



# Security Council

Seventy-second year

**8114**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 28 November 2017, 9 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Cardi . . . . . (Italy)

*Members:*

Bolivia (Plurinational State of) . . . . .	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
China . . . . .	Mr. Shen Bo
Egypt . . . . .	Mr. Aboulatta
Ethiopia . . . . .	Mr. Alemu
France . . . . .	Mr. Delattre
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Bessho
Kazakhstan . . . . .	Mr. Sadykov
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Zagaynov
Senegal . . . . .	Mr. Ciss
Sweden . . . . .	Mr. Skau
Ukraine . . . . .	Mr. Vitrenko
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Allen
United States of America . . . . .	Ms. Sison
Uruguay . . . . .	Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez

## Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

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*The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Maintenance of international peace and security**

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration.

Mr. Grandi and Mr. Swing are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Geneva.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Grandi.

**Mr. Grandi:** The grave abuses perpetrated against migrants and refugees along the central Mediterranean routes can no longer be ignored. I am glad that the Security Council has decided to turn its attention to this compelling matter.

More than 116,000 people have crossed the sea to Italy alone in 2017. We should not forget that many of those arriving, or who end up stranded or dying along the way, are refugees who are fleeing conflict and persecution — which is of direct concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

As I said in my statement to the Security Council just a few weeks ago (see S/PV.8083), the international community's inability to prevent and resolve conflict is at the root of their plight. Compelled to flee, but without legal pathways to safety, refugees are exposed to appalling harm, together with migrants, including torture, rape, sexual exploitation, slavery and other forms of forced labour, which proliferate where governance is weak and transnational criminal networks take root. That requires a comprehensive approach encompassing countries of origin, transit and destination.

Strengthening refugee protection and offering solutions along the routes, including in Chad and the Niger, is key. UNHCR is stepping up its work, but dramatic funding gaps persist, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In Libya, some 17,000 refugees and migrants are in detention; many more are held by smugglers and traffickers, who are protected by well-known militias. Tackling these is linked to progress on political solutions and functioning governance structures.

Meanwhile, UNHCR is playing its part, together with the International Organization for Migration. Progress is discernible, though still modest. Security remains volatile and access to key locations is still not possible, yet, working closely with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and with the support of some donors — to whom I am grateful — we are making progress towards expanding our scope of action. We are helping the authorities to address the needs of displaced Libyans and others affected by conflict, which is an important priority. We have also secured the release of almost 1,000 asylum-seekers and refugees this year, and reception and protection mechanisms are being incrementally strengthened. Plans to establish a transit centre in Tripoli are progressing positively.

Rescue at sea, in line with international maritime law and human rights standards, remains imperative. Support for Libyan border-management authorities, including the coast guard, must be accompanied by building adequate reception and asylum systems. I commend the Governments of Libya and the Niger for enabling a first transit evacuation by UNHCR of 25 refugees, who will be resettled in France. Additional evacuation platforms, resettlement places and other safe and legal pathways are needed along the entire route. I have called for 40,000 additional resettlement places in the 15 countries affected by these movements. To date, we have indications of just 10,500 places — an encouraging but still insufficient number. Council members will recall that UNHCR has also made specific recommendations for tackling trafficking, including by freezing assets, instituting travel bans, disrupting the supply of revenue and materials, and ensuring robust prosecutions.

Too often, measures pursued in relation to the Mediterranean routes have centred on how to control, deter and exclude. This can have a dehumanizing effect and, more importantly, alone it does not help refugees and migrants to avoid exploitative, deeply harmful situations. A comprehensive set of political,

security, humanitarian, human rights and development investments is needed. The Security Council's attention is welcome because its leadership is critical to ensuring that this happens.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Grandi for his interesting and comprehensive briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Swing.

**Mr. Swing:** I want to come at this issue from the angle that it is primarily about smugglers and making money. We have been working over many years, since the fall of Al-Qadhafi in February 2011, to try to take people out of the detention centres, to improve the detention centres and to clean up the matter in a manner that would destroy the smugglers' business model. We have been able to take 13,000 migrants home from the detention centres this year — 8,000 from our centre in Agadez, in the Niger — rather than have them cross the Mediterranean.

It is all about saving life, and that, I think, is why we are here today. We are not trying to stop Africans from getting to Europe. We are working with the African Union, the European Union and the Libyan authorities. In my experience, it is rather rare to have all of the elements of a solution come together at the same time. Since the breaking of the story of the slave trade — in fact, we broke the story in April and it has now been carried forward in major media — it has all been about breaking up the smugglers' business model.

We lost 5,000 people in the Mediterranean last year, and have lost 3,000 this year. We put out a press release on that yesterday. We are all under pressure: the Libyans, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) — our traditional partner — the African Union, the European Union and the source countries. We all want and need a solution, and I believe that, frankly, all of the elements are there now. We have had good discussions with the African Union Chairperson and the High Representative of the European Union. Everybody seems to agree that it can be done.

What we, the IOM and its traditional partner, the UNHCR, plan and hope to do is to empty the 30 Government-controlled detention centres, with about 15,000 people still in them. We do not know how many of the militia groups have centres; we know they do, but let us focus on the Government effort now,

because we will need Libya's help. We believe that, in very short order, if everybody is willing to help out and compromise, what we will need from the Libyans is an agreement that we can empty these centres. I think they will agree to that. We need them to give us overflight and landing clearances. We need to be able to bring in large, non-Libyan aircraft. The Libyans have been extremely helpful. We have used all Libyan aircraft up to now, but they are too few and too small. We are talking about large operations.

We would obviously need to have the support of the African Union and the main source countries by sending consular officers to Tripoli, in particular, to help identify, register and provide travel documents to everyone so that we can then take them home. There will be some who will need a third country to go to until they can be properly documented, but for the vast majority — that is, those who want to go home, as we will do only voluntary repatriations — it can be done.

We will need financing. I had good conversation about that yesterday. I think that the European Union trust fund that we are using for other purposes can also be used for this. We have assurances in that respect, and we can augment it as we go along. The key thing is to come up with an agreement that we all believe is in our common interest and where everybody comes out a winner.

We will then need commitments on the part of the source countries to help reintegrate these migrants. They may come back with a little money in their pockets to get life started again, but they will need the commitment of their home countries to helping them to reintegrate so that they do not have to take off on an irregular migration route again.

The elements are there. We are ready to go. Mr. Grandi and I have had conversations about it and we think we can work together. The majority of the people are probably economic migrants, but there will be many refugees in there, too, probably from Eritrea or maybe fleeing Boko Haram persecution in north-eastern Nigeria. I believe that we can move ahead with this plan rather quickly if we can get all of the agreements I am talking about. We will need help from Libya, and the Libyans have been very supportive on this. We will need help from the African Union, whose Chairperson has been very helpful. The European Union has also been very helpful.

All of us feel the pressure, because this is an enormous human tragedy. We can stop it if we talk in practical terms and put into place the programme that I have just described. I am happy to take questions on it, but this is one, I believe, where the elements are coming together in a rather favourable manner.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Swing for his briefing.

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

**Mr. Allen (United Kingdom):** I thank the briefers for updating us following the disturbing news footage that we all saw last week, showing migrants being sold into slavery in Libya.

Today, let us stand together as an international community in our commitment to eliminating the abhorrent crime of modern slavery and human trafficking, and to safeguarding the lives and dignity of those who are most vulnerable. Like many Libyans, I share the disgust and grave concern at the news footage from last week. I am deeply concerned that civilians continue to suffer inexorably from the conflict in Libya and that, in the absence of the rule of law, they can suffer human rights abuses of the worst kind. I welcome the announcement by the Government of National Accord of Libya of an immediate investigation into that matter and its commitment to ensuring that those involved are brought to justice and that this vile practice is stopped.

We reaffirm our support, working alongside Libya and international efforts, to bring to account those responsible for such crimes, and we encourage all Member States to continue to work with the Libyan authorities in pursuing allegations of human rights abuses to ensure that those individuals responsible are held to account.

After several debates, the Security Council is well informed of the challenges that we face in tackling unmanaged migration, including through Libya. We are aware of the real vulnerability of migrants to trafficking and modern slavery. We want migration to be safe, legal and well managed. We have discussed the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of migration, as well as its consequences. With resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017), we are now well equipped to take action.

Instability creates a permissive environment in which criminal networks exploit civilians and migrants

and operate trafficking networks for their own gains, including through the illegal detention of migrants. We will continue to support the Libyan authorities in improving conditions in the centres currently under their control, and in establishing oversight over the remaining ungoverned centres.

The Council has seen recent progress in revitalizing the Libyan political process and taking steps forward to stabilizing the country. We are clear that the human rights situation in Libya can be improved sustainably only under the stability of a united and representative Government. A safe, secure and prosperous Libya that is able to confidently tackle the challenges in the region is in all our interests, and we continue to support the United Nations action plan for Libya.

We must all recognize that it is not only the trafficked individuals and their loved ones who are directly affected by that horrendous crime. Violent extremists profit financially from the trade in human misery and use it to fund terrorist activity that affects us all. We must integrate our understanding of trafficking and modern slavery with our efforts to combat terrorism, and we must eradicate the use of slavery as a means to resource terrorist groups.

Human-rights monitoring and the capacity-building of police are central to efforts to build stability and address trafficking by field missions. More broadly, we should consider how anti-trafficking is part of the sustaining peace agenda, which is all about using a cross section of United Nations tools to prevent conflict and build peace. It is clear that trafficking itself can be addressed only through a holistic cross-pillar approach on the part of the United Nations.

As is always the case with today's frantic news cycles, the reports from Libya that have so shocked us all will soon be displaced by other headlines and eventually drop off the news agenda all together. While that is to be expected, we should hold ourselves to a higher standard of responsibility. The fact that slavery continues in the twenty-first century, despite all the progress that has been made in defending human rights, is reprehensible. Let us commit to working together to preserve our attention on this issue and sustain our action in order to ensure that this practice does not continue in Libya or anywhere else; it is only by doing so that we can hope to succeed in the maintenance of international peace and security.

If members of the Council consider that a statement would be helpful, we would be happy to work with them on such a text.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking the representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, and the International Organization for Migration, Mr. William Swing, for their detailed, significant and unambiguous briefings on the situation of migrants in Libya. I also thank the Italian presidency for its engagement on this central topic.

Following the very constructive debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations was organized by the Italian presidency on 21 November (see S/PV.8111), President Emmanuel Macron took the initiative of calling for this emergency meeting of the Security Council against the exploitation of migrants in Libya and trafficking in persons. The purpose of this important meeting of our Council is twofold.

First, we of course must seek not only to condemn but also to publicly denounce that barbaric practice, which is profoundly shocking to our universal conscience and constitutes a crime against humanity, so that it can be put to an end. Secondly, such action must follow specific concrete responses to the scourge, in both the immediate and the long terms, by using all resources within the framework of the law. That of course hinges — and I will revisit this point in a moment — on greater cooperation with the Libyan authorities and on a relentless fight against impunity, including through the International Criminal Court and through the imposition of sanctions against all individuals and entities that contribute to those barbaric acts. In that context, France naturally calls for a strong response from the Security Council.

The images that have been circulated by the media in recent weeks are shocking. They highlight the urgent need to improve our global policy in the light of the migratory crisis and to put an end to this human tragedy. We strongly condemn the inhumane treatment and violence suffered by all individuals in Libya, particularly migrants and refugees, as a result of their vulnerability. We must all keep in mind that trafficking in persons includes many forms of exploitation: kidnapping, forced labour, torture, arbitrary detention, sexual servitude and rape, to name but a few. Those despicable practices are not only morally unacceptable,

but they also constitute crimes against humanity and must not and cannot be allowed to go unpunished.

In the face of such crimes, we have a duty not only to protect victims, but also to respect international and humanitarian law. The Security Council bears a special responsibility to combat this scourge, as trafficking in persons thrives in and fuels conflict areas. It is also used as a means to sow terror among peoples and has become a major source of funding and an instrument of retribution, for armed groups and even terrorist groups. For those reasons, trafficking in persons clearly constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Resolution 2388 (2017), which we adopted last Tuesday, is a further step forward in our common fight against trafficking and the exploitation of human beings, but we are all aware that much remains to be done, and that we must act with a sense of urgency.

We must act at several levels. We must first strengthen our cooperation with the Libyan authorities and help them in assuming their heavy responsibilities. We must urgently respond to the situation by putting an end to arbitrary detention and, in particular, the atrocities suffered by migrants in certain detention centres. We must also improve the sanitary conditions in those centres. We welcome the opening of an investigation by the Libyan authorities, and hope that it will be completed as soon as possible.

The Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, met in Tripoli with the Libyan Minister of the Interior on 4 September. The Libyan authorities are aware of their duty to protect and assist migrants in their territory and to fully cooperate with the international organizations, to which France extends its full support. At the same time, we must take into account today's reality of the Libyan State as a State in a precarious situation and a country that has endured several years of conflict and which has limited ability to act regarding the majority of migrants ensnared by trafficking networks, which are beyond the reach of Government centres. Our response will be ineffective if we do not acknowledge this complexity.

We also call for the strengthening of dialogue with the Libyan authorities on the status of refugees and the right to asylum in Libya, as well as support for the development of economic alternatives in a country that has been a destination country for foreign labour in the past and remains so in part today. The development of Libyan capacities in this regard is

therefore indispensable. Action on the part of the United Nations and by the European Union through EUNAVFOR Sophia seeks to strengthen the Libyan State, as well as its security and judicial institutions, with the aim of enabling Libya to better manage the migration crisis and to uphold international standards in the field of human rights.

As I said, we must also leverage all the resources available to international law and justice, to which perpetrators of crimes against migrants in Libya must be held accountable. Impunity is simply not an option in the face of such horrors, and we will not accept it. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court indicated, during her briefings here in November and May (see S/PV.8091 and S/PV.7934), that she continues to receive information and evidence relating to alleged crimes against migrants transiting through Libya and that some such crimes may fall within the jurisdiction of the Court. She has our full support. It is important that Libya and all States concerned fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court, in line with resolution 1970 (2011).

As per the recent call of the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, we must not hesitate to use the framework of the sanctions regime on Libya against traffickers and the individuals implicated in such inhumane practices. The regime, created by resolution 1970 (2011), enables us to impose targeted sanctions against individuals involved in the smuggling of migrants owing to their responsibility for grave violations of human rights.

France will offer to assist the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, chaired by Sweden, in identifying the individuals and entities responsible for trafficking through Libyan territory. We count on the support of the members of the Council to make resolute progress in this direction. We must also work with countries of origin and transit to develop enhanced cooperation with the authorities of the countries concerned so as to encourage them to develop their asylum policies, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We must also encourage countries of origin to strengthen consular protection for their nationals and to support International Organization for Migration (IOM) initiatives for voluntary return whenever possible.

It is clear that a lasting settlement to this tragedy is inextricably linked to an inclusive political solution

to the conflict in Libya that places the Libyan State in a position to respond fully to it. This requires the establishment of a unified army under civilian authority and, initially, by strengthening the Libyan coast guard. In that regard, it is critical that Libyan political actors recognize the importance of moving quickly to implement the plan of action of the United Nations Special Representative to put an end to a conflict in which the primary victims are Libyans themselves.

The exploitation and violations of the fundamental rights of migrants on Libyan territory are fuelled by political and security instability, feeding back into the dynamics of the conflict. To break this vicious circle, we reaffirm our full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, and for his action plan, which remains the sole valid framework for the negotiations under way. In the immediate term, this requires the adoption of the necessary amendments to the Skhirat Agreement.

Finally, in accordance with the commitments made at the Paris summit on 28 August, we shall continue to fight alongside our European and African partners against the trafficking of migrants in all its forms by targeting criminal organizations and smuggling networks and acting decisively to dismantle and destroy the economic model of the traffickers. Subsequent to this agreement, it is possible to work concretely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the IOM, in collaboration with the Libyan authorities, in order to improve living conditions for migrants in official camps, facilitate the efforts of these organizations with the Government of National Accord, and promote the transfer of the most vulnerable to the Niger with a view to their resettlement. We hope to identify, as we have begun to do in connection with our African partners, the men and women who can benefit from the protection of the right to asylum and enable the most vulnerable to find refuge in Europe. The President of the Republic, who is currently in Ouagadougou, has just confirmed his desire to see other Europeans join France in this initiative.

In conclusion, Mr. President, you can count on France to pursue its mobilization in favour of a unified and decisive approach on the part of the Security Council. On this crucial and vital issue, the Council must adopt a strong position with specific measures and tangible measures commensurate with the challenges we face.

**Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia): We are grateful to the Italian presidency for convening this briefing upon the request of the French delegation, and we wish to thank them both. We also wish to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, and the Director General of the International Organization for Migration, Mr. William Lacy Swing, for their briefings.

The situation of African refugees and migrants in Libya has indeed been a matter of serious concern for quite some time. The Central Mediterranean route through Libya continues to be used by migrants and refugees, mainly from sub-Saharan Africa, to cross to Europe. It has become a popular route for traffickers and smugglers, who continue to exploit the current situation and weak law enforcement institutions.

The recent media reports on the auctioning of African migrants and refugees as slaves have caught the attention of the entire world. The video clips circulating on social media and the harrowing stories of some of the African refugees and migrants who described their suffering and pain in the detention camps at the hands of human traffickers and smugglers have sent shockwaves across the continent and beyond.

This inhumane and despicable act is not only unacceptable but has no place in the twenty-first century. It must be condemned in the strongest terms, and we reiterate our support for the statements issued by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of United Nations. We believe that it is only appropriate that the Council adopt a statement along the same lines, demonstrating the seriousness with which it is following the matter. We therefore believe what the United Kingdom and France have suggested in this regard to be very proper. As we stated during the briefing on Libya last week (see S/PV.8104), we believe that there are two important approaches to handling this matter.

First, there is a need for urgent action to dismantle the slavery camps and destroy the criminal networks involved in this inhumane practice. All necessary measures must also be taken to identify all those responsible for that unspeakable and barbaric crime and to bring them to justice. The Libyan Government has already expressed its commitment to undertaking the necessary investigation, and those efforts must be supported. Strengthening the capacity of Libyan

institutions, law enforcement and judicial bodies is very important in that regard.

We welcome the steps taken by the African Union to urgently launch an investigation in support of the measures announced by Libyan authorities and dispatch an envoy to Libya for consultations with the Government and other stakeholders to agree upon practical steps to address the plight of African migrants in Libya. All the relevant United Nations agencies must be actively engaged in support of those efforts, and international cooperation must also be enhanced to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and to protect the rights of victims, particularly women and children.

Secondly, it is absolutely imperative to tackle the root causes of forced displacement, migration and trafficking in persons in a comprehensive and holistic manner. At the root of that is poverty and hopelessness. Situations such as those should remind us to what extent there is virtually no alternative to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as we mentioned on a previous occasion, hence the need to accelerate efforts to address the multifaceted challenges that are forcing young people to flee in search of a better future. We therefore echo the call made by Mr. Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, last week (see S/PV.8111), to move from words to action, and ensure that we meet the goal set for 2030.

However, pending the implementation of sustainable solutions to address the root causes of migration and forced displacement, much more certainly needs to be done to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance for refugees and migrants, irrespective of their status. States should also be encouraged to continue opening up their borders to refugees in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees to further strengthen international assistance based on the principle of border-sharing and solidarity with refugee-hosting countries. The expansion of resettlement opportunities as a means of international protection for refugees and the expansion of regular channels for migration should be encouraged, as it could significantly contribute to the prevention of trafficking in persons and smuggling.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation for the noble initiative taken by the Government of Rwanda to receive 30,000 of those facing the danger of modern slavery in Libya. That is

a demonstration of commitment put into practice for which Rwanda should be lauded.

With regard to the situation in Libya in particular, we understand the complexity and rapidly changing humanitarian challenge that the country is facing within a very difficult political environment. There is an urgent need for the political situation to be sorted out so that the rule of law might prevail throughout the country under an authority whose legitimacy is recognized by the Libyan people. We believe that the United Nations action plan with its sequential components provides a useful framework to end the current political impasse and meet the legitimate demands of all Libyans. We welcome the continued efforts of the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to engage all Libyans based on the United Nations action plan, including in bringing together the main political actors to mend the Libyan Political Agreement, which remains the only viable framework in which to resolve the Libyan crisis.

Lastly, auctioning migrants as slaves is an affront to humankind, and we should do everything possible to combat that scourge. We hope that the Council will send the right message to demonstrate our collective commitment to addressing the immediate and long-term challenge through a comprehensive and holistic approach, and a in a very robust manner, as the representative of France just mentioned — through effective global and regional partnerships.

**Mr. Aboulatta** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the briefers for their valuable briefings to the Security Council.

Criminal networks and various groups continue to exploit ongoing conflicts and the absence of the rule of law in many regions throughout the world to traffic in persons so as to fund their criminal activities, especially through exploiting the most vulnerable groups, including women and children, whether through sexual exploitation, forced labour, organ harvesting slavery or other activities. That is fuelling those conflicts, and we are in need of concerted international efforts to confront the phenomenon. Egypt has been following closely and with grave concern media reports of criminal groups in Libya exploiting illegal migrants and committing crimes involving human trafficking. Egypt rejects and condemns that criminal act, which runs counter to the most basic human values.

Egypt welcomes the efforts of of the Libyan authorities, who have condemned those acts and announced that the relevant Libyan entities have launched an investigation to unearth the truth. They are determined to punish everyone involved in those practices if the allegations prove to be true. We are fully prepared to provide all forms of support to the brotherly Libyan people so as to support the Libyan authorities in confronting the situation in all its aspects.

That shocking and terrifying phenomenon highlights once again the importance of strengthening Libyan institutions so as to confront the grave challenges facing the country and enhance their national capacity to protect the most vulnerable groups of persons, especially women and children. Egypt has spared no effort to unite the armed forces of Libya. In order to support the efforts of the United Nations, the Egyptian Committee on Libya recently hosted a group of Libyan officers in Cairo. We are also making every possible effort to support the political process, aimed primarily at enabling the Libyans to reach their own comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the situation in their country.

We cannot discuss the risks confronting Libya without discussing the security, economic and social situation in the Sahel region. The security vacuum, the difficulty in controlling borders in the remote desert areas and the countries of the region, and the fact that the latter are now safe havens for terrorist groups and organized criminal gangs — thereby facilitating their illegal activities and ability to terrorize civilians — has led to a difficult security situation now confronting Libya.

In that regard, we stress the importance of the role played by the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in confronting those risks. The international community has a responsibility to support that ambitious initiative. Investing in support for the Joint Force will bear fruit in the form of enhanced security and stability in the region and around the world.

The wide-ranging systematic violations of human rights that accompany large flows of refugees and migrants, including human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants, require us to redouble international efforts to enhance the management of those flows. In that regard, we believe that we need to adopt a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of migration, including economic, political,



cultural and humanitarian measures, while focusing on the development dimension in countries of origin and host countries.

We must also open a new legal path for accepting migrants and refugees; we must do more than merely close borders, which contravenes the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. We welcome efforts to adopt the global compact on refugees, in addition to the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

In conclusion, we stress that Egypt supports the central role of the United Nations in enhancing international efforts to combat human trafficking. The Security Council adopted resolution 2388 (2017) a few days ago to that end, in addition to resolution 2331 (2016); the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; and the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1). We call on Member States to enhance those efforts in the upcoming period.

**Mr. Skau** (Sweden): I thank High Commissioner Grandi and Director General Swing for their sobering briefings this morning. We welcome France's initiative to request an urgent Council meeting on this important topic, as it is essential that today's meeting lead to swift and decisive action, including through a strong statement by the Council.

Like others, we have been horrified and outraged by the video footage released last week of human beings reportedly being bought and sold as slaves in so-called slave markets in Libya. All States have an obligation to prevent, deter and penalize the crime of slavery; it is always prohibited and may very well amount to crimes against humanity. We condemn any such act in the strongest terms.

Sadly, these revelations are only the latest in the litany of indignities and abuses seen in the conflict in Libya. In every Security Council meeting on Libya this year, Sweden has raised the widespread and well-documented human rights violations and abuses suffered by refugees, migrants and internally displaced person, including arbitrary detention, rape and other forms of sexual and physical abuse, and forced labour. Those terrible crimes continue to take place with

complete impunity. We all have a responsibility to act; now is not the moment to pass the buck. Let me set out a number of concrete measures to move forward.

First, the Council must demand accountability. We reiterate Secretary-General Guterres' call on the competent authorities to investigate the reported slavery and slave trade. We note the announcement of an investigation by the Libyan Government of National Accord and we welcome to United Nations initiative to work with the Libyan authorities to set up a transparent monitoring mechanism in order to safeguard migrants and refugees against human rights abuses and violations.

We also support the Secretary-General's call on 20 November for all United Nations actors to actively pursue the matter of slavery, and we would welcome a report by the Secretary-General to the Council on the results of those efforts. The Council should join him, as well as the African Union and the European Union, in clearly and unambiguously demanding that these crimes be fully investigated in a swift, credible and independent manner. To that end, we call for the urgent establishment of a fact-finding mission to look into the matter of slavery in Libya.

In addition, we support the initiative of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, last communicated to the Council on 8 November (see S/PV.8091), to actively explore the possibility of investigating crimes related to human trafficking and smuggling networks. As a preventative action, as well as to promote changes in behaviour, we remain open to exploring the possibility of using sanctions to target smuggling and trafficking in persons.

Secondly, improvements in the humanitarian situation are acutely necessary. We call on the Libyan authorities to ensure full and unimpeded humanitarian access to migrant detention centres across Libya, and we repeat our calls for these detention centres to be turned into open transit centres that meet international standards. In addition, it is crucial to find sustainable alternatives to detention, not least for women, children and vulnerable groups. We support the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure the protection needs of refugees, including the emergency evacuation and temporary settlement mechanism. We are one of the largest donors to the important operations of the International Organization for Migration and UNHCR;

we have provided emergency resettlement slots to that mechanism and we encourage other countries to do the same.

While urgent action is required to respond to the most immediate needs of refugees and migrants, the only long-term solution to the unfolding human tragedy is to address the root causes of forced migration. That will require concerted and coordinated action to tackle poverty, inequality, human rights violations and abuses, as well as instability in countries of origin and transit, including Libya itself. The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development is a powerful tool to that end.

Finally, we must continue to support United Nations-facilitated efforts to achieve a lasting political solution to the conflict in Libya, which will improve the lives of all people in Libya, including migrants and refugees.

**Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for their respective briefings.

Last Sunday marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the release of *Casablanca*, a classic of the silver screen that I am sure the majority of the Council will have seen. In one of its most famous scenes, Captain Renault tries to shut down Rick's Café, claiming to be shocked that gambling was happening on the premises. The words have barely passed his lips when one of the croupier's hands over a bag to the Captain containing his winnings, who thanks him and gives the order to shut the place down.

Setting aside the obvious differences, there is a parallel here with the situation that we are seeing in Libya, which is not the only country suffering the phenomenon under discussion today. There have been reports about the existence of a slave market in Libya for months. The difference lies in the fact that what we have seen in recent days is no movie but harsh reality. What is most shameful is that there are despicable people who profit from the misery and despair of migrants.

In April in this very Chamber (see S/PV.7934), Uruguay referred explicitly to an IOM report on the existence of that slave market and unequivocally condemned that horrific state of affairs. Nonetheless,

until a video providing irrefutable proof of the IOM report was made public, declarations of outrage and repudiation of this absolutely abominable fact from the major international authorities were conspicuous by their absence.

We must admit that collectively we have lagged in condemning this situation much earlier and taking concrete steps in that regard. Today we still have time to correct the mistake by cooperating on the prompt investigation of those crimes by establishing mechanisms that make possible accountability for the perpetrators.

The inhumane treatment of migrants who use Libya as a country of transit to reach Europe has been known for years. Hundreds of thousands of sub-Saharan migrants are subjected to degrading practices, such as violence, torture, hunger, sexual abuse and even murder, in acts that constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. To the extent possible, the Libyan authorities have the obligation to detect and to dismantle those trafficking networks. The United Nations, through the appropriate coordination of its agencies and the cooperation of regional organizations, must help the Libyan authorities to fight against that scourge and to protect migrants, in particular the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

The recent adoption of resolution 2388 (2017) reaffirms the importance of the fight against trafficking in persons in conflict situations. Uruguay emphatically condemns human trafficking in its broadest sense and related crimes that seek to exploit an individual and to take advantage of their person or their vulnerable state, which entails disregarding the nature of an individual as such and a substantial violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In recent years, the proliferation of armed conflict and the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities have triggered a series of consequences, including the unprecedented phenomenon of mass migration and situations of refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers, which are precisely the contexts from which the traffickers of human beings benefit, vilely profiting from vulnerability and misfortune.

The trafficking in persons in situations of conflict is a global problem, since it concerns not only the countries of origin but also the countries of transit and of destination of the victims, the countries in which the criminal networks operate and the countries

through which the money from which those networks profit goes. Combating trafficking in persons is therefore the responsibility of the entire international community. The work of States must focus not only on the fight against trafficking in persons in situations of conflict but also on ensuring the fundamental rights of the victims by strengthening prevention and protection mechanisms and measures. Those who flee from conflict not only are displaced within the political borders of their countries but also may seek a better reality in other States. It is very serious that, in addition to the psychological burden of migration under extreme conditions and displacement towards the unknown, migrants may remain at the mercy of those criminal gangs.

As we prepare to begin the negotiations on a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, Uruguay would like again to emphasize the principle of the non-criminalization of irregular migration. Giving migrants the necessary tools to develop in the countries of transit and of destination makes them less vulnerable to trafficking in persons. States must therefore promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their status.

To conclude, Uruguay echoes the appeal of the Secretary-General to deal with migratory flows in a comprehensive and humane way through international cooperation that addresses the root causes of that phenomenon, increases the opportunities for legal migration and strengthens the fight against the smugglers and traffickers of people, while protecting the human rights of the victims.

**Mr. Bessho** (Japan): I would like to thank the briefers for their very comprehensive and insightful briefings.

The media reports on migrants sold into slavery in Libya were shocking. Refugees and migrants are especially vulnerable to trafficking, as well as various forms of exploitation, including forced labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery, which pose a serious threat to human dignity and integrity. The international community must make the utmost efforts to eliminate such heinous crimes.

We take note of the Libyan Government's commitment to investigate the inhumane practices and call on the Government to ensure justice and accountability through its investigation and prosecution of those who are responsible. We hope that a thorough investigation and prosecution will deter similar crimes.

The Security Council has been working to support the political process in Libya, cooperating with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General as well as United Nations organs and Member States. The need to reinforce the Government of Libya and to enhance its institutions, including its security sector and border security, is ever more pressing. At the same time, we need to address the root causes that are forcing people to leave their homes. That issue requires better regional coordination and cooperation. The Council needs to address the trafficking in migrants by working not only with Libya but also with other Member States in the region, as well as regional organizations.

We are encouraged by the African Union communiqué of 20 November, whereby it was announced that the Chairperson of the Commission intends to send an envoy for consultations with the Libyan Government and other stakeholders to agree on practical measures to improve the plight of migrants in Libya. The Council needs to closely follow the situation and to take appropriate action.

**Ms. Sison** (United States of America): I thank Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for their timely updates.

Over the past week, a video of African migrants sold as slaves in Libya has rightly sparked moral outrage around the world. It is an abomination to see human beings bought and sold. Those reports should be profoundly disturbing to all of us and should inspire us to act. As Ambassador Haley said last week (see S/PV.8111), there is no place in our world for slavery. We must hold the perpetrators of such acts accountable for their crimes.

We welcome the condemnation of slavery and human trafficking by the Libyan Government of National Accord and its announcement that it is conducting an investigation into the latest reports. The United States reiterates its call for a full investigation and for those involved to be brought to justice as soon as possible. That video was the latest of many deeply disturbing reports about the treatment of migrants and asylum seekers in Libya.

The fact is that ruthless smugglers are preying on desperate migrants and refugees with no regard whatsoever for human dignity. Human traffickers detain such people in appalling conditions, where

beatings, torture and rape have become commonplace. Migrants and refugees who cannot afford exorbitant ransom payments are abused and exploited. They are forced to work on farms or construction sites or as part of armed militias in gangs or, as we saw, are sold off to the highest bidder.

Under those circumstances, the United States welcomes international efforts to provide assistance and protection to displaced people and migrants in Libya, including the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and IOM that we just heard about. The international community must support greater documentation of abuses in Libya, as well as programmes to ensure the humane treatment of migrants and refugees. Since 2011, the United States has contributed generously to the regional humanitarian assistance programmes of UNHCR, IOM and other partners and has provided more than \$150 million specifically to help refugees and vulnerable migrants in Libya, as well as those displaced internally by violence. Upholding international protection obligations is vital.

We urge the European Union and all Member States to ensure that there is consistent vetting of Libyan partners and an international presence at disembarkation points and in detention facilities, as well as a process to guarantee access to protection. Of course, the only long-term solution to the challenge of migration through Libya is to stabilize Libya. The smugglers responsible for abusing migrants and refugees are part of sophisticated transnational criminal networks that thrive in ungoverned or unstable spaces.

Those migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks also smuggle arms, narcotics and illicit fuel across borders. Their earnings support terrorist organizations, like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida affiliates. Their presence contributes to Libya's instability, as well as to security challenges that affect the entire Mediterranean and the Sahel. Instability breeds criminal behaviour and human rights abuses, which in turn lead to further instability and additional abuses, and the cycle continues.

We should continue looking for any opportunity to disrupt criminal networks in Libya using the tools of the Security Council, including our Libya sanctions regime. However, while we face an immediate imperative to disrupt and dismantle smuggling networks, the members of the Council must also

recommit to supporting the United Nations efforts to advance a more stable, unified and secure Libya. The only viable way to achieve that goal is for all of us to lend our full support to the political process organized by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ghassan Salamé on the basis of the Libyan Political Agreement, which remains the only valid framework throughout the transitional period. We must all use our influence to make sure that all actors in Libya engage with the United Nations in good faith and stress that political dialogue is the only way forward.

Any attempt to assert false deadlines, cut short the United Nations-facilitated political process or impose a military solution will only further destabilize Libya, which would only help the smugglers responsible for abusing migrants and refugees. The United States reiterates its commitment today to ending all forms of slavery, cracking down on the perpetrators and promoting stability in Libya. It is vital that we work together to achieve those goals. We must rally support to end impunity for those abuses and ensure human rights for all in Libya.

**Mr. Ciss** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to most sincerely thank the French delegation for having requested the convening of this urgent meeting in the wake of incidents of slavery in Libya. I would also like to thank the Italian presidency for having convened the meeting. Allow me also to thank today's briefers, Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, for their very detailed and elucidating briefings.

Let us recall that, a few months ago, the respective organizations did indeed sound the alarm following the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), in which the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms all acts of human trafficking in areas plagued by armed conflict and defined measures to be taken to address them. Just last week, we held an open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations (see S/PV.8111) and the threat it poses to international peace and security. At that time, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to the fight against this scourge by adopting resolution 2388 (2017). During the debate, many voices were raised not only to condemn the disastrous and inhumane situation of migrants in Libya, victims of trafficking and all other kinds of abuse and violations, but also to call for action to put an end to it.

With that and the current crisis in mind, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, while waiting to provide more structural responses, decided, inter alia, on the following actions: to refer the matter to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights so as to accelerate investigations and relevant legal processes, to strengthen efforts with African Union partners in that regard and to recommend the repatriation of those who wish to work with African Union member States. In addition, it should be noted that the issue will figure on the agenda of the African Union Summit to be held in January 2018 and of the European Union-African Union Summit to be held this week in Abidjan.

In our West African subregion, the Economic Community of West African States also condemned those acts and invited the Libyan Government and the international community to take urgent steps to find and prosecute those guilty of that crime against humanity.

For its part, the Government of the Republic of Senegal cares deeply about the plight of Libyan migrants. It has mobilized itself and, since the beginning of 2017, has repatriated 2,499 of its nationals present in Libya. In a recently published statement, the Government indicated that it

“[v]igorously denounces in the strongest terms trafficking in persons, which constitutes a grave offense to the conscience of humankind”.

I would like to take this opportunity for my delegation to welcome the decision of the Libyan Government of National Accord to open an investigation into those findings, and invite all Member States to provide support to that end.

My delegation considers it imperative, both in Libya and where armed conflict rages, to resolutely fight against all forms of human trafficking. For, in addition to constituting a grave violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, they exacerbate instability and contribute to the existence of terrorist groups, armed groups and transnational organized crime.

In particular, focus must be placed on accountability, the need to investigate the acts committed and identify and persecute the perpetrators. When national judicial systems are unable to do so because of instability resulting from conflict, we believe that international justice should be able to independently stand in as a

substitute. Hence frank, comprehensive and robust international and regional cooperation must be part of a framework of a concerted and comprehensive approach, especially with regard to identification, protection, assistance and the exchange of information.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress again that only when Libya consolidates a strong and stable statehood with unified institutions can it ensure effective control over all of its territory. The issue must therefore be addressed by a political solution to the Libyan crisis and, more generally, by adopting a comprehensive and concerted approach to promote development and regular migration, based on respect for human rights.

That dimension of the crisis gives deeper meaning to the Secretary-General's appeal to States here in the Council for regular and safer migration routes in order to protect those who flee persecution, which leads me to insist on our obligation to address the root causes of conflicts and crises, among which are instability and poverty. In that spirit, my delegation also supports the idea of a draft presidential statement to enable the Council to speak in a singular, strong and clear voice about the plight of migrants in Libya.

**Mr. Shen Bo** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Mr. Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Mr. Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, for their briefings.

China has paid much attention to the evolving situation in Libya. In the past two years all the parties in Libya have made great efforts to move the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement forward, and some progress has been made. However, Libya is still facing a number of challenges, including a fragile security situation, continuing armed clashes and rampant terrorist activity. On the other hand, there are massive flows of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean, a worsening problem of trafficking in persons and an increasingly complex global situation for refugees and migrants. The combination of unrest in Libya and the issues of refugees and migrant poses many challenges to security and stability in Libya and the region.

The causes of the refugee and migrant issues are complex and multifaceted, and Libya has a long way to go in terms of improving its overall security situation. The international community should

encourage international cooperation in tackling the symptoms and the underlying causes of the situation by taking comprehensive measures and coordinating the efforts of the many stakeholders involved, both in promoting a political settlement and dealing with the refugee-migrant issue, with a view to restoring stability in both the country and the region as soon as possible.

First, the focus should be on a political settlement and the creation of a safe and stable environment. Ending the internal conflicts and achieving stability in Libya as quickly as possible will establish a major foundation for resolving the refugee-migrant issue appropriately. China supports all efforts that can help to stabilize the situation, promote the political settlement process and bring all the parties in Libya together in the fight against terrorism. We also hope that all the parties in Libya will engage in an inclusive political dialogue and promote the political process actively and effectively. The international community should work to increase its consensus on the issue, giving support to Libya's neighbours and regional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States in their efforts to promote peace and the political settlement action plan.

Secondly, we should strengthen international and regional coordination on combating terrorism and transnational organized crime. The international community should be united in fighting terrorism, while working in an integrated manner by using various means to cut off the channels that terrorism uses to supply itself with financing and arms and the ways in which it spreads its ideologies. With a view to preventing a recrudescence of these terrorist groups, which will only exacerbate the region's instability, the international community should help the countries concerned to build up their security capacities, strengthen border controls between Libya and its neighbours, foster information-sharing and cooperation between law-enforcement agencies, destroy the criminal networks that traffic in persons, and improve the humanitarian situation. We hope that all members will fully and accurately implement all the Security Council resolutions on Libya and trafficking in persons and work to effectively address the issues related to refugees and migrants in the Mediterranean.

Thirdly, it is also important to emphasize the significance of treating both the symptoms and root causes of the issues and promoting inclusive and balanced development that benefits everyone. We

must increase support for countries hosting refugees, work to end xenophobia and discrimination and, most important, make efforts to tackle the underlying causes of social instability and development imbalances if we are to put an end to turmoil and poverty. The international community should deal with the issue of development head-on, implement appropriate remedies, provide aid to developing countries, support their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, enhance their capacity to alleviate poverty and related problems, foster homegrown development and promote the achievement of shared development and lasting peace in countries of origin. China is ready to work with the international community in continuing to contribute actively to ensuring an early end to the conflict in Libya and achieving stability and restoring prosperity there.

**Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan): We would like to thank the briefers for their comprehensive depiction of the dire situation of migrants and refugees in Libya. We also appreciate our French colleagues' efforts to initiate today's briefing.

This month alone we have had as many as three Council meetings on Libya, including with regard to the situation of migrants. The frequency and intensity of these deliberations are a clear indication of the need to ensure that more attention is paid to this grave humanitarian problem, which is aggravated by gross violations of human rights. Hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees are enduring abuse and detention in inhumane conditions. It is particularly alarming that migrants trying to reach Europe via North Africa are being sold at modern-day slave auctions by smugglers in Libya. As the Secretary-General indicated in his statement last week (see S/PV.8111), slavery has no place in our world. Such actions are among the most egregious abuses of human rights today and may amount to crimes against humanity.

Kazakhstan joins the call to see that the situation is investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice as soon as possible. My delegation welcomes the Libyan authorities' confirmation that they will be conducting investigations aimed at officially prosecuting and punishing all those involved in such heinous crimes. This crisis will also require strict monitoring and implementing of appropriate measures by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, INTERPOL and

Member States if we are to bring the operations of these smugglers and criminal gangs to a halt.

We will therefore need even more determined international cooperation than we have now in order to clamp down on traffickers and smugglers and establish a concerted policy on migration. Along with that, we must increase all the possible opportunities for legal immigration and the full implementation of international conventions and the relevant Security Council resolutions. At the same time, we must work to reach a settlement of the situation in Libya as quickly as possible through political reconciliation. Investment in development will help to reduce the migration flows across the country.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan joins the United Nations and others in vehemently condemning these reprehensible activities and working to end such human indignities.

**Mr. Zagaynov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would first like to thank the briefers for their information.

The serious problems raised during today's meeting are very worrying. We share the concerns about information indicating the growth of trafficking in persons in the region. The Security Council already discussed the problem in last week's debate (see S/PV.8111) on the subject of trafficking in people in conflict situations, at which we also adopted resolution 2388 (2017). The issue is regularly brought up in discussions about the situation in Libya, as it has been this month.

As we have noted before, the transnational character of crimes related to trafficking in human beings in situations of armed conflict demands major international cooperation in combating it. In order to be as effective as possible in dealing both with this problem and with other migrant-related issues it is essential to take an integrated approach that includes tackling its underlying causes, prosecuting the perpetrators and assisting their victims. The primary focus should be on what has created the problem of migrants.

With regard to the root causes of the situation in Libya, the scale of the activities there of the criminal groups associated with trafficking in persons is one of the many consequences of the severe and protracted crisis created by the violent military intervention in Libya's internal affairs in 2011. The inhuman

treatment of migrants has been made possible against a background of continued political and institutional disunity in Libya. And Libya does not exist in a vacuum. The criminal business related to illegal migration clearly has a reach throughout the region that extends to Europe as well.

We have noted Libya's intention to prosecute these criminal activities, and we should support its efforts to fight them and assist the victims. However, a long-term solution to the problem lies solely in the reunification of Libya through a political settlement in the framework of a broad-based dialogue under United Nations auspices. Only the achievement of lasting peace and a consistent struggle against the terrorist threats in Libya will help lead to sustainably alleviating the problems of refugees and illegal migrants.

Under the pretext of the difficult situation of migrant rights in Libya, we are hearing suggestions about the need for urgent intervention. We know that there are some who prefer to address similar problems independently by bypassing international law and in violation of the sovereignty of States. That will only exacerbate the difficult situation that emerged following the destruction of Libya. At the same time, key international organizations and structures would be well advised to pay close attention migrant-related issues in that country. In that regard, it would be highly useful to strengthen cooperation with the African Union.

**Mr. Vitrenko** (Ukraine): I want to thank the French delegation for initiating, and the Italian presidency for convening, today's briefing on the situation of migrants in Libya. We are equally grateful to the briefers.

The international community, and the Security Council in particular, must respond to news reports about African migrants being sold as slaves. That is why we fully support the idea of a concrete outcome to today's meeting.

The situation in Libya has already featured prominently on the Council's agenda during this month. It has a direct impact on the stability of neighbouring States, the Sahel and the Mediterranean. Largely owing to the current crisis in Libya, the latter is facing numerous challenges ranging from terrorist threats to irregular migration flows.

As we stated in the Chamber just one week ago, Ukraine strongly condemns continuing violations

of human rights in detention centres in Libya, where African migrants are being systematically abused and harassed (see S/PV.8104). Reports about slave auctions are shocking and horrifying. It is appalling that these heinous crimes are taking place in the twenty-first century. In that regard, my delegation joins other Council members in appealing to all the competent authorities in Libya to investigate this barbarism and ensure that those responsible are held accountable. We would also like to encourage the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to thoroughly look into those atrocities as well.

The current situation of migrants constitutes just one of many elements of the ongoing instability in Libya. The lack of progress on the political track and the security vacuum have been exploited by criminal networks, which have flourished to an unprecedented degree. Arbitrary detentions, torture, kidnappings, unlawful killings, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of drugs and arms have all become a reality in the country. That is why only a comprehensive approach to the root causes of the current conflict may alleviate the suffering of the Libyan people.

In that regard, we believe it is vital now to invest more efforts in the political process. My delegation reiterates its support to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ghassan Salamé as he works with the parties to advance the implementation of the United Nations action plan for the resumption of an inclusive, Libyan-owned political process. We call on everyone involved to continue consultations until a compromise on amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement is reached. In our view, the Agreement remains the only viable framework to end the current crisis in Libya. Any attempts to undermine the process are unacceptable and should be rejected. The longer the limbo in Libya continues, the more the slave trade and other unlawful activities will become entrenched in the country.

Ukraine believes that without economic opportunities, particularly for the youth in Africa, there is a risk that the North Africa and sub-Saharan regions will remain unstable zones, with terrorists and criminals exploiting the void left by the State for illegal trafficking in persons and arms. In that context, achieving sustainable peace and stability in Libya and the region requires more investments in socioeconomic development. Without functioning Government structures, the provision of most essential social services, operational law enforcement and

judicial organs, vulnerable communities in Libya and other conflict-affected countries will remain an easy target for criminals. Therefore, initiatives on fighting terrorism, fostering economic development, addressing migration flows and ensuring respect for human rights must go hand in hand and complement each other. Ukraine remains committed to contributing to that endeavour.

**Mr. Llorenty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to thank the Italian presidency and your delegation, Mr. President, as well as the delegation of France for taking the initiative to convene this morning's briefing. We also appreciate the briefings by Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and of Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration.

Bolivia endorses and aligns itself with the statement by Chairperson of the African Union, Mr. Alpha Condé, who condemned the inhumane treatment and enslavement of migrants in Libya, describing them as a despicable trade and a relic from a bygone era. We agree with his assertion that modern practices of slavery must come to an end and that all available tools must be used to that end. We also support the appeal of the African Union to carry out an urgent investigation into those repellent acts and inhuman practices in order to identify those responsible and bring them to justice.

Bolivia expresses its greatest concern for the inadmissible and harrowing plight of migrants in Libya who have been victims of serious human rights violations. This is the fourth time this month that the Security Council has dealt with this issue: we addressed it during the debate on trafficking of persons (see S/PV.8111), we also raised it at the briefings on challenges in the Mediterranean and on the situation in Libya. This demonstrates the gravity of the situation, which demands the immediate attention of the international community.

According to statistics from the International Labour Organization, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, in 2016 more than 40 million people were subjected to some form of modern slavery. That means that in the world today there are five victims of slavery for every 1,000 people, and one out of every four of them is a child. Those are horrifying figures that the Organization must not, and cannot, ignore.



The Security Council should do everything it can to ensure that the investigation mechanisms and the initiatives proposed by the African Union are carried out. We highlight the fact that investigations are being carried out by the Government of National Accord in Libya through a high-level committee in order to identify those responsible for such inhuman acts. In addition, the Government of National Accord must cooperate with the investigations being undertaken by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, as such events may constitute crimes against humanity. Should that be the case, these crimes must be brought to trial before the Court.

We urge all States to address the situation of migrants in Libya in a humane way, through international, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue. Work must be done to strengthen effective measures to combat and eliminate human trafficking and smuggling, support victims and survivors and help them reintegrate, as well as to bring perpetrators to justice and increase opportunities for migration.

In the same way, we reiterate the importance of implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and we call on States that have not yet done so to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. I recall the words of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: human trafficking is a parasitic crime that feeds on vulnerability, thrives in times of uncertainty and profits from inaction”.

In conclusion, it is important to recall that the crisis in Libya and its fallout in the broader region of the Sahel are the direct and practical result of the recourse to regime-change policies, to interventionism and to meddling in the internal affairs of other States — elements that have done nothing but leave behind millions of victims, displaced persons, refugees and dead.

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

I would like to thank the briefers very much for their statements, as well as for the work carried out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization

for Migration (IOM) on the ground to assist all those in need of international protection.

We are committed to helping improve the appalling conditions of refugee and migrant centres, including through the launch of new calls for non-governmental organization projects and finding avenues for legal migration and repatriation. I would like to underscore that Italy has long supported and emphasized the crucial role of the United Nations on the ground, and from the start we have advocated and worked for a stronger presence of UNHCR and the IOM in Libya.

That is why we welcome the important progress achieved both by UNHCR and IOM on that crucial matter. Italy is pleased that Italian efforts, including through the engagement of the Italian Embassy in Tripoli, were able to facilitate UNHCR activities in Libya on behalf of migrants and vulnerable categories in need of international protection, as well as to define the terms of its presence and engagement in the country. To that end, we facilitated meetings at the Italian Embassy in Tripoli with local authorities and UNHCR. The procedures for the resettlement of migrants and vulnerable categories of persons can therefore now be accelerated in cooperation with the office dedicated for that purpose in Tripoli being run by the local authorities, which aims to provide the highest standards of humanitarian assistance and respect for human rights.

Human mobility, exploitation and abuses against migrants, and the situation in Libya and the Mediterranean are at the centre of Italy’s action at the United Nations and of our presidency of the Security Council. One week ago, we organized an open debate (see S.PV.8111) on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. Our Foreign Minister, Angelino Alfano, presided over the briefing on security challenges in the Mediterranean (see S/PV.8106) on 17 November. A meeting (see S/PV.8104) dedicated to the political situation in Libya was held the day before. As a member of the Security Council, measures taken by Italy on those issues has been consistent, culminating under our presidency in the unanimous adoption of resolution 2388 (2017), which was supported by many delegations around the table and co-sponsored by 56 countries at the open debate I mentioned.

The resolution underscores, inter alia, that the challenges posed by trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants in the Sahel region and in Libya

are further exacerbating instability and conflict. It calls for a renewed collective and coordinated effort, and provides a legal basis for a strengthened victim-centred and a gender- and child-sensitive approach in addressing the needs of the victim, especially highlighting that human trafficking entails — as shown by the situation in Libya — widespread and grave abuses of human rights, including heinous forms of exploitation and slavery.

The recent reports indicating that migrants in Libya are being sold as slaves are sickening. Slavery must have no place in today's world. Such actions are among the most outrageous abuses of human rights and may amount to crimes against humanity. We condemn them in the strongest terms. Italy therefore welcomes the statement by the Government of National Accord of Libya condemning those inhumane practices and announcing the launching an investigation into that abhorrent episode to bring the perpetrators to justice. We also welcome the remarks made before of the Council last week (see S/PV.8111) by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Smail Chergui, on the initiative taken by the African Union to address the plight of African migrants in Libya. We also recall the words of Prosecutor Bensouda of the International Criminal Court at the Council (see S/PV.8091) under the Italian presidency just three weeks ago.

We must not forget that the issue of large numbers of people being trafficked through Libya dates back long before a spotlight was recently shined on that matter by the international media. Over the past years, Italy rescued and welcomed over half a million migrants and refugees who tried to reach Europe across the Mediterranean. At the same time, we spare no effort in raising awareness on the issue, initially at the European Union and subsequently at the global level.

As mentioned in this Chamber by Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano in the meeting on Libya, the recent decrease in migration flows across the Mediterranean is encouraging because it results in reducing the number of people undertaking a dangerous journey — one that has cost so many innocent lives over recent years. But better management of migration flows must not take place at the expense of human rights. Migrants should be treated with humanity and dignity, and their rights should be fully respected. That is the approach that Italy has taken since the beginning of this crisis by combining solidarity and security.

Italy is mindful that a sustainable solution to these issues lies in strengthening Libyan State institutions and local municipalities, and we are implementing several concrete initiatives to that end. We recall the importance of assisting Libya, as indicated by several Security Council resolutions, under the coordination of the presidency of the Council, in building needed capacity, including to secure its borders, and to prevent, investigate and prosecute acts of smuggling of migrants and human trafficking. That challenge is transnational in nature, and therefore Libya cannot be left alone in dealing with it.

We believe that the protection of vulnerable groups, including migrants, must be at the centre of the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. We also express support to countries in the region affected by the smuggling of migrants, and emphasize Italy's initiative to strengthen an effective multidimensional response with States of origin, transit and destination.

Instability in the Sahel — as others have reminded the Council — is also being exploited by human traffickers. We need to address those common challenges in a spirit of international solidarity and shared responsibility in order to tackle their root causes and to prevent vulnerable people from being exploited by migrant smugglers and human traffickers.

Ultimately, the solution to the problem is a political one, as we have been reminded in the case of the Libyan crisis. Such a solution would accompany the country on its path towards stabilization and national reconciliation through an inclusive dialogue. Italy reaffirms its full support to United Nations mediation in that respect, as reiterated by Prime Minister Gentiloni Silveri in his meeting with Special Representative Salamé two days ago in Tunis.

In conclusion, Italy would like to support the proposal of the United Kingdom for a formal product, which would lend important added value to advance the engagement of the Security Council on the issue. The proposal would also be a further follow-up to the initiative launched by the Italian presidency during this month. I would like to conclude by also thanking France for organizing this meeting in cooperation with the Italian presidency.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Libya.

**Mr. Elmajerbi** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I deliver this statement to the Security Council on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Faiez Serraj, President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord of Libya.

“At the outset I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank you for convening this meeting on the maintenance of international peace and security, with special focus on trafficking in persons in armed conflict. I would also like to thank Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Mr. William Lacy Swing, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for their briefings. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to take the floor before the Security Council.

“I have followed with extreme concern various media reports that — if proven authentic — show that some illegal migrants of African descent are being traded for financial gain. Regardless of the veracity of the reports, we condemn those actions strongly, and we reject them regardless of the nationality of the perpetrators, be they Libyans or non-Libyans, and regardless of where the events took place, be that inside or outside our country, because they are not aligned with our values, religions or national laws. Nor are those actions in line with international law, humanitarian law and the relevant conventions on human rights. They cannot be dismissed. I have issued directives to the competent security bodies in order to authenticate the recording. If the recording is indeed authenticated, then the authorities concerned will pursue the criminals and will bring them before justice as soon as possible.

“We would also like to confirm that any violations against or any mistreatment of illegal immigrants are isolated, individual actions that are in no way systematic. The Government of National Accord would also like to emphasize that the perpetrators of those crimes will not enjoy impunity. We ask all parties, be they inside or outside Libya, to submit any information regarding such crimes to the office of the prosecutor, which has initiated an investigation.

“We would like to point out that Libyan laws on illegal migration criminalize trafficking in persons and stress the need to treat illegal immigrants humanely. Moreover, Libyan laws ban and criminalize slavery and enslavement. That has been the case since Libya’s independence by royal decree and in accordance with the provisions of the penal code, to which Libya abides. Moreover, such actions are not in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Libya has ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the law will definitely punish Libyans and non-Libyans alike who have broken this law on Libyan territory.

“Moreover, the crime of human trafficking is considered a form of organized crime that is being perpetrated by transnational criminal networks, especially in areas that are undergoing conflict and instability. The international community must arrive at a holistic and effective way to confront this in the countries of destination and origin, and not simply in the countries of transit. If those criminal networks were not present in the countries of origin and destination, then transit countries such as Libya, which is going through a difficult time of instability that has affected its citizens, would not have fallen victim to these large flows of human migration, especially in the absence of the capabilities that would allow them to confront and prevent this phenomenon and protect its borders.

“Therefore, we ask the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to undertake its responsibilities and to help uncover the networks responsible for the smuggling of and trafficking in persons in all countries — countries of origin, destination and transit — according to the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

“The problem of migration is a multifaceted, international one, and it is not simply limited to one country or region. Transit countries, like Libya, cannot bear the main burden for them. In order to deal with this problem, we must focus on the root causes, and not merely the symptoms. We must establish genuine development in the countries of

origin with the help of the countries of destination. We must also help the countries of origin to deal with the real reasons for migration and to confront the organizations and gangs in the countries of origin and destination that are involved in the smuggling of migrants. We must arrive at effective solutions to the problem in its current state in a preventive and sustainable way. I would like to emphasize the following with regard to the role of countries of origin and countries of destination.

“First, with regard to countries of destination, any arrangements or plans to prevent the arrival of migrants to countries of destination and to force them to return forcibly to Libya is simply a shirking of responsibility according to international law and international humanitarian law. That would jeopardize those migrants, especially in States experiencing instability. Moreover, it would place new burdens on Libyan authorities, which need logistical assistance in order to deal with the burdens of this phenomenon at present. It also needs technical assistance in order to protect its borders in a sustainable manner. We would also like to reaffirm our rejection of any attempt to resettle illegal migrants in transit countries like Libya, because that would have repercussions on the demographic composition, as well as on the social and cultural fabric, of society. It would also undermine national sovereignty, laws and international law. We ask the European Union to review its relevant policies in that regard.

“Secondly, with regard to countries of origin, we ask those countries and neighbours of Libya to work on controlling and monitoring their borders and to prevent the flow of hundreds of thousands of their citizens through their borders to Libya, which puts them in danger. We ask that they do so instead of shirking their responsibilities and attempting to throw the burden on Libya, as an unstable transit country. That is one of the burdens caused by the huge flows of illegal migrants. We ask those countries to work on repatriating those who have sneaked into Libya to their original countries in order to spare them these very dangerous illegal migration trips through desert and sea.

“Libya is currently the victim of a large-scale, false media campaign of defamation that tries to portray it as a racist country. We would like to recall that a large portion of our citizens, especially

from the south, are dark-skinned. In the past Libya has absorbed more than 2 million foreign labourers from African and Arab countries for projects in the private and public sectors, and they were treated well. Moreover, as soon as Libya stabilizes and establishes sustainable peace and security, it will absorb a similar number of our African and Arab brothers in order to work on stalled reconstruction and development projects by way of legal contracts and agreements that would guarantee the rights and responsibilities of both parties, that is, foreign labourers and Libyan authorities.

“In conclusion, if the international community were indeed serious about confronting illegal migration, or at least lessening its impact, it would stand united in confronting illegal migration and adopt an effective approach that would deal with the root causes, instead of resorting to further media escalation and defamation of Libya. Moreover, we support any measure that would impose international sanctions on smugglers and human traffickers, provided that they covered all of those involved, both inside and outside Libya, including the countries of origin, transit and destination. Moreover, we call for effective support to Libya’s stability, be it political, security or economic. We also ask that the Government of National Accord receive assistance in order to exercise its control over all Libyan territory and to protect and monitor its borders.

“We call on the African Union, for its part, to work with the African countries of origin to stop the huge illegal migration flows to Libya, which now count hundreds of thousands of people, and to repatriate detained migrants to their countries of origin. Moreover, we are waiting for the European Union to assume its responsibilities under international law and international humanitarian law and not to hold Libya responsible. Libya is experiencing a period of instability, and it should not be held responsible for the effects of an international phenomenon that it did not cause, but of which it has been the primary victim.”

That concludes the official statement of the President of the Presidency Council. I would like to make the following observations in my capacity as Chargé d’affaires.

Having just read out the official statement of the President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord, I would like to express my country's appreciation for the noble humanitarian role that is being played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in helping illegal migrants. However, I would like to point out that today we are discussing illegal migrants, who are risking their lives for economic reasons in search for a better life, and not

refugees. There is a difference between illegal migrants and refugees according to United Nations terminology and international conventions that address these issues. I would also like to reiterate the importance of the cooperation that exists between the Government of National Accord and the International Organization for Migration in order to help illegal migrants and arrive at appropriate solutions to their status.

*The meeting rose at 11 a.m.*