



# Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

**9605**<sup>th</sup> meeting  
 Tuesday, 16 April 2024, 10 a.m.  
 New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mrs. Frazier/Mr. De Bono Sant Cassia . . . . . (Malta)

*Members:*

Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Bendjama
China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. De La Gasca
France . . . . .	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Guyana . . . . .	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Yamazaki
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hyunwoo Cho
Russian Federation. . . . .	Mr. Tretiakov
Sierra Leone . . . . .	Mr. Kanu
Slovenia . . . . .	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Wood

## Agenda

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2024/301)

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in Libya**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2024/301)**

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

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

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2024/301, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Bathily.

**Mr. Bathily:** Since I invited the five key Libyan stakeholders for a dialogue to resolve all contested issues pertaining to the electoral laws and the formation of a unified Government, I have escalated my engagement with them and proposed ways to address their concerns while maintaining the integrity of the dialogue initiative that I originally proposed. Unfortunately, my attempts to address their concerns have been met with stubborn resistance, unreasonable expectations and indifference to the interests of the Libyan people. Their entrenched positions are incentivized by a divided regional and global landscape that perpetuates the status quo, which may subject Libya and the region to further instability and insecurity. Since the end of 2022, the United Nations-led efforts to help to resolve Libya's political crisis through elections have faced national and regional pushback, revealing an intentional defiance to engage

in earnest and an obstinate determination to perpetually delay elections. In that environment of entrenched positions and regional and global complexities, the challenges facing the United Nations-led efforts in Libya have become increasingly pronounced, and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has endeavoured to maintain its neutrality and integrity.

Despite our continued and extensive engagement with the main institutional actors, their persistent positions have significantly impeded efforts to advance the political process. Mr. Mohammed Takala and Prime Minister Al Dabiba nominated their representatives for the proposed dialogue, but both set preconditions that require the reopening of the electoral laws obtained by consensus after eight months of negotiations by the 6+6 joint committee of the House of Representatives and High State Council and published in the official gazette by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Mr. Takala and Mr. Al Dabiba also require the adoption of a new constitution as a prerequisite for the electoral process. Mr. Agila Saleh continues to set the formation of a new Government by the House of Representatives as his priority, arguing that it is the main legislative body that enjoys the greatest legitimacy by comparison to other Libyan institutions. Other Libyans, however, point out that the House of Representatives was elected in 2014, 10 years ago, and its term of office has therefore elapsed, as have those of other current interim institutions. General Haftar has made his participation conditional on the House of Representatives-backed Government led by Osama Hammad being invited or on Mr. Al Dabiba being disinvited — that it to say, the exclusion of either Government.

In fact, the Libyan National Army is indisputably the decision-making authority on political, military and security matters in eastern and southern Libya, and the Hammad Government is its executive wing. While UNSMIL and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes engage the House of Representatives-backed Government, especially on issues pertaining to humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction of Derna, on its own the Administration is not one of the key institutions whose buy-in is needed for a political settlement to enable elections. Extending a separate seat at the table to the House of Representatives-backed Government would effectively formalize the divisions in Libya.

As for the Government of National Unity formed as a result of an UNSMIL-facilitated process in the wake

of the Berlin international consensus in 2021, it has entrenched itself as a major player in western Libya, although it is increasingly challenged by growing rival forces. The extension of its role beyond the promised delivery of elections has exposed its limits and prompted its opponents to question its legitimacy. Nevertheless, it remains the internationally recognized Government of Libya in the current interim phase.

For UNSMIL, the selection of the five parties is based on an objective assessment of the Libyan landscape. It is cognizant of both geographical and geopolitical realities and reflects the current configuration of forces on the ground. The rivalry among those five major players is at the heart of the problem of Libya, and the dialogue proposal represents a balanced way to an inclusive solution. However, the complexities have been exacerbated by an apparent agreement between the President of the Presidential Council, Mr. Mohamed Younis Al Menfi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Saleh, and the President of the High Council of State, Mr. Takala, according to a joint statement following a trilateral meeting in Cairo on 10 March with which UNSMIL was not associated. My subsequent discussions with the leaders who participated in the Cairo meeting revealed differing interpretations of it and a lack of details on its outcome. There is also a lack of buy-in among the Libyan leaders who did not participate in the meeting. Unilateral, parallel and uncoordinated initiatives contribute to unnecessary complications and to the consolidation of the status quo. The unity of the international community under the convening role of the United Nations is key to solving the crisis in Libya.

The preconditions put forward by Libyan leaders contradict their proclaimed intention of finding a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned solution to the conflict. So far they have not demonstrated their goodwill. Concerns about the weakening of the international consensus on Libya are growing among the general population, as their country has become a playground for fierce rivalry among regional and international actors motivated by geopolitical, political and economic interests as well as competition extending beyond Libya and related to its neighbourhood. The renewed scramble among internal and external players for Libya and its position and immense resources is rendering a solution ever more elusive.

As part of my wider outreach, on 4 March I travelled to Bani Walid, in the first visit by a Special

Representative of the Secretary-General since 2012, as well as to Tarhuna and Jado on 4 and 8 April, respectively, where I engaged with local communities, tribal leaders and political activists of those marginalized western cities. I also met in Tripoli with several delegations representing the south, given the region's historic challenges in the areas of political engagement, economic inclusion and the provision of services. During those meetings, I listened to concerns about political and economic exclusion, social injustice, the plight of political prisoners and aspirations for equal rights. I also emphasized the importance of a genuine national and rights-based reconciliation for a successful political process, and urged the local populations to increase their political activism through their representatives in order to generate the necessary social pressure in support of elections. With the same objective, I also encouraged the High National Elections Commission to press on with municipal elections, which continue to be hindered by inadequate Government support for that crucial process. I appeal once more to the Government of National Unity to allocate funds for elections in all municipalities with expired or expiring mandates in 2024.

The economic situation in Libya is becoming severely strained, amid warnings from the Central Bank of Libya of an impending liquidity crisis. The temporary surcharge of up to 27 per cent on official foreign-currency exchanges approved by Mr. Saleh on 14 March, combined with the declining value of the Libyan dinar in the domestic parallel market and restricted access to foreign currencies, has noticeably fuelled public anger as concerns grow about rising prices for essential goods and services, including medical care. It is imperative that the Libyan authorities address not only the symptoms but the root causes of persistent harmful economic and financial practices, which are affecting the entire country and the welfare of the general population while enabling Libyan stakeholders to maintain the current status quo. I therefore urge the Libyan authorities to agree on a national budget without delay and to decisively address the significant deficiencies in the transparent, equitable and accountable management of State resources for the benefit of all Libyans, including in the country's marginalized areas. I will consult with the co-Chairs of the Economic Working Group on how we can provide the best support, given the pressing nature of the situation.

The world's observation on 8 March of International Women's Day emphasized how imperative it is to prioritize women's economic empowerment. Despite the significant potential for women to contribute to Libya's economy, various structural barriers impede their participation. I call urgently for intensified efforts to enable women's full engagement in the economy and ensure that both women and young people can contribute to the nation's prosperity.

The economic dimension of shifting alliances between institutional, political and security actors represents a worrisome trend with a growing potential to undermine peace and stability. That trend was especially conspicuous in western Libya, and notably in the cities of Tripoli, Misrata and Zawiya. Against that backdrop, the presence of armed actors and heavy weaponry in Libya's capital is of great concern, as it constitutes a significant threat to the safety of the civilian population. I urge all stakeholders to pursue a peaceful resolution to the growing tensions and avert any further escalation.

In addition to Zawiya, which remains volatile, tensions escalated on 18 March between armed elements of the Zuwara local communities and the Ministry of Interior's security agencies over the control of the Ra's Judayr border crossing to Tunisia. While it is legitimate for the Government to assert control over Libya's borders, dialogue with local communities is essential in order to address concerns and prevent the perception that it is pursuing factional interests.

Moreover, the continued militarization of armed actors in all those regions and military manoeuvres by the Libyan armed forces near the ceasefire line east of Sirte pose a risk to the ceasefire agreement. Any escalation of tensions in Libya would exacerbate instability — not only in Chad, the Republic of the Niger and the Sudan, but also across the wider region of the Sahel.

Despite those worrisome domestic trends, no violation of the ceasefire agreement was recorded. However, progress on implementing its outstanding provisions, particularly on the withdrawal of foreign fighters, foreign forces and mercenaries, remains hindered by the political stalemate and instability in the southern neighbouring countries of Libya, where many of the foreign fighters and mercenaries originate.

UNSMIL has enhanced coordination with the monitoring subcommittee and liaison committees of

Libya, the Niger, Chad and the Sudan, per the request of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission. A resulting joint training programme is anticipated to be launched with those entities in May in order to boost capacity, trust and coordination for the withdrawal process. The situation in the Sahel remains very worrisome with respect to that project.

I am deeply concerned about the rise in abductions, disappearances and arbitrary arrests in Libya, perpetrated by security forces with impunity in the eastern, southern and western regions. Such actions undermine fundamental freedoms and instil fear among the citizens. As legislative reforms to protect civic space is crucial, I urge the Libyan authorities to continue supporting the initiative led by the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in order to uphold human rights obligations.

I also remain deeply concerned about the dire situation of migrants and refugees in Libya, who endure human rights violations throughout the migration process. The discovery of mass graves in southern Libya on 22 March, containing the bodies of 65 migrants who died while being smuggled through the desert, is extremely distressing. While noting Libyan authorities' investigation into their death, I urge bolstered regional cooperation to ensure the protection of migrants.

Recent reports from Sabha revealed the shocking treatment of migrants in arbitrary detention, underscoring the urgent need for action by Libyan authorities in order to ease human suffering. I welcome the recent high-level meeting of the African Union-European Union-United Nations Tripartite Taskforce on the Situation of Migrants and Refugees in Libya, held in Tripoli, which highlighted Libya's migration challenges with the relevant ministers.

After the Brazzaville meeting of the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya and the subsequent African Union summit, it was agreed that a national reconciliation conference would be held in Sirte on 28 April. I am sorry to inform the Council that the conference was postponed. Divisions among Libyan leaders manifested themselves once again on this critical file. UNSMIL will continue to support the national reconciliation process, including with regard to a new date, venue, agenda and other preparations for this Conference with the African Union.

It is disheartening and it evokes a deep sense of disappointment to witness individuals in positions of

power putting their personal interests above the needs of their country. Throughout the country, Libyans of goodwill among political parties, civil society organizations, women and youth, communities, the business sector, military and security groups, as well as other components of the society, express their impatience to break the current stalemate and save their country from the dynamic of chaos and failure. The selfish resolve of current leaders to maintain the status quo through delaying tactics and manoeuvres, at the expense of the Libyan people, must stop. Libyan leaders must reach a political settlement based on negotiations and compromise. We cannot allow the aspirations of 2.8 million registered Libyan voters to be overshadowed by the narrow interests of a few. I call on the Council to heed their legitimate dream.

Security Council members must therefore uphold their responsibility in words and deeds, individually and collectively, by demonstrating unity to compel Libyan and regional stakeholders to back UNSMIL's efforts to restore unity and legitimacy to Libyan institutions through a political dialogue. Peace and stability in Libya remain ever a sine qua non for the stability of the Sahel and the wider region. More than ever, renewed and coordinated commitment among regional and international actors is imperative.

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

I now give the floor to Ambassador Yamazaki.

**Mr. Yamazaki:** In accordance with paragraph 24 (e) of resolution 1970 (2011), of 26 February 2011, I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee established pursuant to the same resolution. The report covers the period from 16 February to 15 April 2024, during which time the Committee issued a press release on the informal consultations held on 2 February and conducted its work using the silence procedure, with the aim of facilitating the implementation of the sanctions measures.

With respect to the implementation of the arms embargo measures, the Committee received one new report and one subsequent report on vessel inspections conducted by the European Naval Force Mediterranean's Operation Irini. The Committee also continued its consideration of the report on a vessel inspection conducted in October 2022. One Committee member expressed different views with regard to the matter. The Committee received two requests for exemptions to the arms embargo and one request for clarification

of a previously approved exemption. The Committee received letters from the Panel of Experts with their technical inputs on two of those requests. During the reporting period, the Committee acknowledged the communication from Libya transmitting the updated list of authorized signatories for end-user certificates and the specimen copy of their signatures.

In relation to the assets freeze, the Committee received five letters, and no negative decision was taken by the Committee in relation to five notifications, invoking paragraph 19 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011), submitted by the United Kingdom, Bahrain and Luxembourg, respectively. The Committee received a notification from Bahrain invoking paragraph 21 of resolution 1970 (2011), which is currently under consideration. The Panel of Experts has also provided their technical inputs on that request.

Furthermore, the Committee received four letters from Libya concerning certain aspects of the assets freeze, one of which contained an update to the transformation strategy of the Libyan Investment Authority. The other letters pertained to the management of certain Libyan Investment Authority assets, including the Libyan Investment Authority's short-term investment plan for preserving the value of certain Libyan Investment Authority liquid assets.

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

**The President:** I thank Ambassador Yamazaki for his briefing.

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

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily and Ambassador Yamazaki for their briefings today.

The political impasse in Libya is unsustainable. Recent clashes at the Ra's Judayr border are a reminder of the fragility of Libya's security landscape and the devastating impact any escalation could have on ordinary Libyans.

In that context, I wish to make three points this morning.

First, the only sustainable pathway to improving the security situation is through the United Nations-

facilitated political process and an inclusive political settlement. We therefore once again call on Libya's leaders to work with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General constructively and without preconditions to resolve the outstanding issues that are delaying elections. We support Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily's call for the Council and the international community to be united in support of the United Nations process.

Municipal Council elections would be an important step in the right direction, giving Libyans a voice in their leadership. I urge Libya's leaders to provide the High National Elections Commission the funding and security guarantees needed to deliver those elections as soon as possible.

Secondly, the political stalemate leaves Libya vulnerable to the influence or, as Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily put it, the fierce rivalry of external actors seeking control of the country's security and economy, risking further instability, including beyond into the Sahel. Flagrant and malign breaches of the arms embargo contribute to that, and we note reports of large Russian naval vessels delivering military supplies to the Libyan National Army on 8 and 14 April.

As we heard from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily, the political stalemate also exacerbates challenges for civil society, for free speech and for women. Basic human rights and democracy values are being undermined.

Thirdly, seven months on from September's floods, recovery and reconstruction efforts in Derna and other affected areas remain politicized. International institutions are frozen out, and access is constrained. We continue to urge Libyan authorities to agree a transparent model for recovery and reconstruction and recommend the authorities use the technical expertise offered by the United Nations Development Programme to help those Libyans who continue to suffer.

In conclusion, Libya's future prosperity is reliant on a politically stable and unified country with transparent and accountable institutions. The United Kingdom will continue to work with partners and support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya towards that aim. I call once again on Libya's leaders to engage constructively with the Special Representative of the

Secretary-General and to fulfil their responsibilities to the Libyan people.

**Mr. Žbogar** (Slovenia): I thank the Special Representative Bathily for his briefing today. We support his ongoing efforts. I also thank Ambassador Yamazaki for his briefing. I also want to welcome to the Libyan Ambassador to the Chamber.

First, Slovenia regrets the fact that there has been limited progress on the political track since we last met in the Council to discuss this situation (see S/PV.9549). We are also concerned about persisting divisions and instability. The latter should not become the norm or the status quo. We are also concerned about impressions among the population of weakening international consensus, as just reported by the Special Representative.

The only way forward is through a political path. The Libyan people want to choose their own leadership through a democratic process, and it is the responsibility of all actors to show the political will required to engage in good faith and without preconditions with the United Nations efforts and move swiftly towards elections. We call on all key leaders to nominate their representatives to engage in the Special Representative's preparatory meetings without further delay. We repeat our commitment to the unity of Libya and a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned process under United Nations auspices.

A critical element of the democratic process in Libya will be the holding of elections at the local level. We very much welcome the announcement by the High National Elections Commission of its intention to organize municipal Council elections across Libya this year. There should be no barriers to the elections taking place. We call on the Libyan authorities to do everything in their power to ensure they happen freely, fairly and safely in 2024, as envisaged. That includes disbursing the necessary funding required.

Secondly, we know very well that what happens in Libya affects the region, and what happens in the region affects Libya. And we have no doubt that the region is facing numerous significant challenges. That should inspire everyone to search for progress in political processes.

The recent return of several hundred fighters from Chad is a positive development. However, crises in Libya's neighbourhood continue to impact progress across the various tracks, including security. We recall

the need for the withdrawal of all foreign fighters, mercenaries and foreign forces from Libya.

Thirdly, we welcome all efforts to advance genuine dialogue between Libyan actors, including regional organizations and stakeholders, and the broader international community. But we note with concern the warning of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with regard to Libya's becoming a playground for rivalries.

The efforts of the international community should be fully harnessed to deliver a political transition in Libya. We also stress that those efforts should be unified and wholly complementary to the United Nations process.

I would like to make a final point. I wish to note that we were deeply distressed to learn of the discovery of a mass grave with 65 migrants' bodies in south-west Libya last month. Trafficking networks continue to exploit the most vulnerable, and our collective efforts are required to combat it. We welcome the commitment of the Libyan authorities to investigating this horrific incident, for which accountability must be ensured. We call for thorough investigations into all reported incidents of misconduct and human rights violations and abuses against migrants, including those held in Libyan detention centres. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya and United Nations bodies should have full access to those facilities.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I thank you, Madam President, and Special Representative Bathily for his extremely sobering briefing, and for his ongoing efforts to support the Libyan people in advancing a stable, secure and sovereign future for Libya. I would also like to thank Ambassador Yamazaki for his update on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya. We welcome the recent appointment of Stephanie Koury as deputy to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and hope she can bring positive momentum and a wealth of experience to the economic, security and political tracks.

On the economic front, the increasing instability evidenced by the recent drop in the value of the Libyan dinar continues to fuel the country's deepening political divisions. To ensure the provision of essential services to the Libyan people and an equitable, transparent system for the management and distribution of revenues, it is

vitaly important that Libya produce a unified budget and take steps to stabilize the currency.

On the security track, we commend the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and urge both western and eastern Libyan forces to increase their coordination efforts, which could help reduce criminality in the south and secure Libya's borders. Making progress on military unification is key to reaffirming Libyan sovereignty and preventing Libya from becoming enmeshed in regional conflict. We are closely monitoring the situations in the Niger, Chad, the Sudan and Mali — including the movement of foreign fighters and rampant arms trafficking — and its destabilizing implications for Libya. The Council's February press statement (SC/15603) showed unity of purpose in calling for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya without delay. We remain particularly concerned about the activities of the Russia-backed Wagner Group, a transnational criminal organization with no regard for Libya's sovereignty or that of its neighbours. We are also concerned about the efforts to consolidate Wagner personnel into Russia's Africa Corps.

We continue to believe that a political agreement is crucial to unlocking a viable process towards long-overdue elections, and we firmly support the United Nations Support Mission in Libya's efforts to find creative ways to get the main power brokers to the table. We renew our call on Libyan political leaders to commit to participating in the United Nations-facilitated talks. We reiterate that those who continue to delay the process have a heavy share of the blame as yet more time passes without the election of a legitimate, unified Government.

Turning to the issue of sanctions, we thank Ambassador Yamazaki for his stewardship of the Sanctions Committee and appreciate today's briefing on its activities. We remain concerned about the increase in violations of the arms embargo and the embargo on the illicit export of oil, which has necessitated a greater number of interdictions by the European Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI. We are grateful to the European Union for its dedication of resources to monitor and disrupt illicit activities off the coast of Libya. The presence and diligence of Operation IRINI are a deterrent to would-be smugglers. Its efforts also facilitate information-sharing and bolster our knowledge about trafficking off the coast of Libya. The uptick in interdictions sends a clear signal that

Operation IRINI's mandate remains relevant and necessary, and we will support the penholders, France and Malta, in renewing the vessel inspection mandate in June. We encourage other Member States to support and inform efforts to implement the arms and oil embargoes. Those who violate them are complicit in the deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in Libya.

Finally, we welcome the Panel of Experts' identification and investigation of individuals and entities involved in violations of the arms embargo and other United Nations-mandated sanctions. We are committed to using sanctions to deter threats to peace and stability in Libya.

**Mr. Tretiakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), as well as the Permanent Representative of Japan, Mr. Yamazaki, for their briefings.

In the light of the continuing duality of power in Libya, we are compelled to conclude that there are no prospects for a sustainable settlement. The ongoing internal political stagnation is degrading security, generally eroding order and leading to growing public discontent. Those negative trends indicate how essential it is to redouble efforts to find a solution based on the well-known principles of a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned process, under the auspices of the United Nations, without the imposition of artificial frameworks or external solutions, and with the participation of representatives of all political and tribal groupings in the country, including representatives of the former authorities. It will be crucial to focus on providing support without making decisions for them.

There is no question that it is important for all interested international and regional players at this stage to support the work of UNSMIL, the main United Nations instrument in the country, in launching an inclusive intra-Libyan dialogue that should ultimately result in the formation of a unified Government capable of holding presidential and parliamentary elections throughout the country and the creation of the necessary security conditions for that. As a matter of principle, we reiterate our support for Mr. Bathily's efforts in that regard. We believe that holding simultaneous parliamentary and presidential elections would be

preferable from the point of view of preserving a stable situation in the former Jamahiriya.

However, it would seem unwise to completely disregard the initiatives of regional organizations and countries, because they are working for the same goals in the long term. We emphasize how important it is to maintain the work of the 6+6 joint committee in developing electoral legislation. In that regard, we welcome Egypt's readiness to assist Libyan parliamentarians in finding a compromise. We sincerely hope that the House of Representatives and the High State Council will soon agree on a common understanding of the outcome of the meeting in Bouznika, Morocco. We also appreciate the efforts to organize a pan-Libyan conference on national reconciliation under the auspices of the African Union, which will help to overcome mistrust among the broadest possible spectrum of Libyan political forces and could facilitate a consensus on many problematic issues, including those related to the preparation and convening of presidential and parliamentary elections. We are eagerly awaiting that event.

Although there have been no ceasefire violations in Libya, the situation is far from ideal. The security situation is extremely fragile, as we saw from the recent fighting in Tripoli and other cities and on the Libyan-Tunisian border. The fact that cells of international and regional terrorist structures are strengthening their positions in the country is also alarming. The efforts to create the conditions necessary for integrating the country's disparate military components into a unified Libyan army must continue, a task that requires considerable effort and political will. Another important area is the eventual elimination of the foreign military presence on Libyan soil. We advocate for a synchronized, balanced, gradual and step-by-step withdrawal of all non-Libyan armed groups and military units.

In addition, we are concerned about reported violations of the Libyan arms embargo. We emphasize the importance of the operation of the special inspection regime in the open sea off the coast of Libya that was introduced in accordance with resolution 2292 (2016). Unfortunately, we cannot say the same about the work of the European Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, whose activities have been raising serious questions for more than a year regarding its geographic scope, its functionality, accountability and the conformity of its actions with the mandate of



resolution 2292 (2016). The mandate of this inspection regime is up for renewal in early June. Our work on the draft resolution will be based on our view of IRINI's actions with regard to facilitating the implementation of the arms embargo.

In conclusion, we cannot ignore our United States colleague's insinuations about the so-called Russian presence on Libyan territory. Let me put things in perspective for him. Russia has always taken active steps to normalize the situation, both through multilateral formats under the auspices of the United Nations and bilaterally. We opposed NATO's 2011 adventurism in Libya and had nothing to do with the collapse of the country. We have continued to maintain constructive contacts with all Libyan stakeholders, urging them to engage in dialogue and compromise. I want to repeat that where the question of ending the foreign military presence in Libya is concerned, we support doing it in a synchronized, balanced and phased manner.

We believe that the supplies of weapons and mercenaries that are destabilizing the country must cease. The situation has been going on since the beginning of the conflict in 2011, when an illegal NATO aggression resulted in the collapse of Libyan statehood. Now we are seeing a new twist, in which it is Washington that is expanding its military presence in the former Jamahiriya while cynically pointing fingers at us. There is widely available information in open sources about the expanding activity on Libyan territory of the private American military company Amentum, formerly DynCorp. In particular, we are told that its specialists are training some units in western Libya. And by the way, the company is a United States Department of Defence contractor. While the training of Libyan troops itself is a good thing, Libya still has no unified armed forces. In the circumstances, training only one of Libya's armed groups, without due Government control, raises questions regarding the task of unifying the country and rebuilding its security apparatus.

We would like to ask the United States representative what exactly that military company is doing in Libya, on what basis it is present there, and how its work squares with the arms embargo on Libya. We can also assume that the American personnel stationed around Tripoli are armed. Bringing lethal weapons into Libya, even for the Government's needs, requires authorization by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), but the Committee has received no such requests.

**Mr. Yamazaki (Japan):** I would like to deliver the following remarks in my national capacity.

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his insightful and sobering update on the situation in Libya. I also welcome Ambassador El-Sonni, the Permanent Representative of Libya, to today's meeting. Today I would like to make three points.

First, the continued political impasse has to be addressed. The lack of progress in the political process is having a negative effect on Libya's economic, social and security situation as well as regional stability. While Japan welcomes the regional efforts and initiatives to bring stakeholders together to discuss a way forward, we underscore that those efforts should be concerted under United Nations auspices, promoting a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process. It is vital for the international community to fully support the initiative of the Special Representative. Japan urges the major political stakeholders to put the aspirations of the Libyan people above their own interests for the sake of peace and stability in Libya and to nominate their representatives to the preparatory meetings without delay or preconditions. In that connection, we welcome the Special Representative's continued commitment to ensuring inclusivity in the process by engaging not only with political parties and security actors but also with civil society, including women and young people.

Inclusivity is also critical to the reconciliation process. Achieving inclusive and rights-based national and local reconciliation by ensuring justice and accountability is the foundation for sustainable peace and stability. Progress in the reconciliation process will also contribute to and complement the effort on the political track led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Secondly, as we saw in the recent armed clashes in Tripoli, Zawiya and near a border crossing between Tunisia and Libya, the persistent insecurity is worrisome. It will be vital to accelerate the coordination and cooperation aimed at unifying the security and military institutions in the east and west of the country and withdrawing all foreign forces, fighters and mercenaries.

Thirdly, Japan remains deeply disturbed about the humanitarian and human rights situation in Libya. The reports of widespread violations of international law, including human rights law, and excessive control over civil society and people with dissenting views are

alarming. The serious risks posed by trafficking and other criminal networks on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers must also be urgently addressed. On that note, Japan looks forward to the discussion tomorrow at the signature event under Malta's presidency on the role of young persons in addressing security challenges in the Mediterranean.

Let me conclude by reiterating Japan's belief that the attainment of political stability through the establishment of a unified and legitimate Government is key to sustainable peace and stability and economic and social development in Libya. We remain committed in supporting Libya in that endeavour.

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Special Representative and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) for their briefings. I welcome the participation of the representative of Libya this morning. I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, our collective priority must be relaunching the political process in Libya. France reiterates its support for Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. His mediation is essential to enabling Libya to move towards free, transparent and inclusive presidential and legislative elections throughout its territory. We also encourage all Libyan actors to commit to dialogue in good faith under the auspices of the United Nations. France welcomes the efforts of the Libyans who are mobilizing to relaunch the political process, including with the support of regional organizations. We also call on the Libyan authorities to enable the High National Elections Commission to organize municipal elections in 2024, as they represent an important stage in the democratic life of the country. All of those efforts must be guided by the goal of restoring unity in Libya. The status quo is no longer acceptable for the Libyan people, and the political process must be relaunched for a new unified Government that is capable of leading the country into elections. To that end, the adoption of a unified budget and the transparent management of national resources are essential.

On the security front, France remains ready to support the efforts of Libyan actors working to unify the army, under the auspices of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the two Chiefs of Staff. As co-Chair of the dedicated group, and with the support of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL),

we would like to bring those actors together as soon as possible in order to move towards that goal.

France remains very concerned about major human rights violations in Libya, in particular the reported forced disappearances, arrests, arbitrary detentions and excessive control of civil society detailed by the Secretary-General (S/2024/301). The violations must cease and those responsible must be held to account. We are also concerned about the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and we encourage the Libyan authorities to cooperate with UNSMIL, United Nations agencies and the European Union.

France will continue to support Libya's stability. Security tensions remain significant, and the political vacuum is only benefiting militias and enabling foreign interference, which is destabilizing to the country and the entire region. Recent tensions between militias in the capital attest to the urgent need for a political and security transition in Libya. In that context, France emphasizes the importance of fully implementing the October 2020 ceasefire. We reiterate our call for the withdrawal of all foreign fighters, foreign forces and mercenaries from Libyan territory, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. France is also working to support stability in the region, as evidenced by the international humanitarian conference on the Sudan that we co-chaired yesterday in Paris, along with Germany and the European Union.

Finally, as always, we will be working in a constructive spirit with all the members of the Council, alongside Malta, to renew the European Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI in June.

**Mr. Kanu** (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African members of the Security Council, namely, Algeria, Mozambique and my country, Sierra Leone, together with Guyana (A3+).

The A3+ thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily for his update on the situation in Libya. We would also like to thank Ambassador Yamazaki, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), for his briefing on the work of the Committee. We recognize and welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Libya in today's meeting.

The A3+ remains firmly committed to a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous Libya. As the Council

holds another briefing on the situation in Libya, we will focus on several issues.

On the political situation, we note with grave concern that even now, 13 years since the start of the crisis, Libya remains in a political stalemate. The country continues to grapple with a deepening political impasse and instability, beset by internal divisions. With no new dates set for parliamentary and presidential elections, we believe that this situation will heighten political instability and further undermine the State's ability to rebuild its institutions.

Today Libyans are still hopeful for progress towards credible and successful elections that will put the country on the path to national reconciliation. Libyans do not need any more good rhetoric. They need action, and they need it now. This process is taking too long, and the current fragile political situation is a recipe for chaos and insecurity.

In that context, the A3+ reiterates its call on all stakeholders to support, fully engage with Special Representative Bathily's mediation efforts and, without further delay, to reach consensus on electoral laws and hold elections that will help to restore political, security and economic stability to the country. That should be done in an inclusive manner, with agreement on the way forward to sustainable development, stability, prosperity, peace and a democratic future for all Libyans. We therefore encourage Special Representative Bathily to continue engaging Libyan actors for the resumption of political discussions that will deliver progress towards elections.

We also appeal to all political leaders to participate in good faith and support the Organization's mediation role and to constructively engage in meetings convened by Special Representative Bathily in order to address unresolved matters for a successful conduct of credible and fair elections.

In essence, the focus is on fostering dialogue, resolving issues and ensuring a successful electoral process. In that regard, we call on the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to leverage their good offices in developing a clear and time-bound plan for an effective political process. That plan should aim to expedite the end of all transitional periods and culminate in national elections.

We take note of the meeting held on 10 March at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the League

of Arab States. We also stress the imperative for convergence and complementarity of the ongoing efforts by international and regional organizations so as to avoid the duplication of efforts in Libya.

On the security situation, the A3+ expresses concern regarding the persistent tensions and sporadic clashes among armed groups in Libya, despite the hold of the 2020 ceasefire agreement, a fact that we positively note.

Additionally, it is crucial to acknowledge that some external actors have significantly contributed to Libya's instability. Those actors have funnelled money and weapons to various proxies, placing their personal interests above the well-being of the Libyan population. That exacerbation has further complicated Libya's path towards ending violent conflict and establishing stable State institutions.

Mindful of the negative impact of those external actors, the A3+ reiterates that the withdrawal of all foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya is a matter of urgency. Their departure is crucial for a favourable and conducive environment for advancing the ongoing political process, establishing security and stability in Libya and preserving its unity, independence and territorial integrity.

The reconciliation process in Libya is a critical step towards healing the wounds in Libyan society and promoting national unity. We therefore encourage all Libyans to engage in this process wholeheartedly and work towards forgiveness, understanding and mutual respect. In that regard, we emphasize the need for good preparations in order to ensure the success of the upcoming reconciliation conference. We also urge all parties to support that process. In that regard, we welcome the role that the African Union has been playing through its High-Level Committee on Libya.

On the humanitarian front, the A3+ reiterates the need to ease access to humanitarian aid for the benefit of the population and calls on all Libyan leaders to rise to their responsibility and unite in their efforts, including through managing the reconstruction of Derna and other flood-affected areas.

We also reiterate our deep concern about the continued dire situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Libya, who continue to be exposed to serious protection risks. Deportations and collective

expulsions of migrants and asylum seekers in inhumane conditions are also of great concern.

We therefore continue to urge the Libyan authorities, with the support of the international community, to work effectively to improve the plight of migrants and refugees in Libya, consider alternatives to detention and hold perpetrators of violations accountable.

On sanctions, A3+ would like to recall the importance of safeguarding and returning Libya's frozen assets. Those funds should be redirected towards supporting the Libyan people and rebuilding the country. In that regard, it is crucial to preserve their integrity and value, ensuring that they serve only the interests of Libyans.

In conclusion, the A3+ reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the resilient people of Libya during these challenging times. We firmly believe that they will overcome the obstacles they face. To that end, it is crucial that effective and genuine political will guide Libya towards peace, stability and a brighter future.

**Mr. Hyunwoo Cho** (Republic of Korea): I too thank Special Representative Bathily and Ambassador Yamazaki for their briefings, and I welcome the participation of the Libyan delegation at today's meeting.

Libya is at a critical juncture in its political process and its endeavours to achieve a stable and prosperous democracy. It is regrettable that we continue to witness the delay of the presidential and parliamentary elections, a crucial step to lay the groundwork for the whole political process in Libya.

Meanwhile, ordinary people are facing the ever-deepening socioeconomic challenges caused by the delayed political process and the lack of unified national governance. A series of recent clashes, involving local armed groups, demonstrates the fragile security situation in Libya.

At this critical moment, delegation underlines several points.

First, key Libyan leaders should respond, without preconditions, to Special Representative's efforts to advance the political process, particularly by nominating representatives to the preparatory meeting for resolving outstanding issues on draft electoral laws.

Any unilateral initiative in pursuit of narrow political interests will endanger the long-overdue political process in Libya, frustrating the aspiration

of Libyans towards democracy, led by leaders of their choosing. It is high time that all relevant parties prioritize national interests ahead of their own self interests.

In the same vein, my delegation emphasizes that all relevant authorities should support the Libyan High National Elections Commission's efforts to organize local elections this year, as announced in January, by allocating adequate budgets and guaranteeing a secure environment.

We expect that the sustained national reconciliation efforts, in tandem with the political process and based on the principles of transitional justice and accountability, will pave the way for lasting peace and security in Libya. In that regard, it is disappointing to hear that the convening of a national reconciliation conference, supported by the African Union, has been postponed.

Secondly, Libyan authorities should pursue economic and fiscal reforms for a transparent, equitable and accountable management of State resources and should continue to make efforts to reunify the Central Bank of Libya. The recent Secretary-General report (S/2024/301) on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) shows a series of symptoms indicating a potential economic crisis.

The recent protests by the Libyan population are largely motivated by the accumulated degradation of living standards, which has been further compounded by the recent sharp depreciation of the Libyan dinar. The grievances of the local population are also simmering as national resources for reconstruction in eastern Libya, affected by the devastating flood in September 2023, are not being distributed in an equitable and transparent manner. In that regard, my delegation echoes the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's call for a coordinated national platform for reconstruction of flood-affected areas.

Thirdly, United Nations Member States must fulfil their responsibility in implementing the sanctions put in place to ensure a successful political transition and maintain peace and security in Libya. As vividly shown by the report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) last year (see S/2023/673), violations of the arms embargo are rampant through the country's porous borders, particularly through borders with the Sudan and Mediterranean routes, threatening the already precarious regional stability. In that vein, my Government fully supports the European Naval Force's Operation IRINI responding

to illegal arms and oil transactions and emphasizes the importance of Member States' strong support for the Panel of Experts' activities.

Last but not least, coherent international efforts are essential to protect the human rights of migrants and refugees in Libya, as well as to holistically address the root causes of the transborder challenge. Every year, thousands of people tragically die while crossing the Mediterranean Sea; and tens of thousands of people are intercepted and returned to Libyan shores, then subject to harsh detention in the dire environment. In that regard, my delegation calls on the Libyan authorities to cooperate with United Nations agencies to hold accountable those who are responsible for human rights violations within detention centres and to allow unrestricted humanitarian access to such facilities.

In conclusion, my delegation emphasizes the importance of sustained reforms in the political, economic and security sectors and also supports the crucial role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNSMIL in facilitating a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Special Representative Abdoulaye Bathily and Ambassador Yamazaki for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of our dear colleague the representative of Libya in this meeting.

I would like to address three points.

First, with regard to the political situation, we cannot repeat enough that it remains necessary to find a compromise so that free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections can be held. In that respect, we reiterate our call for a more coherent approach by the international community, which must act in support of the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). In the absence of a genuine compromise that is both inclusive and unifying, Libyans' legitimate aspirations for elections and peace will be hindered. Switzerland therefore calls on all Libyan actors to further engage in dialogue in good faith and without preconditions under the auspices of the United Nations good offices.

Secondly, the success of the political process depends on the creation of an enabling environment. That requires respect for human rights and an immediate cessation of the repression of human rights defenders. Furthermore, the silencing of the

voices of journalists, academics and members of civil society constitutes a serious attack on the freedom of expression. Switzerland, as co-Chair of the Working Group on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights of the Berlin process, continues to engage with various partners who are equally concerned about the continued shrinking of civic space in Libya. Moreover, the success of the political process is complementary to an inclusive national reconciliation process, based on the rule of law and centred on the victims. We therefore actively support initiatives to promote reconciliation, such as the conference on transitional justice on 26 February, organized by the Presidential Council and UNSMIL. In that respect, we note the commitment of the Presidential Council in the run-up to and at the conference.

Finally, I would like to mention the migration situation in Libya. Tomorrow the Council will discuss the issue of security in the Mediterranean. That topic is closely linked to the situation of migrants in or passing through Libya. Switzerland is alarmed by the discovery of at least 65 bodies of migrants in a mass grave in south-west Libya and condemns the perpetrators of those crimes. They must be held accountable. The discovery reminds us of the urgent need for a coordinated response to migrant smuggling and human trafficking in Libya.

The political status quo in Libya is unsustainable. The armed clashes that took place in Tripoli last week and the tensions that led to the closure of the Ra's Judayr border crossing are a symptom of the growing instability. Such instability is in no way in the interests of the population.

Yesterday's sad anniversary of the conflict in the Sudan, which also has a devastating impact on the region, shows the urgent need to prevent an escalation in Libya and to commit to a political process. That requires a more coherent international community, genuine transitional justice and greater stability. That is why Switzerland will continue its involvement in Libya.

**Mr. De La Gasca** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative Bathily and the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Yamazaki, for their briefings. I also welcome the representative of Libya to this meeting.

I would also like to recognize the recent appointment of Ms. Stephanie Koury as Deputy Special Representative and thank the Secretary-General for preparing the report (S/2024/301) for this meeting.

My delegation will focus its statement on the following points.

First, the political stalemate has prevented the realization of the aspiration of the Libyan people for a return to democracy through free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections. Ecuador hopes that the Libyan actors renew their commitment to participate, without preconditions, in a political agreement that paves the way for the holding of presidential and legislative elections. In that context, my country is considering with interest the initiative of the League of Arab States to facilitate dialogue and resolve issues related to the holding of elections, which we believe should be complementary to the process put forward by the Special Representative.

Secondly, the establishment of a unified Government and addressing the economic challenges it faces, including the rebuilding of the areas affected by Storm Daniel and the management of its resources, are indispensable for the future of peace and stability in Libya. Therefore, Ecuador stresses the importance of the efforts of the Presidential Council to advance the national reconciliation process, which is supported by the African Union, and will closely follow the developments with regard to the national reconciliation conference, which was scheduled for 28 April in Sirte, Libya, but which has been postponed.

Thirdly, in the area of security, the tensions and clashes between armed groups and security forces in different regions of the country are a cause for concern, the most recent event being a clash between armed groups in Tripoli on 11 April. Ecuador encourages the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to continue to support the efforts of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission in implementing the 2020 ceasefire agreement and supports the Special Representative's call for security actors to create an environment conducive to the holding of elections.

Finally, the International Organization for Migration reported the recent discovery, in a mass grave in south-western Libya, of at least 65 bodies of migrants, who reportedly died while being transported across the desert by traffickers. Ecuador reiterates its call to the Libyan authorities, in cooperation with the international community and partners in the region, to protect the rights of those people and to dismantle the trafficking networks operating in their country.

**Mr. Dai Bing** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Bathily and Ambassador Kazuyuki Yamazaki, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, for their briefings, and I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya in this meeting.

Recently, the parties in Libya have continued to engage in dialogue on the electoral process. A number of points of consensus have been reached. China notes that the League of Arab States convened a conference on Libya in Cairo in March to encourage the Libyan parties to discuss issues such as the establishment of a technical committee and the formation of a unified Government. China hopes that all parties in Libya will act in the overall interests of the country by continuing to address their differences through dialogue and consultation and to make progress in the political process. China supports the mediation efforts of Special Representative Bathily and hopes that the United Nations Support Mission in Libya will uphold the Libyan-led and -owned principle and play a constructive role in promoting dialogue and consultation. When attending the Arab League meeting on Libya, the Libyan parties reiterated their opposition to external interference in Libya's political process. China calls on the international community to heed the voices and concerns of the Libyan parties, respect Libya's sovereignty and territorial integrity and refrain from imposing external solutions. China calls on external armed forces and mercenaries to withdraw from Libya as soon and in a smooth and orderly manner.

At the same time, we note that the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya is actively encouraging Libya to hold a national reconciliation conference. China commends the Republic of Congo for its important role and supports its efforts to find African solutions to African problems. China hopes that the conference will be held as soon as possible and that all parties in Libya will seize this opportunity to advance the peace and reconciliation process, build consensus for unity and solidarity and give new impetus for Libya's political transition and long-term development.

The security situation in Libya remains complex and grave. Recently, multiple clashes erupted in Tripoli and Zawiyah, and some armed forces have accelerated their military exercises and upgraded their combat readiness. That is a cause for concern for China, and we call on all parties in Libya to exercise restraint, enhance communication and mutual trust within the framework

of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, resolve conflicts and differences and maintain the hard-won peace.

In March, 65 migrant bodies were found in mass graves in south-western Libya. In recent years, there have been frequent tragic maritime incidents involving migrants and refugees along the coast of Libya, which is heartbreaking. China urges relevant European countries to approach the migrant and refugee issue with an open and inclusive mindset and to protect the right to life and human rights of such migrants and refugees. The international community should provide constructive support to Libya in order to help the country improve its management of migrants and refugees and scale up its humanitarian assistance.

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

I thank Special Representative Bathily and the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya.

Libya continues to suffer from a state of political paralysis that prevents Libyan citizens from being able to choose their own leaders. We continue to be supportive of all efforts that seek to advance a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process, under United Nations auspices.

Overcoming the impasse and conducting free, fair, transparent, inclusive and secure elections requires compromise and political consensus. To that end, we underline our steadfast support to the Special Representative and his efforts to facilitate inclusive dialogue towards that common goal. At a time of continued paralysis, reiterating our collective support for the Special Representative's efforts remains crucial. The key Libyan stakeholders must be guided by the overarching national interests and constructively engage with that initiative, including with regard to attaching certain preconditions to their participation.

It is fundamental that any regional efforts or initiatives run complementary to, and do not undermine, the efforts of the United Nations process. We equally underline the need for Libyan authorities to support the High National Elections Commission in organizing municipal elections this year. The Commission must be provided with the necessary funding and resources in a timely manner.

Malta stresses that any such political process must also ensure the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women as voters, candidates and observers. It must equally include the views of all Libyan stakeholders and facilitate the active, meaningful and inclusive participation of young persons and civil society.

Such a whole-of-society approach must also be mirrored on the national reconciliation front. We hope that the efforts to hold a national reconciliation conference are successful and commend the work of the African Union to that end. This is an important milestone that provides opportunity for broader political agreement while simultaneously advancing peace and stability across Libya. The fragile political environment creates a precarious security context where tensions and sporadic clashes continue to occur.

Recent armed clashes in Tripoli and nearby Ra's Judayr are concerning examples. We also call for the full implementation of the announcement regarding security arrangements in Tripoli post-Ramadan, as that should lead to greater stability. The continued work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and other measures that seek to stabilize the security situation require our full support. We remind all parties of their obligations under international law to ensure the protection of civilians and to safeguard their human rights.

Libya's insecurity is only worsened by the continued presence of foreign fighters, foreign forces and mercenaries, whose full withdrawal should be prioritized, and by the proliferation of weapons under the control of various State and non-State actors. That serves to underline the enduring importance of implementing the Libyan arms embargo and the crucial role played by the European Naval Force Mediterranean's Operation IRINI in that regard. We look forward to renewing resolution 2684 (2023), which authorizes such measures, by the end of May.

While discussing the sanctions regime, we stress our belief that the assets freeze is meant to exist for the benefit of Libya and its people. Libyan funds held abroad must continue to be identified, frozen and declared for eventual repatriation.

We strongly support the work of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and UNICEF on child protection. In that context, we welcome the commitment of the Ministry of Defence of the Government of National Unity to develop new laws to protect children

and to criminalize the recruitment and use of children, and we encourage the authorities to swiftly adopt and implement such laws.

I conclude by reiterating Malta's support for all efforts seeking a unified Libya. That is the only way to ensure that Libya advances on the path to long-term stability and prosperity for all its citizens.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Libya.

**Mr. El-Sonni** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, and the delegation of Malta on your assumption of the Security Council presidency for the current month. I also thank Mr. Bathily for his briefing, and I thank the representative of Japan for his briefing on behalf of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya.

The world these days is experiencing complex and multiple crises, especially over the past six months. We all bear witness to the scope of the tragedies and genocide being perpetrated against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, which have removed many masks and exposed double standards. The Council continues to be unable to enforce the implementation of its resolutions on a ceasefire, including its most recent resolution 2728 (2024). Will the Zionist entity be placed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations because it did not implement those resolutions and continues to threaten civilians and violate international humanitarian law?

I know that members are surprised because I began my statement by speaking about the situation in Palestine, since this meeting is about the situation in Libya. I am simply reminding members of their responsibilities to the world in maintaining international peace and security and reminding those who proclaim slogans of justice and human rights, for we still hear some who preach to us and criticize the situation in our country, giving us lessons on the principles of humanity and democracy while at the same time turning a blind eye to the scenes of killing and destruction in Gaza, covering their ears against the screams of women and children buried under the rubble and remaining silent without speaking the truth and distinguishing between the aggressor and the aggressed, between the oppressor

and the oppressed and between a resistance fighter who defends himself and those who usurp his land.

More than 13 years have passed since my country was placed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, amid circumstances that we are all aware of. Nine Special Envoys have dealt with us. The questions that Libyans always ask are: how long this situation will last? What will the Security Council do following its inability over all those years to overcome its division and put an end to direct and indirect interference in our country? That interference has been exacerbated and led us to the situation that we face today.

The Libyan people are following Council meetings, but they are well aware that these meetings will not amount to anything new, with the exception of some statements and repeated speeches. The political boxing match inside the Security Council will continue while waiting for the next meeting and the meeting after, but unfortunately nothing will be different from those that preceded them. Why? Because adopted resolutions are not implemented and those who obstruct their implementation will not be exposed, be they individuals or States. Please remind me: when was the last time that any obstructing side was placed on a sanctions list?

Members speak of the flow of weapons into my country and the role of the Sanctions Committee, and I truly pity those who have chaired it over the years. Libya is now exporter of weapons, via smuggling and other means. What does the Council do when confronted with that? Nothing. Members are well aware of how weapons enter Libya and from where. Now therefore is a good time to save face and remove Libya from Chapter VII and put an end to the sanctions, because it is pointless to stay where we are. Maybe then we would find for ourselves — and by ourselves — the means to a solution and a way out of this crisis. With the determination of our people, we could put an end to all forms of external interference.

In that context, despite the fact that we repeatedly talked about the importance of the United Nations role in mediation and finding practical solutions to the crisis, the time has come to truly support genuine national initiatives. As we always hear from the Council, it is important to support Libyan ownership and leadership of a solution, as that is the only way to put an end to the current crisis and end the vicious cycle in our country. Therefore, it is important that any initiative be



practical and effective and can be implemented within a set timeline, with the aim of settling controversial and unresolved issues and holding national elections — transparent, fair and held according to just laws that can be implemented — whose results can be respected by all, so that we can put an end to the fragile transitional stages and then build the executive and legislative institutions of a unified State that will have legitimacy from the people.

National reconciliation, rebuilding trust and repairing our social fabric are the most important steps that will put Libyans on the right path towards a comprehensive solution. Without that we cannot arrive at true reconciliation and all proposed political solutions will remain fragile and incomplete.

We have many examples to cite from earlier experience. National reconciliation was not accorded due attention over the past years, even in the various United Nations initiatives, because each time efforts were made to create multiple and parallel tracks that never met. No attention was paid to building a strong foundation. In our opinion, that foundation is national reconciliation. In that regard, it is worth noting that we

know that the path to national reconciliation is difficult and long. But to get there we can start by agreeing on a social contract, a foundation to build trust among everyone as a way to bolster the political process and other processes.

We call on everyone to support the efforts of the Presidential Council and the African Union. We hope that the United Nations can play a complementary role through its initiatives so that we can achieve that important national requirement, which continues to face challenges, while bearing in mind the concerns of all Libyan stakeholders, with their different political positions, so that national reconciliation serves as the foundation that can be used to support all other tracks facing complications, whether political, military, security or economic in nature, with the main goal of holding elections, which all Libyans seek equally.

**The President:** There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.*