



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8820th meeting
Thursday, 15 July 2021, 10 a.m.
New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Le Drian/Mr. De Rivière	(France)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	India	Mr. Shringla
	Ireland	Mr. Flynn
	Kenya	Ms. Omamo
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Niger	Mr. Abarry
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

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 (*spoke in French*): I wish to warmly welcome the distinguished Ministers and other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Germany and Libya to participate in this meeting.

I request the Protocol Officer to escort His Excellency Mr. Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya, to the Council table.

Mr. Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

I also welcome His Excellency Mr. Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: Let me begin by thanking Minister Le Drian and the French presidency for convening this timely in-person meeting. I would also like to welcome here among us His Excellency Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah and other Excellencies,

Ministers and high-level representatives of States Members of the United Nations, notably members of the Security Council but also other ministers. I thank them for joining this meeting. It is important both for understanding the situation in the country and for mobilizing the international community in support of the processes in the country that should strengthen its unity, stability and security, with a positive impact on the overall region.

I come from my most recent visit to Libya, where I held consultations with a wide range of actors to convince them to safeguard and advance the course to national inclusive, free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections in December. While all my interlocutors reiterated their commitment to holding the elections on 24 December, I am afraid that many of them are not ready to walk the talk. I reminded them of the overwhelming demand and expectations of the Libyan people and the international community for the elections to be held on time, which is necessary to complete Libya's democratic transition and prevent a return to conflict, violence and chaos.

The constitutional basis for the elections should have been clarified by now. Regrettably, the House of Representatives, the body mandated to do so in consultation with the High Council of State, has not yet delivered. Last week, a new committee of the House of Representatives was established to prepare electoral laws for holding the elections on 24 December, and it requested United Nations support. I advised the Speaker of the House of Representatives to consult with the High Council of State, in line with Libyan Political Agreement, and to ensure that the legal and constitutional basis are in place for holding the elections on 24 December, as per resolution 2570 (2021), the conclusions of the second Berlin Conference on Libya and the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) road map.

I also convened a virtual meeting of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum at the end of May to consider a draft constitutional basis recommended by the Forum's legal committee and address key issues that the Committee had left unresolved. The outstanding issues raised by LPDF members themselves included whether the presidential elections should take place through a direct vote by the people or indirectly through the Parliament; whether a referendum on the draft permanent constitution should be held first, even as a precondition for direct presidential elections; what

the criteria for the eligibility of candidates, especially for President, should be; whether military personnel and dual-citizenship holders should be eligible and on what conditions; and questions about the representation of cultural components.

The May session of the LPDF was unable to resolve those issues and insisted that an in-person meeting was necessary to negotiate a compromise. That meeting took place in Geneva, with the kind support of Switzerland, from 28 June to 2 July. At the request of some LPDF members, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) convened the LPDF's Advisory Committee in Tunis from 24 to 26 June to prepare for the meeting in Geneva by developing options to bridge the differences over the unresolved issues. The Advisory Committee reached a broad consensus on a compromise proposal, which sought to address the concerns of the various constituencies and interest groups within the LPDF. The proposal was tabled during the Geneva meeting of the LPDF.

However, it became clear in Geneva that LPDF members were fragmented into various blocs and interest groups with different affiliations. The various blocs maintained their entrenched positions, also reflected in their proposals, and the LPDF was unable and unwilling to reach an agreement on a final proposal for a constitutional basis for the elections.

Because of that failure of both the constitutional bodies and the LPDF, the situation in Libya is becoming more difficult, confrontational and tense. Institutional, political and individual interests stand in the way of agreeing on the necessary legal framework for holding the elections on 24 December, as agreed in the LPDF road map, endorsed by the Security Council. Old and new status-quo forces are using diverse tactics and often legitimate arguments with only one result — obstructing the holding of the elections. My predecessor, who had his own experience with similar approaches, called them spoilers — a correct description given the impact of their approach and manoeuvring.

UNSMIL continues to facilitate efforts to find common ground, including through the work of a consensus-building committee established by the LPDF meeting in Geneva, which we will convene tomorrow, and through my own engagement with the political and other leaders in Libya.

Together with High National Elections Commission, UNSMIL is requested to advise the committee

convened by the House of Representatives, to which I referred earlier. We are ready to do so with the aim of facilitating the holding of the elections on 24 December, taking as our point of reference the LPDF road map and the legal committee proposal. The committee intends to meet next week in Italy.

To increase our engagement with civil society, including the women and young people of the country, the UNSMIL leadership intends to engage them in a digital dialogue, used by UNSMIL in the past.

I am deeply concerned about the wider ramifications of the stalemate in the political/electoral track and related cleavages that are the result of the standoff between key Libyan State institutions, in particular between the Government of National Unity and the House of Representatives, the Government of National Unity and the Libyan National Army, led by Field Marshal Haftar, the House of Representatives and the High Council of State and those who want to respect the 24 December timeline for the elections and those who would see the elections delayed.

On a positive note, despite the lack of a legislative electoral framework, the High National Electoral Commission initiated the voter registration update on 4 July, with a special provision for the inclusion of internally displaced persons. The Electoral Commission decided to move forward and start the implementation of the part of the process that does not fully require having the legislation in place. Yet there are limitations to what can be done in the absence of electoral legislation.

If the impasse over the constitutional basis and the ongoing standoff between State institutions are not quickly resolved and if the key leaders of the country will not show the political will to reach a solution and a compromise and implement it, all that could reverse the positive momentum seen just a few months past, which started with the enactment of the interim executive authority and other positive developments.

The ramifications of the political impasse and the risk that it poses to other key national priorities, particularly the security and economic tracks, are already beginning to manifest themselves. The House of Representatives has not adopted the budget presented by the Government of National Unity despite several rounds of consultations between the House of Representatives and the Government on finalizing the budget proposal. The last effort failed only this week,

and that means that the country is moving towards the Eid holidays without a budget and without the necessary support that could be provided to the people.

Up until now, the House of Representatives and the High Council of State have not agreed how to proceed on the appointments to sovereign positions despite several meetings facilitated by Morocco. The Libyan National Army has not allowed the Government of National Unity to extend its authority to the areas that it controls. The Presidency Council and the Government have not been able to agree on the appointment of the Minister of Defence, a position crucial to the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, progress on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups, security-sector reform and the reunification of the military.

Recently the 5+5 Joint Military Commission postponed the reopening of the coastal road to connect the eastern and western parts of the country to protest the failure to take decisions that would facilitate the holding of elections on time and to protest the stalemate on the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces. They have also complained about the failure by the Government of National Unity to pay the salaries of the opposing forces and fighters. If not addressed, all that could cause the suspension of participation of any of the two parties in the Joint Military Commission, which otherwise keeps demonstrating exemplary unity, patriotism and leadership in taking steps to implement the ceasefire agreement.

I am concerned that although the ceasefire agreement continues to hold notwithstanding minor clashes between armed groups and criminal gangs, the unity of the Joint Military Commission and the implementation of the agreement could unravel if the political process remains stalled. The Commission has a vital role in the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, and its achievements have previously paved the way for political progress. Every effort must therefore be made to preserve its unity and to insulate its work from the detrimental effects of the political stalemate and the standoff between Libya's main political actors.

The United Nations will continue to support the implementation of the ceasefire agreement in Libya. In line with resolution 2570 (2021), preparations are ongoing for the deployment of an UNSMIL ceasefire-monitoring

component in support of the Libyan-led, Libyan-owned ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

The Secretariat is currently preparing for the first phase of the deployment of ceasefire monitors, including through the recruitment of personnel and the procurement of enabling elements. The Secretariat will then reach out to Member States regarding support for the full deployment of the UNSMIL ceasefire monitoring component once the necessary financial resources have been secured.

However, there is no clarity yet on when the Libyan component of the mechanism will be in place. The Government and the 5+5 Commission have also at times indicated that the main task of the United Nations component should be to monitor the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters rather than patrolling to verify compliance with the ceasefire agreement.

The reopening of the coastal road is an essential step for ceasefire implementation. On 8 June, the Presidency Council issued an order to the Commander of the Sirte-Jufrah operations room to relocate its armed groups, a necessary step prior to the reopening of the road. That provided impetus for a Joint Military Commission meeting in Sirte from 19 to 22 June to discuss preparations for a safe opening, and a further meeting was to follow on 5 July to discuss final arrangements. However, the meeting was postponed by the eastern delegation to the Commission in reaction to the LPDF meeting and what they saw as attempts by certain blocs to postpone the elections. I stressed to the Commission the importance of moving ahead with opening the coastal road, as not doing so would serve the interests of spoilers. I also stress the need for all authorities and institutions active in the security field to consult and coordinate their moves with the 5+5 Commission.

The continued presence of foreign forces, mercenaries and foreign fighters also threatens the ceasefire. It is imperative that Libyan and international actors agree on a plan to commence and complete the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign forces. Initial signals to that end are encouraging, but concrete steps and agreements are needed.

The security situation is further complicated by recent attacks and a renewed terrorist threat by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and the Islamic State/Da'esh, particularly in the south. The delayed reunification of Libya's security and military apparatus along with

the lack of a centralized and coordinated approach is allowing space for violent extremist organizations to recruit, operate and increase their asymmetric activities. I urge Libya's security actors to jointly address that threat in consultation and cooperation with the 5+5 Commission and local actors, notably tribal leaders, guided by a broader interest to reinforce stability and security.

On 8 July, I delivered the report of the international financial audit to the Presidency Council in the presence of Prime Minister Dbeibah and the heads of the two branches of the Central Bank of Libya. The audit was requested by the former head of the Presidency Council, Mr. Serraj, in a letter dated 10 July 2018 and was subsequently mandated by the Security Council, which requested that UNSMIL facilitate the process.

The main finding of the audit is that the unification of the Central Bank of Libya is no longer simply recommended but required. While Libya's foreign currency reserves were largely protected during the past five years, the division in the Central Bank of Libya has eroded the integrity of the banking system and impeded monetary reform. Owing to the lack of a unified budget and successive oil blockades, both branches of the Central Bank extended credit to their respective former Governments, thereby accumulating large debts. Managing that debt is possible only if the Central Bank unifies. In plain terms, Libya's banking system will likely collapse absent unification.

The transmission of the audit report marks the end of the financial audit review and the beginning of the process to unify the two branches of the Central Bank of Libya. It is my hope that the international community can support that process as it moves forward, within the framework of the Berlin process.

On 31 May, the Presidency Council launched a series of workshops to develop a legal framework and structure for the Libyan High National Reconciliation Commission, with participation from the African Union, UNSMIL and the Minister of Justice, as well as legal experts and representatives of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The United Nations and the African Union are supporting initiatives planned by the Presidency Council, including meetings with tribal and local community leaders, women and youth. Advancing those initiatives is essential for laying the groundwork for a longer-term national reconciliation process based

on clear accountability, as well as to promote unity and social cohesion ahead of the December elections.

The situation of migrants and refugees in Libya remains dire, as the number of people attempting to cross the Mediterranean continued to increase in the first five months of 2021. By 26 June, the Libyan Coast Guard had intercepted and returned to Libya 14,751 migrants and refugees, exceeding the total number of all returnees that was reached in 2020.

As a result, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of migrants and refugees arbitrarily detained in official detention centres, without judicial review and frequently in inhumane conditions. As of 21 June, an estimated 6,377 migrants and refugees were being arbitrarily held at official detention centres across the country, a 550 per cent increase since January 2021. Those developments have significantly increased human rights, humanitarian and protection concerns. United Nations and other agencies continue to face restrictions from Libyan authorities on humanitarian access and access for human rights monitoring to detention centres. We again urge the Government to swiftly approve the resumption of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees- and International Organization for Migration-facilitated humanitarian evacuation and voluntary resettlement and return flights and departures of migrant and refugees from Libya. Some 6,000 people have so far registered for such departures, which have been blocked for several months.

In June, UNSMIL received yet more shocking reports of sexual violence against girls and boys in official detention centres for migrants. Such acts may constitute crimes under both international and national law.

I reiterate that Libya is not a safe port of disembarkation for migrants and refugees. Member States that support operations to return individuals to Libya should revisit their policies, bearing in mind that migrants and refugees continue to face a very real risk of torture and sexual violence if returned to Libyan shores.

Member States with influence must do more to prevent such crimes. I encourage those who provide support for Libyan security agencies alleged to be involved in those violations to shoulder their responsibility and take all feasible measures to prevent such egregious conduct.

The overall humanitarian situation has seen some improvement since the ceasefire agreement of October 2020, with more displaced people returning to their areas of origin. The number of internally displaced persons decreased to an estimated 224,000 persons, marking a 19 per cent reduction since February. But serious challenges remain in ensuring that returnee populations have adequate and sustained access to basic services, such as health-care and education facilities, with primary infrastructure urgently continuing to require rehabilitation. All of that is happening in a situation gravely affected by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Planned and often forced evictions targeting IDP communities by Libyan authorities is a growing concern. In May, some 500 Tawerghan families living in an IDP settlement at the Naval Military Academy in Tripoli were evicted. Two other sites in Tripoli where internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees live are facing forced eviction, with migrants and refugees subjected to harassment and attacks. I note that forced evictions without due process are human rights violations.

UNSMIL, in cooperation with UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund, hosted an in-person meeting in Tunis from 16 to 18 June for the Committee of Libyan Experts on Combating Violence Against Women. I would once again thank Tunisia and other partners that are hosting different meetings for their continued support. The meeting concluded by adopting the first comprehensive draft legislation in the Middle East and North Africa region on combating violence against women. The Libyan Ministry of State for Women Affairs sponsored the meeting, and the Minister for Women's Affairs, Ms. Houria Eltermal, attended and announced that the Ministry would transmit the draft to the House of Representatives for adoption.

I welcome the conclusions of the second Berlin Conference on Libya and the collective efforts of Member States and regional and international organizations to assist the Libyan people in their quest for unity, peace, stability and prosperity. As compared to the first Berlin Conference, Libya was an active participant and partner in finalizing the conclusions of second Berlin Conference. Now it is important to see their implementation.

As evidenced since the fall of 2020, the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and progress on the political track and the necessary economic reform

agenda are interdependent. Positive steps are now needed to avoid backsliding on all tracks. We count on the sustained support of the Security Council and the Berlin process partners in that. I would like to thank a number of Libya's international partners for supporting the work of UNSMIL and efforts of Libyan partners to further advance the different tracks by graciously hosting their meetings.

It is incumbent on Libyan political actors to exert every effort to hold parliamentary and presidential elections on 24 December in accordance with the road map of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum and as called for by the Security Council and the international community. I also urge the members of the LPDF, who are to meet by the end of the week, to put their differences aside and come to an agreement on a proposal for the constitutional basis for immediate consideration and adoption by the House of Representatives so that the elections can be held on 24 December. The relevance and effectiveness of those bodies rest on their ability to fulfil their responsibilities and meet the aspirations of the Libyan people.

Interest groups, spoilers and armed actors must not be allowed to derail the process, which is aimed at restoring the legitimacy, unity and sovereignty of the Libyan State and its institutions. In that regard, the international community might have a special role in line with resolutions 2570 (2021) and 2571 (2021) to hold the spoilers to account.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

After a decade of instability, the Libyan people aspire to live in a safe, united and sovereign country, and that aspiration is legitimate. It is incumbent upon us to support it by acting before the window of opportunity that opened at the end of last year closes. The signing of the ceasefire agreement by the Libyan parties on 23 October 2020, the meeting of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum and the swearing in of the Government of National Unity by Parliament are all signs that progress is possible.

Many Libyans of goodwill — regardless of their affiliation — have demonstrated their determination to write a new chapter in the history of their country by prioritizing their commitment to Libyan sovereignty. I

thank the United Nations, which has supported them on the path paved by dialogue, in particular the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy Ján Kubiš, with whom we are working closely. I would also like to commend the spirit of responsibility that has guided the work of the Security Council since the beginning of the year. The unanimous adoption of resolutions 2570 (2021), 2571 (2021) and 2578 (2021) is a powerful message of support for the political transition and the return to security.

We know, however, that the same momentum faces serious threats, which the briefing of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General illustrated for us. We must work to diffuse those threats.

First, it is imperative that the electoral calendar be upheld. The legislative and presidential elections must take place on 24 December in line with the expectations of the Libyan people. It was set by the Political Dialogue Forum. It was endorsed on 16 April by the Council through resolution 2570 (2021) and on 23 June by the second Berlin Conference. It was nevertheless contested by some of the participants at the Forum's most recent meeting in Geneva. That timetable is key to ensuring the transition process. Under absolutely no circumstances, therefore, can we compromise on the date of 24 December.

I recall that the mandate conferred by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum and the House of Representatives upon the Libyan interim executive authority is to ensure the holding of elections by the end of the year, that the mandate runs until 24 December and that the Council was clear in its adoption of resolution 2571 (2021) that all those who try to thwart the political process may be subject to sanctions.

Another imperative is the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries, whose presence constitutes a violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and a serious attack against Libya's sovereignty. It is time to implement a progressive, balanced and phased timetable for the departure of foreign elements from both sides. We have made specific proposals to that effect that have been extensively discussed with the participants in the Berlin process. Such a withdrawal could initially involve Syrian mercenaries from both sides to begin in the coming weeks. That first step would enable initiating a process aimed at the eventual departure of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libyan territory.

In that regard, the situation of Libya's neighbouring countries must obviously be taken into account. I am thinking in particular of the Sahel countries, which have already paid all too dearly for the instability in Libya. Recent events in Chad compel us to ensure that mercenaries from Libya's neighbours be returned to their countries of origin through a credible demobilization process.

In the area of security, the highest level of vigilance must be maintained. The end of foreign interference in Libya must be accompanied by progress on the reunification of the army and the dismantling of the militias so that the civilian authorities can assume their security responsibilities. That process must enjoy the support of all.

Monitoring the ceasefire must remain a priority, with the deployment of a monitoring mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and in support of Libyan decisions. The fight against terrorism must also continue, in particular in southern Libya, in close cooperation with the countries of the region.

We must also support an effective reopening of the coastal road, above and beyond the repeated announcements. It would be a strong measure, on which the 5+5 Joint Military Commission has conducted excellent work. I commend those efforts.

Lastly, we must work with the Libyan authorities, with full respect for Libya's sovereignty, to strengthen their control over their land and maritime borders. With regard to maritime issues, the European Union, Italy and France are willing to make greater efforts to support the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and to ensure that it is well equipped. Training, through the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, might be a key contribution, beyond its primary function, which is the implementation of the arms embargo imposed by the Council.

For the first time in a long time, peace is within reach in Libya. I would like to reiterate to the Prime Minister of Libya and, through him, to the Libyan people that the Security Council and the international community are determined to stand with them in the implementation of the political and security road map I just mentioned. That explains the unanimous adoption of resolution 2571 (2021) I mentioned earlier. It is the idea behind the Berlin process, to which Heiko Maas, who chaired the crucial second Berlin Conference of Libya, will return.

We were able to measure progress made since the first Berlin conference a year and a half ago. It also explains the commitment of a European Union that is united in its position on the situation in Libya, as we, together with my Italian and German colleagues, demonstrated during our joint visit to Tripoli in March. It explains presidential statement S/PRST/2021/12, which we agreed and which I welcome. It sets a clear course and holds accountable all those who continue to hinder the process of returning to stability — be they Libyan or non-Libyan stakeholders.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of the Republic of Tunisia.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, my friend Mr. Le Drian, for convening today's high-level meeting, which provides a new opportunity for the international community to underscore its commitment to supporting sisterly Libya in its political process, under the auspices of the United Nations.

I must also commend the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and his Special Envoy to Libya, Mr. Ján Kubiš. I also welcome Mr. Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, Prime Minister of Libya.

For a decade, sisterly Libya has endured a conflict that has drained its human and institutional capabilities and targeted its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is a conflict that has resulted in security and economic repercussions on the entire region, and on neighbouring countries in particular. Over the past 10 years, Tunisia has continued to underscore that the only way to resolve the crisis in Libya is through intra-Libyan dialogue. His Excellency President Kaïs Saïed called for Libyans to unite in support of a national project to restore Libya's security and stability and balance to the region so as to spare it any further tensions and security threats.

The Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, hosted by Tunisia in November 2020, and its clear road map and objectives, was the beginning of a genuine breakthrough on the political path and represented a turning point supported by the international community, which expressed its full commitment to supporting this historic stage of transition.

The upcoming presidential and legislative elections, to be held in December this year, will without a doubt be decisive in the Libyan political process and a start on the path to lasting democracy and lay the foundation for the rule of law and State institutions in Libya. Tunisia welcomes the announcement of the commitment of its Libyan brothers to holding the elections as scheduled. We also welcome the recent second Berlin Conference on Libya and the international support to the Libyan parties to create an environment conducive to the successful holding of the elections.

I reiterate Tunisia's readiness to offer its constitutional, legislative and electoral experience to its brothers in Libya. We also urge all political parties to continue constructive and responsible dialogue, with the aim of reaching a consensual formula for constitutional rule that would empower the Libyan people through their right to holding the elections.

The faltering of the most recent negotiations in Geneva should not be a reason to delay the electoral process. It should be a new opportunity to identify challenges and obstacles and work to overcome them, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the support of regional and international partners. We are confident that our Libyan brothers can overcome all their differences, unite and prioritize Libyan interests and those of the Libyan people, thereby allowing them to exercise their right to vote.

We reiterate the importance of continuing to adhere to the ceasefire agreement, signed in October 2020, and of implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2570 (2021), on monitoring the ceasefire, as a key pillar for building peace in Libya and trust among all the parties. It is therefore important to expedite the establishment of a Libyan ceasefire monitoring mechanism, with the support of the United Nations.

We believe that the recent initiative proposed by the Libyan Government to support stability in Libya is the basis for strengthening the Libyan vision for managing the next phase of the transition. It should be achieved within an international working group that supports Libya in implementing political, security, economic and financial programmes by creating the necessary implementation mechanisms. The withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries is a prerequisite for supporting stability, given that they pose a serious

threat not only to Libya and its transition process but to the entire region, in particular neighbouring countries.

We also stress the importance of developing a clear time frame and of the support of regional and international partners, including the United Nations, during this delicate process. We must prevent any adverse effects on the security and stability of neighbouring States and the Sahel region, in particular due to organized crime and terrorism. We reiterate the need to redoubling our efforts within the various international and regional mechanisms to achieve security cooperation and counter terrorism, such as the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership, with the aim of strengthening regional capabilities and enhancing cooperation among the Sahel and North African countries in the fight against terrorism, which threatens the region and beyond.

I must also underscore the need to strengthen coordination and monitoring mechanisms to reduce the increasing incidence of illegal migration by sea. There has recently been an increase in the flow of illegal migrants of various nationalities towards Tunisian territorial waters, which poses security, economic, social and humanitarian challenges at the national level as well as the entire Mediterranean.

The stages of democratic transition are among the most important and delicate stages in a country's history, given the complexities and problems that must be addressed. They lead to establishing the foundations for building democracy and a future political system that guarantees pluralism, freedom and human rights. We in Tunisia have experienced the subtleties and complexities of such a stage. Therefore, we realize that the democratic transition in Libya must take place, and institution building must be completed notwithstanding the challenges faced. We trust that our Libyan brothers are capable of achieving this transition with the support of the international community. Tunisia, as always, will continue to support its brothers in their transition, so that they establish a strong and unified Libyan State that serves the interests of the Libyan people and enhances stability and security in the region as a whole

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya.

Ms. Omamo (Kenya): Allow me, at the outset, to express how delighted and honoured I am to be able

to address the Security Council in person for the first time. I thank you, Your Excellency, our dear friend Mr. Le Drian, for the opportunity. I congratulate you, Sir, for successfully steering the work of the Security Council since France's assumption of the presidency for the month of July. I acknowledge and welcome the participation of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Libya, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany and Tunisia and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. I also appreciate and thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, for his briefing.

Throughout the past one and a half years the people of Libya have steadily achieved key milestones within the peace process and continued to work towards a peaceful, secure and stable Libya. We laud them for that and urge them to continue steadfastly in national dialogue and engagement towards the peaceful, secure and stable Libya they envision.

We also applaud the Special Envoy and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) for the support they are offering Libya. Every gain, however small it may be, should be protected and applauded, with the understanding that peace processes should not be forced, and indeed people should be allowed the space to pool together in dialogue for the purposes of acceptance and ownership.

We encourage continued national dialogue towards the delivery of the 24 December elections in line with the Libya Political Dialogue Forum road map.

My delegation acknowledges the steps being taken by the Government of National Unity to galvanize progress and togetherness, through the establishment of the Libya stabilization initiative. Such initiatives should be designed and implemented in a manner that all Libyans feel reached and represented. We encourage continued efforts towards the reunification of national institutions to fulfil the Government's commitments to the people.

The importance of national reconciliation cannot be overstated. Therefore, Kenya welcomes the establishment of the High National Reconciliation Commission as a critical step to that end. We urge the Government's continued commitment to the process, with the full support of the African Union.

We note and encourage the continued efforts of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and to ensuring the

completion of the requirements for the deployment of the United Nations ceasefire monitoring component in support of the Libya ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

Kenya further welcomes the conclusions of the second Berlin Conference, held on 23 June, especially with regard to the requirement for the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement, including the immediate withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya, as well as compliance with the arms embargo. Those conclusions dovetail with the calls by the Security Council that all foreign fighters and mercenaries must leave Libya in line with resolutions 2570 (2021) and 2571 (2021). That is critical considering that the continued presence of those fighters and their accumulated arms constitute a grave threat to the peace process and any gains achieved.

In addition, the continued presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries creates a conducive environment for terrorism and violent extremism. We continue to call for the planning and implementation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme in Libya, alongside security sector reforms, that takes into account the surveillance of the southern border.

In response to the threat to neighbouring States and the Sahel region, it is the responsibility of the Security Council to not only play a preventive role but also to address the threat. Kenya continues to call on the need for corresponding DDR programmes in neighbouring States in the region where some of the fighters come from or are bound to pass through as they depart Libya. To achieve that, we highly recommend that the mandate of UNSMIL be adjusted to include a regional dimension in DDR. We hope that can also be factored into the ongoing independent strategic review. In view of the regional dimension of the situation in Libya, it is important that UNSMIL work in close coordination and consultation with neighbouring States, regional organizations and other interested partners in that regard.

We continue calling for the humane treatment of refugees in Libya. In particular, all involved should desist from interception at sea and from returning migrants to Libyan ports.

Finally, Kenya calls on all Member States and regional organizations to support a truly Libyan-led and -owned peace process, in a manner that upholds Libya's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political

independence. I reassure the Council of Kenya's support and continued commitment in that regard. Libya's peace is Africa's peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the Permanent Representative of the United States of America and member of President Biden's Cabinet.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over today's meeting. I also thank Special Envoy Kubiš for his very useful briefing. I would like to join others in welcoming the presence of the Cabinet Minister from Kenya, the Minister for Foreign Affairs from Tunisia, the Libyan Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister from Germany and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

A political solution in Libya is possible. It is necessary and urgent. But it requires elections on 24 December, as planned. Parties must come together to ensure that happens by putting needed legal and constitutional frameworks in place. National elections will advance both democratic progress and Libyan unity, by allowing the 7 million Libyans throughout the country to have a voice in shaping Libya's future. The elections must not be delayed. The electoral process must be Libyan-owned, Libyan-led and free from foreign interference or malign influence.

Many of us here participated at the second Berlin Conference a few weeks ago. We were pleased to see such a robust turnout, including the participation of the interim Libyan Government. Berlin was successful in demonstrating a resounding commitment to supporting national elections on 24 December, echoing resolution 2570 (2021), adopted unanimously in April.

It is clear that the international community expects national elections to take place, as agreed in the road map adopted by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF). To go from road map to reality, constitutional and legislative arrangements must be adopted — I cannot say that more clearly. We have seen the LPDF continue discussions in recent weeks on the path forward to elections facilitated by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and Special Envoy Kubiš. Today he described to us those efforts and called on all parties to do what is necessary to achieve the elections. It is essential that the members of the LPDF rededicate themselves to those discussions.

The Security Council must also continue to support efforts to resolve the issues surrounding military de-escalation and call for the immediate departure of foreign forces and mercenaries. We must again stress the importance of the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement; anything less, as Mr. Kubiš stated, would threaten the ceasefire. A Libyan-led and -owned ceasefire monitoring mission will have an important role in verifying the departure of mercenaries and, eventually, other foreign forces. To that end, we are encouraged that the Joint Military Commission is developing its plans for the ceasefire monitoring mechanism in consultation with UNSMIL, including the small number of observers already deployed.

The international community clearly and fully supports the Libyan people on their road to national elections. We must now do everything we can to help ensure that potential spoilers, both internal and external, do not derail months of hard-fought progress. In this final stretch, it is important, and it is incumbent upon all of the parties, to support the Libyan people.

Mr. Shringla (India) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, for presiding over this high-level ministerial meeting on Libya. I also thank Special Envoy Mr. Ján Kubiš for his informative briefing.

(*spoke in English*)

I would also like to welcome Mr. Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah, Prime Minister of Libya, as well as the other ministers present and Mr. Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, for today's briefing. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Germany for hosting the second Berlin Conference on Libya last month. We fully support its conclusions.

There has been a sense of cautious optimism with regard to the situation in Libya over the past few months, especially since the signing of the ceasefire agreement on 23 October 2020. The Council witnessed and welcomed the political progress achieved, including the establishment of the Government of National Unity charged with the conduct of elections on 24 December 2021.

However, as we heard from the Special Envoy, despite the progress, there is still cause for concern. The security situation remains fragile despite a reduction

in violence. The adverse impact of the conflict on the economy has been exacerbated by the pandemic and disintegrating financial institutions. The involvement of external forces in the internal affairs of Libya has negatively impacted the progress on the political track.

The next six months will be critical for Libya as it embarks on a journey towards peace and stability. It is incumbent upon the international community and, the Security Council in particular, to continue to provide support to Libya in this critical phase. Today's meeting will therefore help in conveying a message to all stakeholders in Libya. In that regard, I would like to make several suggestions.

First, elections need to be held as planned on 24 December 2021 in a free and fair manner. In order to achieve that, it is vital that the constitutional basis for conducting elections be agreed upon early. Regrettably, consensus in that regard is still elusive. The Libyan parties, in particular the members of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, need to continue consultations among themselves in order to arrive at a workable solution as soon as possible. We would also urge the House of Representatives and the High Council of State to frame the required legislation for the conduct of elections. At the same time, we encourage the High National Elections Commission to fully prepare for the upcoming elections.

Secondly, the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Libya needs to be safeguarded. The peace process must be fully Libyan-led and -owned, with no impositions or external interference. We also encourage all Libyan parties to continue to make concerted efforts towards the unification of all national institutions. In that regard, we welcome the independent audit of the Central Bank.

Thirdly, the provisions of the ceasefire agreement and successive Security Council resolutions need to be respected. Unfortunately, those provisions, in particular those related to the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries, continue to be violated. It is equally alarming that the arms embargo continues to be blatantly violated, as repeatedly reported by the Panel of Experts on Libya. There needs to be a serious discussion within the Council on what further measures could be taken to ensure that the decisions of the Council on the withdrawal of foreign forces are implemented so that sustainable peace and stability can prevail in Libya.

Fourthly, we must ensure that terrorist groups and affiliated entities are not allowed to operate unchallenged in Libya. The continued presence and activities of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Libya, as illustrated by the latest report (see S/2021/68) of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, is of serious concern. The report indicates the spread of terrorist activities into the Sahel region as well. Libya has become a logistics platform for Al-Qaida affiliates in Mali. This is a matter of grave concern due to the potential cascading effect it could have throughout the Sahel region. It is unfortunate that the issue is not receiving the attention it deserves. The international community must speak in one voice against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Fifthly, we need to plan for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups and non-State armed actors. We appreciate the fact that the United Nations Support Mission in Libya is prepared to render assistance to Libya in that process.

Finally, an inclusive and comprehensive national reconciliation process is the need of the hour. We hope that all the parties concerned will engage sincerely in that endeavour. We also urge the international community to support such a process.

India has traditionally enjoyed close and mutually beneficial ties with Libya. The contributions made by Indian enterprises and professionals in critical sectors like energy, manufacturing, education and health care continue to support the Libyan economy and society to this day. India remains committed to supporting Libya and the Libyan people in their endeavour to bring about lasting peace in their country. To that end, we look forward to working with the Government of National Unity in providing capacity-building and training assistance in mutually identified areas.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this discussion. I would also like to thank Special Envoy Kubiš for his briefing. I am pleased that we are joined by Prime Minister Dbeibah, Foreign Minister Maas and Mr. Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

The United Kingdom welcomes the progress made in Libya over the past year, supported by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the Berlin process. However, as we have heard, there is still work to be done to complete Libya's political transition. I would like to highlight three urgent steps today.

First, it is time to deliver on the commitment to free, fair and inclusive national elections on the 24 December 2021, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. I therefore urge all relevant Libyan authorities to work together with the support of UNSMIL to agree on a legal basis for elections and ensure that they go ahead on 24 December as agreed. Members of the House of Representatives and the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum have a particular responsibility in this regard, and the United Kingdom will not hesitate to act against those who deliberately undermine holding elections.

Secondly, we urge the full implementation of the October ceasefire agreement. This includes the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries without delay. We support efforts by the United Nations and Libyans to operationalize this withdrawal immediately. We also encourage the Libyan parties to press ahead with their commitment to opening the coastal road and building confidence in the transition away from conflict.

Finally, we must not lose sight of the essential services that ordinary Libyans rely on, including electricity, water, education and health care. Delivering these things means agreeing on a balanced national budget and ensuring that resources are used for the benefit of people across Libya. It also means reunification of Libya's institutions and the rebuilding of citizens' trust in government.

Thanks to the efforts and the will of Libyans, the country has made important progress in the last year, but that momentum must be sustained. The next steps in the transition are critical. Libya and all Libyans will continue to have the United Kingdom's full support in the process.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome you, Minister Le Drian, to the President's seat at today's Security Council meeting. We would also like to welcome Prime Minister Dbeibah of Libya, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia and Germany and the Secretary-General of the League

of Arab States, Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, and other high-level representatives

We would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš for his detailed and informative briefing on the situation in Libya. We are cautiously optimistic about perspectives for development in the situation. The main achievement, of course, was the signing by Libyan parties of the ceasefire agreement in October 2020. Warring sides have gradually begun to overcome the mutual distrust caused by many years of conflict provoked by external interference in 2011.

Significant progress has also been achieved by Libyans on the political track. New authorities have been appointed to the Presidency Council and the Government of National Unity for an interim period. Ongoing efforts are under way to ensure the functioning of unified State structures and financial and economic institutions. This progress was reflected in the outcome communiqué issued following the second International conference on Libya, which was held in Berlin in June.

We understand that achieving all the provisions of the road map will not be easy. This is also clear from Mr. Kubiš' briefing. The main challenge before the current transitional authorities in Libya is holding universal elections within the established time frame, that is, on 24 December 2021. To achieve that objective, we need to ensure the adoption of the relevant constitutional foundations. This in turn requires compromises to be reached between the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum and the House of Representatives. We strongly believe the success of this process will depend on the level of inclusiveness and transparency of the political process as a whole, including of the elections. This implies the involvement of all leading political forces in the country, representatives of all regions, as well as representatives of former authorities.

We support the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC), which has an important role to play in unifying the armed forces of the country and ensuring general security. We hope that the JMC will be able to agree as soon as possible on the opening of the strategic transport route between the west and east of the country.

Another vitally important question today is the foreign military presence. We would advocate a gradual and coordinated withdrawal of all foreign forces and divisions from Libya. At the same time, it is vital to ensure that the existing balance of forces on the ground,

which is currently preserving calm in the country, is not broken. We need to ensure that there is no threat of a new military escalation. We also need to bear in mind the security interests of Libya's neighbours and refer to their experience on this issue.

In our work, we will continue to consistently support close contacts with leading political forces from various regions in Libya and urge them towards compromise on key issues of the political process. We are ready for constructive cooperation with international partners.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I would like to present the apology of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Niger, who was unable to attend today's meeting owing to a last-minute impediment.

I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Libya, for his excellent briefing, which allowed us to assess the situation in the country in terms of progress made and challenges that remain to be overcome. The constant engagement of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya alongside the Libyans has undeniably contributed to the positive momentum that currently prevails in Libya.

My delegation also welcomes the participation of Prime Minister Abdel Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah, the German Foreign Minister, the Tunisian and Kenyan Foreign Ministers, as well as the Secretary General of the Arab League, in our work, which shows, if that were necessary, the appropriateness of the French presidency choosing to organize this debate today.

After 10 years of fratricidal conflict, the recent encouraging progress in Libya has been driven by the Libyans themselves, who are determined to reconcile with each other and move forward with the constructive support of neighbouring countries and the international community. I would like to commend Germany for holding the two international conferences in Berlin, whose important conclusions paved the way for peace in Libya.

We also welcome the unstinting talks that have enabled all the actors involved in the crisis in Libya to speak to each other and make commitments to ending all forms of foreign interference which, as we know, have been a real brake on the progress of the various components of the reconciliation process among the Libyan factions. We also salute Tunisia, whose hospitality has enabled direct consultations among the Libyan political actors.

The initiatives I have just mentioned — and many others — have greatly contributed to the current positive momentum in Libya, which we all welcome today. We are pleased to note that the 23 October ceasefire, which was called for by the parties to the conflict, is still holding. We call on the new transitional Government of National Unity to ensure the scrupulous implementation of the political road map agreed upon by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Tunis in November 2020. The establishment by the Presidency Council of the High Commission on National Reconciliation is a highly positive step, which should be welcomed. As Libyans are committed to organizing national elections by 24 December, technical, logistical and financial support will be needed. It is also essential that the Council maintain a united voice to send the right message in order to dissuade all potential troublemakers whose actions could jeopardize Libya's historic date. The elections must fulfil the tremendous aspiration of the Libyan people to strengthen and consolidate the country's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national identity. On the security front, it is essential that measures be taken to prevent the neighbouring Sahel from suffering a second wave of direct consequences of the conflict. The tragic events that Chad has experienced are a challenge to us and remind us how urgent it is to take into consideration the imperatives of the peace, stability and security of Libya's neighbouring countries. In that regard, my delegation believes that the withdrawal of foreign fighters, rightly desired by the Libyans and the international community, should be carried out in a coordinated and orderly manner, in collaboration with the countries of origin and under the supervision of the United Nations. In that once stable and prosperous country, approximately 1.3 million people are now dependent on humanitarian aid, which is an increase of 400,000 since last year. Added to that are the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which further exacerbate the humanitarian situation. In the Niger, our firm hope is to see Libya rebuilt — a Libya where the daughters and sons of that rich country will finally be able to benefit from their vast resources in peace. I cannot end my statement without mentioning the tragic situation in which African migrants and refugees find themselves in Libya due to the poor treatment to which they are subjected by the various factions. It is therefore necessary, as the Secretary-General said, that the policy of disembarking migrants intercepted

on the high seas on Libyan soil be reviewed so as to prevent the unspeakable suffering that many women and children undergo in detention centres, which are quite often beyond the control of the Libyan authorities.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank Special Envoy Ján Kubiš for his briefing and express Estonia's full support for the work of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. We welcome today's high-level discussion and look forward to hearing from all the speakers.

While the political and security developments since the signing of the Libyan ceasefire agreement last October have been very encouraging, it is of the utmost importance to continue taking concrete measures to achieve lasting peace in Libya. It is critical to make all the necessary preparations for holding free, fair, inclusive and credible elections on 24 December, as set out in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map and in resolution 2570 (2021). We call on all the relevant authorities to take immediate steps in coming to an agreement on the legal basis for the elections so that the preparation process can continue in a timely manner.

It is extremely important to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the inclusion of young people at all stages and all levels of the political process. The only viable way to a lasting peace is to create a safe space for women and young people to express their views without fear of retaliation.

The support of the international community for Libyan peace efforts remains vital. We welcome the convening of the second Berlin Conference on Libya on 23 June, which reaffirmed the commitment of the participants to the United Nations-facilitated, Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process. We call on all parties to fully honour and implement those commitments, including ending all foreign interference in Libya.

The 23 October ceasefire agreement must be fully implemented. An essential element of its implementation is the removal of all foreign fighters and mercenaries without any further delay. All actions that violate the Libyan arms embargo need to stop immediately. We welcome the efforts of the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI in supporting the implementation of the Security Council arms embargo. Furthermore, it is important to take concrete steps in implementing the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned ceasefire monitoring mechanism, including

through the swift deployment of its international support component.

The humanitarian situation in Libya remains concerning. Migrants and asylum seekers continue to be exposed to violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. It is important that the authorities take action to alleviate the suffering of civilians and ensure access for humanitarian aid and workers.

For there to be lasting peace, trust needs to be restored in the society. It is crucial to ensure that all alleged human rights violations, mass killings, torture and enforced disappearances be thoroughly investigated and that justice be ensured for the victims. Fighting against impunity, ensuring accountability and focusing on reconciliation are essential to healing the society.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): At the outset, permit me to welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity of Libya, as well as the Foreign Ministers and Cabinet officials and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States here with us today. I also thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his briefing.

Over the past few months, Libyans have experienced significant advances through shared objectives, responsibilities and strong commitment in their pursuit to restore peace and stability. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines hails those developments and encourages the Government of National Unity to stay the course.

Consolidating the existing momentum is critical to Libya's rebirth. We welcome the instrumental role of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and reaffirm our support for the United Nations multitrack Libyan-led and Libyan-own process. We also look forward to the renewal of the UNSMIL mandate in September, and we call for the strengthening of UNSMIL's capacity to carry out disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities aimed at assisting the countries of origin of returned fighters and mercenaries, along with addressing the influx of illegal weapons.

We further express appreciation for the very important work and initiatives of the African Union, the League of Arab States, the European Union and other international partners. Last month's second Berlin Conference on Libya embodies the international community's commitment in supporting Libya. Saint

Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the Conference and endorses its outcome document (S/2021/595, annex).

As Libya continues its quest for lasting peace, stability and development, some critical tasks must be finalized. Those include, inter alia, the fulfilment of arrangements for the holding of inclusive, free, fair, transparent and credible elections on 24 December; the reunification of Libya's institutions; the full implementation of the 23 October ceasefire agreement, including the complete and properly supervised withdrawal of all foreign fighters and mercenaries to avoid grave ramifications for the Sahel region and the wider continent; and the initiation of a national reconciliation process, supported by the African Union.

Libya's historical circumstances and existing conditions require all stakeholders in the political process to honour their obligations. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines repeats its urgent call for full adherence to international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, respect for Libya's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and full compliance with the arms embargo and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2570 (2021), 2571 (2021) and 2578 (2021). We urge all Libyan stakeholders and influential external actors to assist in that regard.

The human rights and humanitarian situation facing the groups made vulnerable, in particular refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons and women and girls, is concerning. We note the Secretary-General's repeated calls for urgent attention to migrants and refugees in detention centres and emphasize the utmost importance of ensuring the protection and safety of those groups in vulnerable situations. We also reiterate that Libya is not a safe port for the disembarkation of migrants and refugees.

Peace, security and development must go hand in hand, and the Council ought to fulfil its obligations and ensure that the necessary conditions prevail to give effect to Libya's full stability.

After 10 years of uncertainty and extreme difficulties, Libyans are on the verge of mending a fractured country. The upcoming elections represent movement in the right direction. However, we note the difficulties in reaching consensus on the legal framework to hold elections and remain hopeful that

the parties can exhibit compromise to reach consensus on that vital issue.

Of equal importance is the need to unite critical institutions, including the central banks, to address financial shortcomings, treat socioeconomic deficiencies and tackle the pandemic, which continues to take its toll.

We further encourage the parties to settle their differences on the 2021 budget.

In closing, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends all Libyans, who have toiled, compromised and exhibited their resolve to change their country's path and who continue to strive to do better in pursuit of lasting peace and stability. We remain in solidarity with them.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): I thank the Special Envoy for his comprehensive briefing. I also want to thank France for having convened today's meeting at a high level, reflecting the importance that we all attach to Libya's future.

I want to welcome in particular the presence here today of Prime Minister Dbeibah and also the participation of ministers and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Aboul Gheit.

At this critical moment for Libya, I would be remiss not to highlight the significant progress that has been achieved to date. The October ceasefire agreement and the endorsement of the Government of National Unity in March are very important and hard-won achievements.

But, as others have outlined, more remains to be done. That includes the holding of elections in December as scheduled; the immediate withdrawal of all foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya; and the unification of Libya's political, security and economic institutions. With that in mind, Ireland welcomes and endorses the conclusions of the Second Berlin conference, held on 23 June.

It is deeply regrettable that the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) was unable to agree on the constitutional basis for December elections by the 1 July deadline. We reiterate our firm support for the holding of national presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 December, as set out in the LPDF's agreed political road map and in accordance with resolution 2570 (2021). We call on the Libyan authorities and the House of Representatives to make all necessary preparations

and encourage the LPDF to continue to seek a workable compromise on the constitutional basis.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) should now redouble its efforts to safeguard the political process against risks to progress. The holding of free, fair and inclusive elections is the foundation of any democratic society. Any delays to the December timeline risk jeopardizing both Libya's political transition and the prospects for security and economic reform. The Council will have the opportunity to take stock of progress in September.

We regard inclusive voter education, as well as measures to ensure the safety of all participants in the political process, as essential components of election preparation. Ireland underlines the necessity — and the right — of women to participate and engage fully in all areas related to the democratic transition, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Youth must also be supported and involved in such processes.

We encourage UNSMIL to proceed with its deployment of ceasefire monitors to Libya as soon as possible. The importance of fully integrating a gender perspective into ceasefire monitoring, in line with resolution 2570 (2021), cannot be overstated.

We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2578 (2021) last month and commend European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI for its ongoing efforts to support the implementation of the arms embargo.

We also encourage further international support and regional cooperation between Libya and its neighbours to enable the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups and a coordinated return to their countries of origin.

In addition to the political and security challenges, we should not neglect the importance of addressing vital humanitarian and development issues. Economic and financial reform, as well as the strengthening of Libyan institutions, is critical for long-term recovery. We welcome the conclusion of the international financial audit review of the Central Bank of Libya, which paves the way for unification, as the Special Envoy outlined earlier. We also call on the House of Representatives to approve a budget permitting essential humanitarian and infrastructure interventions to progress.

We stress that all parties in Libya must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian

and human rights law and note with concern the serious violations outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/451). We underscore the need to ensure accountability for such violations. Countering impunity is essential to preventing future violations, and we fully support the work of the independent Fact-Finding Mission to Libya in that regard.

We welcome the Government of National Unity's efforts, working with the African Union in particular, to create a national reconciliation process, and we encourage the Libyan authorities to strengthen transitional justice institutions. The work of the International Criminal Court must be seen as complementary to those important domestic initiatives. We continue to call on States to cooperate with the Court as it investigates allegations of serious international crimes in Libya.

We are extremely concerned about grave violations against children in Libya and echo the concerns noted by the Special Envoy earlier. It is essential that child-protection provisions be included in ceasefire monitoring and the transitional processes. We call for an end to the practice of the arbitrary and indefinite detention of migrants, especially the detention of children.

I will conclude by recalling our collective responsibility, as members of the Council, to deliver on the commitments of the Berlin Conference and the relevant Council resolutions to enable the Libyan people to build a unified, democratic and peaceful country.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I thank the French presidency for having convened this important meeting, and I thank the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France for presiding over it. I welcome the presence of His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity of Libya and of the ministers and representatives at this meeting. I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ján Kubiš, for his comprehensive briefing.

After nearly a decade, Libya is on the cusp of achieving long-term peace and stability. We therefore warmly welcome the positive developments on the political and security tracks in the country since the beginning of the year. That momentum must be maintained, and the current challenges need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

In that regard, I wish to highlight three points.

First, on the political track, we call on the relevant parties in Libya to resolve their outstanding differences and expedite all necessary legal and logistical arrangements in order to ensure that national elections are conducted in line with the agreed road map. We also underline the importance of ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in that process. We commend Germany for convening the second Berlin Conference on Libya. We also commend all participants on their commitment to the peace process in Libya. Further cooperation among the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), regional organizations, neighbouring countries and other international partners will remain vital to supporting the peace process in Libya at this critical juncture. The international community should also foster and support dialogue, confidence-building measures and reconciliation efforts among the relevant parties.

Secondly, with regard to the security track, it is imperative for all the relevant parties to fully implement the provisions of the October 2020 ceasefire agreement. That must also be in line with upholding the arms embargo in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions on Libya. The improvement of the security situation in the country will provide an environment conducive to the upcoming elections and the path beyond towards a sustainable peace. We look forward to hearing about the further work of UNSMIL in supporting the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned ceasefire monitoring mechanism, as outlined in resolution 2570 (2021).

We reiterate our support for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from the territory of Libya, in line with the ceasefire agreement and resolution 2570 (2021). That process must be carried out in a timely, orderly and comprehensive manner and should not translate into instability for neighbouring States and the region. We also wish to see further cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed combatants related to Libya.

Thirdly, with regard to the economic and humanitarian track, we commend the current efforts to facilitate the unification of Libya's economic and financial institutions and wish to see further progress in that regard. While the fighting has stopped, humanitarian challenges remain. We call on international partners to continue to provide support, especially for vulnerable groups, such as women, children and migrants in Libya,

in addressing their needs and challenges. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations and other partners in supporting the coronavirus disease vaccination process in Libya and wish to see further assistance to the country in that connection.

In addition, Viet Nam commends the efforts to clear the coastal roads in Libya of mines and explosive remnants of war, with the support of the United Nations Mine Action Service. We call for further efforts in the area of risk mitigation to protect civilians from explosive remnants of war.

In conclusion, Viet Nam reiterates its consistent support for the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned peace process. It is our sincere hope that the people of Libya will soon achieve both sustainable peace and sustainable development for all Libyans.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank Mr. Kubiš, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his very useful briefing. We also welcome the high-level participation of the parties concerned. I would like to highlight four issues today.

The first is the importance of holding presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 December this year. While we welcome the progress made, we are nevertheless concerned about the deadlock over the constitutional basis for elections, which threatens to undermine everything that has been achieved in the past year. We urge the High State Council and the House of Representatives, as well as other relevant State institutions, to do their part to clarify the constitutional basis and enact the necessary legislation by 1 August.

We expect the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, with the active support and facilitation of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), to take steps as necessary, in accordance with the road map agreed by its members to facilitate the holding of elections on time. Free, fair and inclusive elections are vital for Libya to move forward. That means that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, both as voters and candidates, must be ensured.

Secondly, the October 2020 ceasefire agreement must be fully implemented. As Libyans themselves have called for, it is critical that all foreign forces and mercenaries leave the country and that the mandate of resolution 2570 (2021) for the deployment of ceasefire monitors be implemented as soon as possible to safeguard the existing ceasefire. We also recognize

the concerns of countries in the region regarding the possible destabilizing effects of returning foreign fighters and/or mercenaries. It is therefore necessary to ensure a comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Both UNSMIL and regional organizations can play important roles in facilitating the process and cooperation among the relevant countries.

My third point concerns the arms embargo. As the Panel of Experts on Libya has stated, the embargo remains ineffective. The illicit flow of arms and military equipment into Libya is a clear obstacle to peace and progress in the country. We once again urge all actors to abide by the arms embargo and avoid further fuelling the conflict. Norway supports the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI in implementing the United Nations arms embargo on Libya.

My fourth and final point is to express Norway's continued concern about the tragic drowning of migrants and refugees trying to cross the Mediterranean. We urge the Libyan authorities to respect international law relating to search and rescue operations. We are also concerned about the reports of the arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees, including children, in official and unofficial detention centres. Safeguarding those most vulnerable and ensuring that their rights are protected is a priority for long-lasting peace and cohesion, and international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be respected. Humanitarian access also continues to pose a challenge. We urge the facilitation of safe and unhindered access for humanitarian workers in Libya to protect and assist people in need.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Norway's support for UNSMIL and Special Envoy Kubiš, as well as UNSMIL's continued and active facilitation of the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process. Their support for the holding of elections on 24 December is essential.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Kubiš, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his briefing and welcome the presence of the Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity of Libya, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States at this meeting.

With the support of the international community and the joint efforts of all Libyan parties, the ceasefire as a whole has been maintained and the parties are

committed to ending the war and moving Libya forward on the path towards peace and reconstruction through the holding of general elections in December. At the same time, many challenges remain for all parties to reach a comprehensive and inclusive consensus on the future of their country.

The promotion of the political process in Libya is at a critical stage that requires all parties to strengthen dialogue and consultations and build on and expand consensus in the interests of the country and the people of Libya. The future of Libya is in the hands of the Libyan people. It is our hope that all Libyan parties will seize this historic opportunity to jointly promote the country's long-term stability and sustainable development. I would like to mention the following points.

First, with regard to firmly advancing the process of political transition, the Libyan Government of National Unity is currently actively preparing for general elections and holding reconciliation conferences. Many efforts have been made to unify the Central Bank and other State institutions. That represents progress, and it should be recognized as such. At the second Berlin Conference on Libya held last month, the international community reaffirmed its support for a Libyan-owned and Libyan-led political process, as well as the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya.

China hopes that all parties will live up to the expectations of the international community; strengthen dialogue and consultations; properly resolve outstanding issues, such as the constitutional basis of the elections; and hold the elections in accordance with the road map. China supports the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in following the mandate of the Security Council to actively coordinate further practical steps to determine the legal framework and overall arrangements for the elections and help the Libyan Government advance its preparations for holding them.

Secondly, by resolutely maintaining peace and stability, all Libyan partners need to make every effort to consolidate the ceasefire. China welcomes the new Government's announcement to reopen the Sirte coastal highway. It is an important measure for implementing the ceasefire monitoring mechanism. China looks forward to a swift deployment of the UNSMIL ceasefire monitoring team, which should ensure

objective and impartial performance. An organized and orderly withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries will have a consequential effect on the maintenance of Libyan and regional security.

The Council's Arria Formula meeting last month also expressed similar concerns. China calls on all parties concerned to strengthen consultations on arrangements for the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries; take into full account the concerns of neighbouring countries; strengthen regional and coordinated action; and, through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform, effectively address the issues of arms proliferation and the infiltration of armed groups into neighbouring countries so as to avoid increasing risks to regional security.

Thirdly, support for post-conflict reconstruction must be increased. Since the establishment of the Government of National Unity under the leadership of Prime Minister Dbeibah, a great deal of work has been conducted to promote financial reform, stabilize oil production, improve public services and foster foreign cooperation. Libya now faces many difficulties and challenges in the area of national reconstruction. Some 1.3 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

China calls on the Libyan Parliament to accelerate the review and approval of the unified national budget and provide financial guarantees for public services, health care and education. It is hoped that international partners will actively participate in the Libyan reconstruction, support economic recovery and development and increase humanitarian assistance.

Recently, there has been a resurgence of the coronavirus disease pandemic in Libya. The international community will continue to support the Libyan Government in fighting the pandemic and provide vaccine assistance. In addition, the frozen assets of the Libyan Government are the common wealth of the Libyan people and should be used for the country's reconstruction and development. China again calls on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya to respond to the concerns of the Libyan people, accelerate the assessment of loss of Libyan frozen assets and put forward practical solutions.

It is crucial that the Council remain united in its response to the situation in Libya. China supports the

United Nations in continuing to play a leading role in working towards a political solution to the situation in Libya. We would like to work with the international community to help the Libyan people embark on a path to peaceful development and contribute to lasting stability and prosperity.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico welcomes you, Mr. President, to the Security Council.

I also thank Special Envoy Kubiš for his briefing. He reminded us of the complex challenges that the Libyan people continue to face in bringing about a successful political transition.

We also welcome high-level participants, in particular the Prime Minister of Libya, to whom I convey Mexico's solidarity on the path to peace and reconciliation in his country.

First of all, I would like to highlight the progress that the formation of the Government of National Unity has brought to the political process. Because of the responsibility shouldered by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, it was possible to overcome divisions, take a decisive step towards the unification of institutions and maintain the validity of the ceasefire agreement.

The Security Council has reiterated time and again the importance of Libyan stakeholders taking control of their own destiny. In that spirit, we welcome the fact that during the second Berlin Conference, Libyan authorities joined the International Monitoring Committee for Libya, which without a doubt underscores the legitimacy of that process.

We agree with other delegations that it is essential for Libyan political stakeholders to reach an agreement on the legal framework for holding presidential and legislative elections on 24 December. Mexico stresses the need for the requisite measures to be taken to guarantee the full participation of women and young people. The December elections are a unique opportunity for reconciliation after a decade of protracted civil conflict.

The Security Council should therefore make every effort, through the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), to provide the necessary support to prevent the electoral process from deepening internal divisions and jeopardizing progress achieved. However, the urgency of pending electoral tasks, as well as those related to the unification of Libyan institutions, in

particular security institutions, should not make us forget the victims of the Libyan conflict.

As we heard earlier, more than 1 million civilians are in need of humanitarian assistance, more than 400,000 people have fled their homes because of the conflict and thousands of migrants remain in clandestine detention centres. We call for the human rights of all migrants to be respected and for the adoption of a legal framework that provides the necessary guarantees.

Mexico also calls on Libyan authorities to facilitate the work of humanitarian personnel operating in the country. The work of humanitarian organizations is essential to meet the basic needs of the vulnerable population during the transition period, as Libyan State services are being reorganized. We also urge UNSMIL to exercise its good offices to support humanitarian work in Libya, in accordance with its mandate.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call on all international actors to respect the arms embargo and to coordinate properly with Libyan authorities and the countries of the region to ensure the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters. The fragile security situation in the country and throughout the region makes that imperative.

My country welcomes greater involvement of regional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, in the implementation of a programme to repatriate and reintegrate foreign fighters in Libya. Every effort must be made to ensure that a peaceful and prosperous Libya helps to stabilize the entire region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya.

Mr. Dbeibah (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Council this month and on convening today's high-level meeting to address the situation in my country, Libya.

I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his personal efforts and follow-up in seeking a peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis. I also thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), for his briefing on the latest developments in my country. We wish the United Nations Support Mission in Libya every success

in its efforts to assist Libyans and to provide support and counsel in order to resolve the Libyan crisis.

The Security Council is holding its meeting on Libya today in circumstances unlike those of previous years, which were marked by divisions, differences and wars. Today we are seeing light at the end of the dark tunnel that we have endured for years. By the grace of God and Libyan efforts, and with the support of the United Nations and sisterly and friendly nations, we have been able to achieve a more stable and more positive situation in Libya. This has occurred under the Government of National Unity. We are seeking to achieve stability through the Libyan stabilization initiative and by working with international partners on both the security and the economic tracks.

Our Government represents everyone and excludes no one. It is free of the conflicts over legitimacy that Libya had suffered for many years. By the grace of God, we have been able in a short time to unite most executive institutions in the country, despite all the challenges, and we look forward to continuing to fulfil all entitlements of the sovereign institutions, which is the purview of the House of Representatives and the High State Council. We urge them to accelerate their efforts to unite those institutions so that the Government can work as efficiently and effectively as required.

On this occasion, we would like to thank UNSMIL and the Libyan Audit Bureau, which audited the accounts of the Central Bank, leading to the recommendation of uniting the bank in Tripoli, which would improve the State's economic situation and reflect positively on the life of our citizens.

We stress that the decision to hold the parliamentary and presidential elections on 24 December is a national choice and a historic entitlement. It requires solidarity and close cooperation among each and every person, in accordance with their roles and responsibilities. At the forefront of the task ahead is the finalization of the constitutional basis for elections and the necessary electoral legislation as soon as possible. We, the executive authority, are doing our part to support that historic entitlement. We have formed a ministerial committee to support the elections and have allocated the funds available to support the High National Elections Commission, despite the fact that the general budget has not been adopted by the House of the Representatives, although we presented it more than three months ago, immediately after the Government

adopted it. This hampers our efforts to improve citizens lives and fulfil their immediate and urgent needs, particularly their humanitarian needs, and to provide an environment conducive to holding the elections.

With regard to ensuring the security of the elections, we have instructed the Ministry of the Interior to train 30,000 personnel to be responsible for securing ballot centres throughout the Libyan territories. We are following up on this important issue to secure the safety of electors, candidates and the entire election process. In that regard, I call on my sisters and brothers in the House of Representatives, the High State Council and the members of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum to put their differences aside, fulfil their historic responsibilities to the Libyan people and reach consensus so that we can hold the general elections at the scheduled time.

The issue of mercenaries and foreign fighters on Libyan territories remains one of the greatest impediments to stability in Libya. We underscore here today the need for the Council to assist us in resolutely addressing that matter. All parties must abide by relevant Security Council resolutions and the conclusions reached at the first and second Berlin conferences. All participating States have expressed their commitment to fulfilling the Security Council's resolutions and to respecting Libya's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also emphasize that this continued presence poses a real threat to the current political process and to efforts to preserve the ceasefire and to continue uniting the Libyan army. As Council members know, the speedy withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters was among the provisions of the ceasefire agreement that was signed by the 5 + 5 Joint Military Commission in October 2020. On this occasion, I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Commission for their efforts and their patriotism, despite all the challenges. In that regard, we reiterate our continued efforts to fulfil the confidence-building measures through practical steps, foremost among which is reopening the east-west coastal road and releasing all detainees from both sides.

In that connection, allow me to summarize the position of our Government, which is reflected in its efforts to achieve stability in both the economic and the security spheres.

First, the Government of National Unity emphasizes that the continued presence of mercenaries and foreign fighters on Libyan territories is unacceptable.

We emphasize that they must immediately and simultaneously be withdrawn. We remind the relevant States of their responsibilities with regard to the actions of their citizens outside their territories and the need to immediately withdraw them.

Secondly, we call on the international community to support Libya in uniting the Libyan army and security forces within a comprehensive security strategy that includes the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform and securing the borders to consolidate stability and prevent threats against our national security, especially from neighbouring countries and those of the Sahel region. These measures will allow the State to control its territories and borders and allow us to face the real enemy of Libya and the region, which is terrorism and extremism in all its forms, transborder crime and human trafficking.

Our Government is also working to address illegal migration. We highly appreciate all approaches that acknowledge that migration must be addressed not only through measures taken on the Mediterranean or along the Libyan coast, but at the source of its causes. It is a global human issue and cannot be the responsibility of any single State.

Thirdly, the Government of National Unity would like to remind the Security Council of its commitments and promises to preserve the Libyan people's resources, represented in the assets frozen by the relevant Security Council resolutions. We emphasize once again that the measures taken by some States through their exploitation of resolution 1970 (2011) are a source of great concern. We find that those actions contradict the purposes of that resolution. Accordingly, we insist that continuing those actions will greatly affect Libyan money that the Security Council has promised to preserve.

We once again stress our previous demands that the sanctions regime be amended in a manner that allows the relevant Libyan institutions to manage Libyan funds, despite their being frozen. That would allow the institutions to carry out their work perfectly and without impediment and end further depreciation of those assets.

We also call on the Council to cooperate by implementing some amendments to its resolution on exemptions in order for us to use those exemptions for humanitarian purposes, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Government of National Unity emphasizes that it will carry out the necessary economic reforms to improve the services offered to citizens and to grant them a decent living. We call on the relevant States involved in the situation in Libya to work to create an environment conducive to productive and collective work and to end their systematic internal attempts to weaken our Government efforts to address economic challenges which, regrettably, only harms Libyan citizens and the interests of States that have invested in Libya.

We wish to stress that the success of the political process in Libya in ending the crisis will require the ability to achieve comprehensive national reconciliation. We therefore once again call on the international community, particularly the African Union, to coordinate with the United Nations to support the efforts of the Presidency Council and the Government of National Unity towards national reconciliation and transitional justice. Such efforts will restore confidence and promote stability in the country.

We also call on the Council to implement its resolutions on addressing the obstructers, local and international, who continue to threaten to wage war and rely on military solutions while working with all their might to prevent the Libyan people from expressing their will.

In conclusion, we take this opportunity to reiterate to the Libyan people and the world the resolve of the Government of National Unity to make involvement in new wars a thing of the past. The Government will work with all its might, in cooperation with all Libyans, to avoid differences and wars and to begin to build a united, stable and modern Libya. I thank the Council for its concern for my country and its people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the Federal Minister for Foreign affairs of Germany.

Mr. Maas (Germany): In the past year, Libya has come a long way towards peace and unity — an interim executive authority has been selected and approved by the Libyan House of Representatives, military representatives from both sides have agreed to a ceasefire and the oil shutdown has been lifted, providing an economic lifeline for the Libyan people.

We owe this progress to the Libyan people, who want to take their country's future into their own hands. We owe it to the United Nations, which has

shown outstanding support for Libya. And we owe it to Libya's international supporters, who have been working together, including through the Berlin process.

At the second Berlin Conference, held on 23 June, we were able to advance our joint agenda in several ways.

First and foremost, the representatives of Libya were invited to the conference table. The interim executive authority, with Prime Minister Dbeibah at the helm, played a key role in all the preparations and negotiations — a crucial step towards full Libyan ownership.

Secondly, all participants recommitted to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya. There was broad agreement, in line with the Libyan ceasefire agreement and all relevant resolutions, that all foreign fighters, forces and mercenaries have to leave the country. We now need to find a way to make that happen without delay.

Thirdly, all conference participants reaffirmed the need to hold free, fair and inclusive elections, set for 24 December, because Libyans must finally be able to make their voices heard.

We now have a chance to build on that work. That is why I am asking the Council today to support the implementation of the conclusions of the second Berlin Conference. Moving forward, we are also counting on the continued leadership of Special Envoy Ján Kubiš and his team to push for elections on the agreed date in December.

We regret that the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum has, thus far, failed to agree on a legal basis for national elections. We must take a strong stance against those who favour postponing the elections for selfish political motives. Here, the Security Council must reaffirm that it will not tolerate any obstruction. With the support of the United Nations and the Council, Libya has made great progress towards peace and unity. Now, we must stay the course to make that progress irreversible. That is what we agreed upon in Berlin three weeks ago and I am counting on the Council to help us honour that commitment.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Aboul Gheit.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the French presidency for convening this timely meeting. As the Security Council

is aware, many of the parties to the Berlin process are concerned, if not demoralized, by the major delays that are hindering the political process and undermining the significant achievements made thus far.

We are here today to reaffirm that the positive momentum that the political process has enjoyed since the first Berlin Conference must continue, as must ceasefire agreed in Geneva in October and the formation of the Government of National Unity and the Presidency Council, in addition to the agreement on the date for elections and the unanimous support expressed by the international community for the process at the second Berlin Conference last month. Indeed, slowing down or stopping the process would be a real source of disappointment and deep frustration for the Libyan people, who have placed great hope in the political process and its potential to bring the country out of the abyss into which it has been plunged for over a decade.

We all followed the deliberations in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Geneva at the beginning of this month and saw the outcome — the inability to agree on a constitutional foundation for elections to be held on 24 December. This inability to reach consensus and unanimity reflects the primacy of narrow interests and reminds us of the divisions that we thought we had overcome in order to build a future for all the Libyan people, both in the east and in the west.

The League of Arab States is working tirelessly to encourage brotherly Libyans, regardless of their political or geographic affiliation, to move on from the mindset of competition to that of consensus — at least during the next few months — so as not to squander this opportunity and to work tirelessly to remove all the obstacles, be they legal, constitutional or logistical in nature, that are hindering the convening of elections on the agreed date.

Indeed, the holding of presidential and legislative elections on 24 December will be a milestone in the process to save Libya and preserve it as a unified State that enjoys full sovereignty over all of its national territory. I am saying explicitly that reopening discussion about the date of the elections would trigger a return to competition and conflict and would not serve the interests of Libya or Libyans.

All participants in the second Berlin Conference in June unanimously agreed on the need for mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces to leave Libyan territories. The Arab League believes that this is critical

if the transition from chaos to stability, and from fighting foreign forces on Libyan soil to maintaining the independence and sovereignty of Libya and ending foreign interference in its internal affairs, is to succeed.

The withdrawal of foreign forces without further delay is a fundamental principle of the political process; it was agreed at the first Berlin Conference and reiterated at the second. Regrettably, it remains far from being achieved. There is no doubt that the delays — indeed, the procrastination — of some in withdrawing foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya will have serious negative repercussions for the entire political process.

Issues pertaining to the transition period in Libya are numerous and intimately linked. I would like to stress the need for all of these issues to be dealt with at the same time so as to ensure that the next stage is completed peacefully. Nevertheless, I would like to specifically dwell on two of them.

First is the unification of State institutions, including military and security institutions. What has been accomplished to date in this domain is far less than expected. Neither the Governor of the Central Bank nor the President of the Supreme Court has been appointed. Some of the positive momentum made in the 5+5 Joint Military Commission has slowed or reversed. The unification of institutions is a critical aspect of the transition process in Libya that must be given due consideration. Completing the political transition in the country will depend on applying the principle of unifying institutions.

Secondly, the Arab League has noted the trend whereby some parties are seeking to make Libyan territory into a transit zone for irregular migrants and asylum-seekers — numbering in the hundreds of thousands — who have illegally entered Libya in the

hopes of transiting to third countries. Some parties, deliberately or otherwise, seek to turn Libya from a transit zone into a permanent zone of settlement for these migrants. We would underscore the danger of such a trend and its negative effects on Libyan stability. While we are totally convinced of the humanitarian needs in this regard, the demographic situation in Libya is sensitive, and anything affecting the current demographic balance in the country by settling hundreds of thousands of foreign nationals on Libyan territory would undoubtedly add a new element to the crisis and exacerbate its complexity.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the position of the Arab League in favour of implementing the political road map and its agreed details, which enjoy the unanimous approval of the international community, including the holding of elections on time as agreed upon by all parties. Changing this would risk plunging the country once again into further darkness of political division and disagreement. No one wants that. All Libyans aspire to get past this difficult and delicate period safely so that they can move towards achieving stability at the end of this year, God willing.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank the Council members for their valuable contributions to the statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2021/12.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.