one of the Council's meetings on Libya last year.

“We are facing another dilemma that Libyan citizens cannot really understand. On the one hand, the Council calls for compliance with Security Council resolutions, international agreements, dialogues and road maps, while, on the other hand, it calls for respect for a genuine Libyan-led and Libyan-owned solution...

“Libyan citizens and political leaders are confused. Libyans hope for a Libyan consensus in order to end this vicious cycle. We also hope that the dialogue ... will be successful and reach a constitutional agreement that will lead to elections. However, the same questions arise. Where will things stand if the [consensus] fails? ... What will be the Security Council's position against the obstructers if [the consensus is only partial]?”

“Those are the questions being asked by the Libyan people, who are hoping that the Security Council will be able to answer them. Libyan citizens do not care for provisions of laws. What really matters to them is stability and safety.” (S/PV.9047, p.15)

I believe that all those questions continue to be legitimate and to apply to the current situation in Libya.

Despite all the challenges, we always try to remain optimistic. After exhausting negotiations with Council members, we took note of presidential statement S/PRST/2023/2, adopted on 16 March, which stresses the importance of renewing the momentum for establishing the legal and constitutional framework for holding free, fair, transparent comprehensive and safe presidential and parliamentary elections in Libya this year in order to complete the country's political transition process.

In that regard, we once again stress the importance of focusing all efforts and initiatives on supporting the ongoing dialogues in order to achieve a comprehensive Libyan consensus on a just and fair constitutional foundation, along with non-exclusionary election laws that give everyone the opportunity to participate based on a clear timetable. That should take place in conditions conducive to holding presidential and parliamentary elections. Let the Libyan people be the decisive factor in ending all the fragile transitional phases and avoiding past mistakes.

In that regard, we welcomed the Security Council's response in its presidential statement, because it responded to the Government's request that a team be sent to assess the need for technical and logistical support for the electoral process. We call on the United Nations to support the High National Election Commission, together with all the relevant national and civil-society institutions, while coordinating with regional and international organizations. We need the all the technical preparations necessary for voter registration, vote counting, supporting polling stations and providing monitors. That will guarantee the holding of fair and transparent elections whose results will be accepted by all. For our part, we held our first meeting with the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division to discuss those issues in which we confirmed that the assessment team will visit Libya in the next few weeks and meet with most of the parties concerned throughout Libya. A summary of the Government's activities was presented at the meeting, along with the existing challenges. We are currently collaborating in order to determine the support we need from the United Nations to make this national entitlement a success across the country.

As we have said many times, we continue to be optimistic and commend the patriotic spirit that has prevailed during the ongoing meetings between the members of the Joint Military Commission and a number of security leaders in the east, west, north and south of the country, in which they all positioned themselves

independently of political interests. Those meetings, which are considered a continuation of work that began last year and are aimed at strengthening and building trust, are an important and essential step in the work of beginning to unify the military institutions and building the nucleus of a unified Libyan army under civilian authority. In turn, the army will work to protect Libya's territory, secure its borders and end every form of foreign presence in the country. As we heard today, the military and security leaders have repeatedly reiterated that they are ready to provide all the support needed to secure the elections at every stage and to take practical measures to address problems related to the return of displaced persons and refugees and uncovering the fate of missing persons.

With regard to the issues of border security and the stability of the region, we cannot ignore the precarious current situation in our brother country and neighbour the Sudan, where we hope that the ongoing fighting will stop, bloodshed will be prevented, and the ongoing cycle of conflict will end as soon as possible. That situation will undoubtedly have a direct and negative impact not only on the Sudan but on its neighbours and Libya, especially southern Libya, which continues to suffer more from the scourges of war, division and foreign interferences. The events of the past years have taught us lessons. We again call on all the countries concerned with the Libyan file to work seriously and effectively to find a comprehensive political solution and to support our stability, because it inevitably has a direct effect on the stability, safety and security of its neighbours and the region. In that context, we welcome the recent meetings and rapprochement among influential countries in the region, which we hope will help to create a consensus of views in support of the desire of Libyans to end the conflict and emerge from this crisis, without any of the negative interventions that have happened in previous years.

Today we listened to many statements that focused in particular on issues related to human rights, migration, terrorism and even civil society. We should all know that those issues, especially immigration and terrorism, are the consequences of the crisis situation in Libya for which all share responsibility, because had there been no negative interventions over the years and matters had been left in the hands of the Libyan people, we would not be dealing with the situation we have today. While undoubtedly there are some aspects that must be improved, the responsibility is nonetheless shared.

The migration issue does not originate from inside Libya, because as we all know very well, Libya is a transit country. We all know that there are international networks that finance human trafficking. They also finance hotbeds of terrorism. That being so, where did Council members discuss holding those international networks accountable, from the countries of origin to the receiving countries? We heard nothing about that. That does not mean that we are abandoning our responsibility to consider humanitarian cases. But if the international community really wants to solve the crisis, let us start by resolving the political issues and the division, and then we can ensure that the problem is solved and the issue of our immigrant brothers can be contained. If Council members really find the situation so distressing, why do they not themselves take in those migrants, those children and women, until the political problems within my country are resolved? We should all understand that the responsibility for this is shared.

Despite all that has been said today, we are optimistic, and we have begun to see some stability throughout the country during this period, especially in the blessed month of Ramadan, when we have sensed a mood of tolerance, brotherhood and communication between the people of the country, with those who were enemies not long ago now cordially shaking hands. That does not mean that all the wounds have healed or that the fight for victims' rights has been abandoned. However, the path to achieving stability and building State and law institutions needs concessions and sacrifices. We have great confidence in Libya's citizens, especially the new generation of young men and women who have matured and become more aware. We are also confident that we will overcome the crisis through our national efforts. Whatever the challenges, we are moving towards achieving reconciliation, bridging the rifts and restoring our national sovereignty while ensuring that Libya has the international and global status that it deserves.

Before I conclude, as we speak about the holy month of Ramadan and at a time when last night and today the entire Islamic world is celebrating Laylat Al-Qadr, the night on which the noble Qur'an was revealed to our Prophet Mohammed, I want to reaffirm in this Chamber Libya's strong condemnation of the recent acts of some extremists, specifically in Europe, in which they set the Qur'an on fire in a desperate attempt to provoke Muslims on a pretext of exercising freedom of expression before the eyes and ears of their countries. It comes at a time when we are all working on the basis of international resolutions to combat the problem of Islamophobia.

We therefore call on all the countries concerned to work to stop those acts, educate their citizens and abandon double standards, especially when it comes to freedom of expression, because such acts fuel violence and threaten peace within society as well as international peace and security. That is because those people and their backers who profit from such acts employ extremist and terrorist ideologies, using such acts to justify their crimes in the name of religion. The Islamic religion rejects them all, because Islam is as far as it can be from hatred, radicalism and extremism. It is a religion of mercy, tolerance, coexistence and peace. To quote the Holy Qur'an,

“We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you.” (*The Holy Qur'an, XLIX:13*).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): 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 noon.