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United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2510 \(2020\)](#), [2542 \(2020\)](#), [2570 \(2021\)](#), [2647 \(2022\)](#), [2656 \(2022\)](#) and [2702 \(2023\)](#), covers political, security and economic developments in Libya. It provides an overview of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the country and the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) since the issuance of the previous report ([S/2023/967](#)), dated 7 December 2023.

II. Political and security-related developments

2. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of UNSMIL, Abdoulaye Bathily, pursued his efforts to convene the main Libyan actors under UNSMIL auspices to facilitate a political settlement that would pave the way for the holding of transparent and inclusive presidential and legislative elections. Unfortunately, limited progress was made on the political track as some of those actors did not nominate their representatives for the preparatory meetings or set preconditions for their participation. The Special Representative also continued his outreach to Libyan civil society, including women, young people, political parties, security actors, notables and tribal leaders, professional associations and academics, to make the political track more inclusive. In addition, he continued his engagement with security actors across Libya to discuss ways to mitigate the risk of spillover from crises in neighbouring countries and to establish the conditions for a safe environment for elections.

3. The deadlock in the political process, coupled with a deteriorating economy, led to protests in various locations in western Libya, primarily Misratah and Zawiyah, against the Government of National Unity. In a statement issued on 29 February 2024, 76 members of the House of Representatives and 51 members of the High State Council called for the launch of a political process on the basis of the deliberations of the “6+6” joint committee and the formation, under United Nations auspices, of a new national government to organize and supervise the conduct of elections (see [S/2023/248](#), paras. 5 and 13; and [S/2023/967](#), paras. 10, 11 and 40).

4. Tensions between Libyan actors and institutions in the east and the west continued in the aftermath of Storm Daniel, which hit eastern Libya in September



2023, including because of disagreement over the management of reconstruction funds. At a press conference on 3 January, the Attorney-General, Siddiq Al Sour, announced that investigations had found negligence in the maintenance of the two dams that had collapsed in Darnah on 10 and 11 September 2023, and that proposals for the construction of a third dam had been ignored. To date, 16 officials, including the mayor of Darnah, had been charged with malpractice. Of those, 14 remained in pretrial detention and 2 had fled the country. Demonstrations were also reported in several locations in southern Libya, during which demands were made for improved infrastructure and public services, in particular the supply of electricity and fuel. In the western region, demonstrations took place in Tripoli on 11 March and Misrata on 19 March, amid the decline in the value of the Libyan dinar, limitations on access to foreign currencies and an unpopular surcharge imposed on official currency sales.

A. Implementation of the intra-Libyan dialogue tracks

5. On the political track, none of the five main Libyan actors rejected the Special Representative's invitation to meet under UNSMIL auspices to reach a negotiated political settlement, but some set preconditions to attend the meeting. On 16 December, the President of the Presidential Council, Mohamed Younis Menfi; the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh; and the General Commander of the Libyan National Army, General Khalifa Haftar, issued a joint statement welcoming the UNSMIL dialogue initiative on the condition that the participants' concerns were addressed. On 18 December, the Prime Minister, together with the President of the High State Council, Mohammed Takala, and the two Vice Presidents of the Presidential Council, Abdullah Al Lafi and Ibrahim Al Koni, also issued a joint statement indicating that they had accepted the invitation to the dialogue without preconditions.

6. The Speaker and General Khalifa Haftar insisted on either including representatives of the Government designated by the House of Representatives in the dialogue initiative or excluding both the Government designated by the House of Representatives and the Government of National Unity. In addition, the Speaker asked that negotiations focus on the formation of a new unified government. The President of the High State Council continued to reject the revised electoral laws adopted by the House of Representatives, while the Prime Minister continued to affirm that the Government of National Unity would only step down following the successful completion of the electoral process.

7. The President of the High State Council and the Prime Minister designated their representatives to attend a preparatory meeting, as did the two Vice Presidents of the Presidential Council, yet General Khalifa Haftar, the Speaker and the President of the Presidential Council did not. The President of the Presidential Council indicated that he did not consider himself a party to the dialogue and viewed his role as that of a facilitator.

8. In a statement to mark the country's Independence Day, on 24 December, the Special Representative called on Libyan leaders to come together to resolve all outstanding issues and proceed with the holding of national elections. He also encouraged all segments of society to urge their leaders to place the aspirations of the Libyan people above partisan interests and choose the path of peace, unity and democracy for the country.

9. The Special Representative held multiple rounds of consultations with the President of the Presidential Council, the Prime Minister, the Speaker and his Deputies, the President of the High State Council and his Vice Presidents, and General Khalifa Haftar to encourage their engagement in the proposed dialogue initiative. In

his exchanges, the Special Representative stressed the need to accelerate collective efforts towards creating the conditions for inclusive and transparent elections. He also warned of the potential consequences if the parties failed to reach an agreement and urged leaders to come together in the spirit of compromise for the sake of peace and stability in Libya.

10. In line with his commitment to an inclusive political process, the Special Representative held consultations with a broad range of political, economic, security and civil society actors. In Benghazi on 11 and 12 December, the Special Representative met with representatives of political parties and social councils, respectively, who shared their perspectives on ways to build intra-Libyan consensus to advance the political process. At a meeting with UNSMIL in Tripoli on 13 December, 15 youth activists, including 9 women, shared their proposals to overcome the political deadlock. In addition, they recommended introducing a youth quota in parliament and other measures to enable young people to contribute to shaping the future of Libya. On 14 March, the Special Representative visited Bani Walid, where he met with members of the municipal council and the social council, as well as representatives of academia, political parties, women and youth groups, all of whom shared their sense of marginalization and reported on their efforts towards reconciliation.

11. The difference of views between the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the High State Council over the electoral laws adopted in October 2023 became evident to the public in January and February. In a 28 January letter to the Special Representative, the President of the High State Council outlined how the electoral laws adopted by the House of Representatives infringed on the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement. For his part, on 30 January, the Speaker called on UNSMIL to advance the political track on the basis of the revised electoral laws issued by the House of Representatives. On 3 February, the President of the High State Council publicly reiterated that the laws had been issued without the requisite political consensus of the two chambers, and that new electoral legislation had to be agreed upon before the formation of a unified government.

12. On 10 March, the President of the Presidential Council, the Speaker and the President of the High State Council met in Cairo, under the auspices of the League of Arab States. At the joint press conference, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, stated that the objective of the meeting was to facilitate Libyan-Libyan dialogue and resolve contentious issues related to conducting presidential and parliamentary elections. In the final communiqué, the three interlocutors agreed, *inter alia*, to establish a technical committee “to consider the appropriate amendments to expand the basis of consensus of the work of the 6+6 Committee and resolve the outstanding issues regarding controversial points according to the legislation in force.” The need was also stressed to form “a unified government to supervise the electoral process” and to unify sovereign positions. Also in the communiqué, UNSMIL and the international community were called upon to support the agreement.

13. As part of UNSMIL efforts to advance the security track, the Special Representative met with military and security actors across Libya, including the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and representatives of security actors from the western region. During those meetings, the Special Representative called on military and security actors to support efforts to reach a political settlement and to unify security institutions. He also highlighted their pivotal role in creating conditions for peaceful elections.

14. On the economic track, the Central Bank of Libya continued efforts to reunify its eastern and western branches, as announced on 20 August 2023. Those efforts

included completing the merger of the Research and Statistics Department with the Financial Information Unit, combining their Banking Supervision and Currency Departments and starting to provide liquidity to commercial banks in the eastern region. On 28 January, the Special Representative reviewed economic and financial developments with the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, stressing the importance of transparent, equitable and accountable management of State resources. On 30 January, the Central Bank approved a new legal framework for the Libyan Credit Information Centre, aimed at centralizing banking loans, enhancing transparency and providing credit information.

15. On 31 December, the Speaker issued decision no. 105/2023, establishing a technical committee to restructure the national budget. Chaired by the Head of the Planning and General Budget Committee, the technical committee comprises representatives from the Presidential Council, the Government of National Unity, the High State Council, the House of Representatives-designated government, the Central Bank of Libya headquarters and its eastern branch, and the National Oil Corporation. The decision tasks the committee with reviewing allocations for salaries and operations; ensuring the involvement of governorates and municipalities in decisions regarding development plans and projects; empowering local administrations to generate their own resources for spending priorities; proposing a gradual removal of subsidies on fuel and gasoline; and recommending a mechanism for spending on projects by government and de facto authorities, including monitoring and reporting.

B. International Follow-up Committee on Libya of the Berlin process

16. The International Follow-up Committee on Libya of the Berlin process and its working groups continued to serve as the overall framework for international support to the intra-Libyan dialogue tracks.

17. On 6 and 7 February, the co-chairs of the working group on international humanitarian law and human rights – the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Nations – participated in a round table on freedom of association in Libya, under the auspices of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. The event was organized in collaboration with civil society organizations and brought together representatives of the Presidential Council, the Government of National Unity, the House of Representatives and the High State Council. Participants highlighted the importance of expanding civic space in Libya and creating the conditions for a successful political transition, in which all Libyans have the opportunity to shape the country's future.

18. On 6 March, the Special Representative met with the Security Working Group co-chairs (France, Italy, Türkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the African Union) of the Berlin Process to discuss how to harness the efforts of the international community in support of the security track. Agreement was reached on the need to maintain momentum in preserving the gains achieved on the security track and to convene a Security Working Group meeting in Libya as soon as possible.

C. International and regional engagement

19. The Special Representative continued his engagement with regional and international actors to mobilize support for a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process under United Nations auspices. In his meetings, the Special Representative underscored the importance of consensus among international actors to urge Libyan

stakeholders to engage in the political dialogue and nominate their representatives to the preparatory meeting.

20. On 5 February, the Special Representative attended a summit of the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya, in Brazzaville, to review the status of the national reconciliation process in Libya. In his remarks, the Special Representative underscored the importance of the African Union's continued support to Libya. He further encouraged the deployment of an African Union team of experts to Libya to provide enhanced technical support to the Libyan-led national reconciliation process. On 26 and 27 February, UNSMIL, in partnership with the Presidential Council, convened a conference in Tripoli to foster an inclusive, rights-based and victim-centred transitional justice and reconciliation process in Libya. Mr. Al Lafi chaired the conference, which was attended by representatives of the House of Representatives, the High State Council and over 95 representatives of victims and civil society activists from across Libya. Participants discussed ways to enhance the safe, informed and meaningful participation of victims in future transitional justice mechanisms. UNSMIL intends to feed the recommendations put forward by victims' representatives into the national reconciliation strategy.

D. Situation in the western region

21. From 6 to 10 December, forces affiliated with the Government of National Unity, on their way to secure the Ghadamis-Dabdab crossing point at the border with Algeria, were reportedly stopped in Zintan by forces aligned with Major General Osama al-Juwaili. Following discussions between the President of the Presidential Council and Major General al-Juwaili in Tripoli, the parties agreed to deploy Zintani forces affiliated with the Ministry of Interior at the border crossing point. In Ghadamis, small protests against Zintani control of the area ensued. Demonstrations were also reported in Nalut after the Acting Minister of Interior announced control over the Ras Jdir crossing point on the border with Tunisia on 17 December 2023. The Chief of General Staff of the Libyan Army, Lieutenant General Mohammed Al-Haddad, subsequently visited Ghadamis, Nalut and other border areas to explore operational arrangements in cooperation with local communities.

22. On 12 January, members of the "17 February movement for reform, combating corruption and rule of law" – a leading Misratah-based movement in opposition to the Government of National Unity – stormed Misrata International Airport demanding the withdrawal of the Joint Operations Force from Misratah port and airport, following allegations of abuse of power and engagement in illicit activities by the Force. In an attempt to defuse tensions, on 15 January, the Council of Ministers issued Decree No. 21 (2024), limiting the presence of border security forces to crossing points on land and at sea. The Joint Operations Force complied with the order and withdrew from Misrata International Airport in January, followed by the Deterrent Agency for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism, whose elements left the terminal of Mitiga International Airport in February.

23. On 9 February, the Gharyan branch of the Stabilization Support Apparatus, led by commander Abdullah Al-Shukri, attacked and captured a compound of the Misratah-based and Ministry of Defence-affiliated Counter-Terrorism Force in Gharyan.

24. On 12 February, armed clashes erupted between the 103rd Infantry Battalion and elements affiliated to local commander Muhammad Kashlaf, also known as "Al-Qasab", in Zawiyah, following the alleged killing of a member of his armed group during a counter-trafficking mission carried out by the 103rd Infantry Battalion.

25. On 17 February, at least 10 people were killed in Abu Salim district in Tripoli as a result of a power struggle within the Stabilization Support Apparatus. The victims included at least two members of the Stabilization Support Apparatus, along with eight of their relatives from the Mashashiyah tribe and from the city of Ujaylat, west of Zawiyah. The General Prosecution, in collaboration with the Criminal Investigation Department, launched an official investigation.

26. On 18 March, the Tunisian-Libyan border crossing point of Ras Jdeir was closed following renewed tensions between Zuwari forces and law enforcement forces affiliated with the Ministry of Interior that had been deployed (mainly from Tripoli) there since December as an initial security arrangement. On 28 March, the Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Al-Haddad, and representatives of the Zuwari forces agreed to deploy elements affiliated with the Ministry of Defence to Ras Jdeir to secure the area and in preparation for its reopening.

E. Situation in the eastern region

27. In early February, media sources reported a mobilization of Libyan National Army forces (ground, air and sea) towards the city of Sirte. The mobilization was related to a large-scale military exercise that was conducted in a desert area east of Sirte in early March under the supervision of Major General Saddam Haftar, the Libyan National Army Land Operations Forces Commander. Also in early March, western military forces reportedly organized a military parade and a military exercise in Misratah and the desert area south of Bani Walid.

F. Situation in the southern region

28. The country's average oil production of 1.2 million barrels per day was affected by the closure of the Shararah oilfield from 3 to 21 January due to protests by local populations over the scarcity of fuel and gasoline and limited socioeconomic prospects in the south. The Shararah oilfield contributes about 24 per cent of the country's daily oil output. The closure resulted in the temporary suspension of crude oil supplies to the Zawiyah terminal, leading the National Oil Corporation to declare force majeure at Shararah on 7 January. Protesters threatened to also close the Fil oilfield if their grievances were not addressed. After the Government of National Unity reportedly met some of the protesters' demands, the Deputy Prime Minister, Ramadan Abu Janah, confirmed the reopening of the oilfield on 21 January.

G. Violent extremist organizations

29. From 3 to 5 January, the Internal Security Agency and the Deterrence Apparatus for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism conducted security operations against elements suspected of having ties to ISIL (Da'esh) in Tajura. The Internal Security Agency reported the arrest of an individual alleged to be a Syrian ISIL member, and the Deterrence Agency for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism announced the capture of Hashim Abu Sidra ("Khubeib"), regarded as the ISIL leader in Libya.

H. Economic situation

30. Divisions between eastern and western authorities continued to hinder socioeconomic development and the effective reconstruction of areas affected by Storm Daniel. On 11 December 2023, the Government of National Unity issued Decree no. 842, authorizing the disbursement of 25 per cent of the previously

approved 2 billion Libyan dinars (\$400 million) for the Benghazi and Darnah Reconstruction Fund, which operates in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to support the recovery and rehabilitation of conflict-affected areas in Benghazi and Darnah. On 13 December, the Government of National Unity issued Decree no. 856, authorizing the Ministry of Planning to commence the disbursement of an additional 8.8 billion Libyan dinars (\$1.8 billion) through the Ministry of Local Governance to benefit municipalities across Libya that are applying for development projects. The Government did not consult with the High Financial Committee on the decisions, but the subsequent disbursement of funds by the Central Bank of Libya could not be confirmed.

31. On 18 December, the House of Representatives adopted decision no. 181, appointing Balqasim Haftar, as Executive Director of the “Darnah and affected areas and cities reconstruction fund”. On 6 February, the House of Representatives further issued decree no. 1, establishing the “Libya development and reconstruction fund”, with Balqasim Haftar as its Director General. According to the decree, 10 development and reconstruction entities will be transferred under the newly established fund, including the “Darnah and affected areas and cities reconstruction fund.”

32. The Central Bank of Libya and the Ministry of Finance published their 2023 revenue and public spending reports on 7 and 10 January 2024, respectively. Both reports revealed that expenditures in 2023 had totalled about 125.7 billion Libyan dinars (\$26.03 billion), while revenues had reached 125.9 billion Libyan dinars (\$26.07 billion). This represented a significant decrease in the annual fiscal surplus, which fell from 6.5 billion Libyan dinars (\$1.3 billion) in 2022 to 200 million Libyan dinars (\$41 million) in 2023. The Central Bank expressed concern over the nearly \$10 billion reduction in Libyan foreign reserves throughout 2023 and called for restraint in public spending to safeguard reserves.

33. On 13 January 2024, the Prime Minister opened a two-day “energy and economic summit” in Tripoli, during which he highlighted the improved investment climate in the country’s hydrocarbon industry and the commitment of Libya to exploring alternative and renewable energy sources. The event was overshadowed by the Attorney-General’s decision to postpone the signing of an investment agreement between the National Oil Corporation and a consortium of foreign energy firms related to the Hamada oilfields. The Attorney-General’s decision to place the Hamada investment agreement under further scrutiny followed the House of Representatives’ criticism that some provisions of the agreement were harmful for the interests of Libya, such as conceding an “unreasonable” share to foreign interests.

34. Amid warnings by the Central Bank of Libya about a looming liquidity crisis, the Speaker of the House of Representatives issued decree no. 15 (2024) on 14 March, approving a temporary surcharge of 27 per cent on official foreign currency exchange. The decree stipulates that the returns from the surcharge would serve to fund development projects and help cover the national debt. The issuance of the decree provoked criticism from within the High State Council, House of Representatives, Prime Minister Al Dabiba’s government and the general public. Meanwhile, the value of the Libyan dinar depreciated against the United States dollar from 5.2 Libyan dinars in mid-October 2023 to 7.2 Libyan dinars at the end of March, negatively affecting the purchasing power of Libyan households.

III. Other activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

A. Electoral support

35. UNSMIL and UNDP continued to provide technical support to the High National Elections Commission, with a focus on preparations for municipal council elections. The Government of National Unity, however, did not disburse funding for the municipal elections or update the database of eligible voters in response to the Commission's request submitted in October 2023.

36. During a press conference on 1 January, the High National Elections Commission declared its intention to hold elections in 97 municipalities across Libya in 2024 and gave information about changes to the municipal council voter registration process. The Commission completed the identification of the polling venues, voter registration software adjustments, the training of staff, the activation of the call centre and the production of public outreach materials. UNDP supported a series of workshops for staff of the High National Elections Commission, with a focus on strategies for countering fake news and disinformation campaigns.

37. From 2 to 4 February, the Ministry of Interior of the House of Representatives-designated government instructed 11 field offices of the High National Elections Commission located in the east of Libya to suspend their activities. The offices were allowed to resume their activities on 19 February, following facilitation by UNSMIL. Meanwhile, UNDP continued to support the Commission to re-establish its field office in Darnah, which had been severely affected by flooding in the wake of Storm Daniel.

B. Human rights, transitional justice and the rule of law

38. Enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention continued throughout Libya, resulting in a climate of fear that undermined freedom of expression, assembly and association. Civil society organizations continued to face a restrictive registration process that enabled State authorities to deny them recognition or dissolve them on broad, undefined grounds, as well as significant administrative hurdles imposed by the Civil Society Commission. In December 2023, UNSMIL and UNDP launched a new programme to address the issue of missing persons, as part of advancing transitional justice and accountability in Libya, by supporting victim participation and building responsive security sector institutions.

39. On 9 January, the House of Representatives passed a law criminalizing witchcraft, sorcery and fortune-telling. The law makes some acts punishable by the death penalty. Members of the judiciary, academics and human rights defenders raised concerns about the potential use of the law to target religious minorities, political activists and civil society.

1. Rule of law

40. UNSMIL continued to observe instances where court cases, including the trial of senior officials of the former regime, were adjourned owing to the absence of defendants. The frequent absence of defendants in court highlights the systematic challenge to access to justice and fair trial.

41. Between 20 December 2023 and 19 January 2024, UNSMIL deployed an international expert to the Libyan military prosecution to assist in reviewing the current legal framework and share best practices to better manage the work of the

military prosecution. UNSMIL also continued to support the public prosecution in its efforts to increase access to justice and improve transparency of legal processes.

2. Unlawful deprivation of liberty, detention and torture

42. Western and eastern security actors were reportedly involved in enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions. In some cases, victims were allegedly subjected to different forms of ill-treatment, including torture or extrajudicial killings. Such acts continued to be used as tools of coercion against actual or perceived political opponents and their families. As of March 2024, at least 60 individuals were known to have been detained for their actual or perceived political affiliation.

43. On 14 December, three members of the Supreme Judicial Council, who had travelled to Benghazi to participate in a session of the House of Representatives to discuss the amendment of the law on the judiciary system, were abducted. They were released on the same day and sent back to Tripoli. On 13 January 2024, the head of a charity association operating in the south disappeared in Benghazi after allegedly insulting the leadership of the Libyan National Army. On 29 January, a human rights activist was arrested without a warrant by the Criminal Investigation Department and detained at the Tripoli courthouse; he managed to escape on 31 January.

44. In mid-December, former Minister of Defence Al Mahdi Al Barghathi, one of his sons and seven other people were confirmed dead by eastern authorities, with allegations of ill-treatment and torture, after being arrested on 7 October 2023 and detained by security actors associated with the Libyan National Army. UNSMIL called on the competent Libyan authorities to conduct an independent and transparent investigation into the deaths and provide information on the fate of others reportedly still missing.

3. Migrants and refugees

45. Libya continued to be a destination and a transit country for migrants and asylum-seekers. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of migrants in Libya stood at 706,369 as of December 2023, of whom about 10 per cent were estimated to be children. During the reporting period, the number of migrants and refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya continued to rise. In late March, a mass grave containing at least 65 bodies was discovered by security authorities in southwest Libya; the bodies are believed to be of migrants who died in a failed smuggling operation through the desert. As at 16 March, 3,311 migrants and refugees had been intercepted at sea and returned to Libya by the Libyan Coast Guard. An additional 558 people were reported dead between 1 January and 25 March 2024 along the Libyan coastline. Migrants and refugees who disembarked at Libyan ports, to which United Nations humanitarian agencies have access, received life-saving humanitarian assistance. As at 20 March, 3,427 migrants and refugees were detained in official detention centres throughout Libya, including 348 children.

46. Since the start of the conflict in the Sudan in April 2023, a greater number of Sudanese refugees had arrived in Kufrah through the country's southern borders. Most of the refugees entered through irregular crossings, mainly directly from Sudan or through Chad, while a minority made their way from Egypt. As of late March, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had registered 14,516 Sudanese refugees arriving in Libya since mid-April 2023, with an additional 2,736 awaiting registration.

47. Migrants and asylum-seekers continued to be expelled from Tunisia near the areas of Nalut, Tiji and Ghadamis in Libya. As at 28 March, a total of 8,664 migrants

and persons in need of international protection had been intercepted at the Tunisia border by the Libyan Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, Libyan border guards and Libyan customs officials, with 29 deaths recorded. Libyan authorities transferred people intercepted at the border to the Assah detention facility operated by Libyan border guards, as well as to detention centres operated by the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration in Tripoli, and to Bi'r al-Ghanam, an unofficial detention centre. United Nations agencies have limited access to Assah and other official detention centres for the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance. Conditions in official and unofficial detention centres have deteriorated owing to limited humanitarian access and the greater numbers of individuals detained.

48. On 8 February, the African Union-European Union-United Nations Tripartite Taskforce on the Situation of Migrants and Refugees in Libya met in Tripoli to address urgent priorities and next steps related to refugee and migration management in Libya.

4. Groups in vulnerable situations

49. At least 25 women and 45 children allegedly associated with ISIL (Da'esh) remained in arbitrary detention, without due process or access to basic services, often exposed to sexual violence and other human rights violations and abuses. UNSMIL and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) urged the Libyan authorities to ensure due process, release those arbitrarily detained and facilitate repatriation processes.

5. Transitional justice and rights-based reconciliation

50. UNSMIL provided the Presidential Council with technical assistance, supporting efforts to adopt a rights-based national reconciliation strategy and draft an inclusive victim-centred reconciliation law. On 3 January, the House of Representatives discussed a draft reconciliation law that appeared inconsistent with fundamental human rights norms; UNSMIL shared its concerns about the draft law with the House of Representatives and other relevant Libyan interlocutors. On 30 January, the Presidential Council submitted its own draft reconciliation law to the House of Representatives.

51. On 8 and 9 December 2023, UNSMIL, with technical support from the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, held a workshop in Tripoli, as mandated by the Human Rights Council, to support the Libyan authorities in establishing a national action plan for implementing the recommendations of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, as described in the report of the Secretary-General of 7 December 2023 (S/2023/967). In total, 19 participants (including 9 women) from the southern region, including representatives of civil society, attended the workshop and formulated recommendations for institutional reforms in the security and justice sectors, as part of the transitional justice process.

52. On 13 and 14 December in Sabha, on 14 and 15 January 2024 in Zuwarah, on 13 February in Zintan, and on 18 March in Ghat, Mr. Al Lafi, with the support of the African Union, held preparatory meetings for the National Reconciliation Conference, to be held in Sirte in April 2024. On 15 January, the Special Representative delivered closing remarks at the preparatory meeting in Zuwarah, emphasizing that reconciliation was a long-term process that should run in parallel with the political process.

6. Human rights due diligence policy

53. On 10 January, the United Nations Secretariat gave a briefing to the human rights due diligence policy task force about human rights violations committed

against migrants and refugees by the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration and other security actors. It noted that the situation in Libya continued to require rigorous monitoring and concerted action in response to grave violations of international human rights, humanitarian or refugee law, including by forces receiving United Nations support.

C. Security sector

1. Support for Libyan planning for interim security arrangements and the unification of security forces

54. On 17 December 2023, UNSMIL facilitated training for over 20 officers, including 2 women, from the investigation and counterterrorism departments of the Internal Security Agency. The training covered international human rights standards on detention and principles of international humanitarian law.

55. On 9 and 10 January 2024, UNSMIL hosted a workshop in Tunis to improve collaboration between the House of Representatives, the High State Council and security institutions on reforming the security sector. Members of the House of Representatives, the High State Council and the 5+5 Joint Military Commission participated in the workshop, in addition to other security officials and civil society representatives. Participants included one woman from the House of Representatives and six from civil society organizations from across the country. The workshop emphasized the role of legislative authorities and civil society in security sector reform and produced recommendations, including on the demilitarization of urban areas and avoiding the use of military forces for internal security.

56. UNSMIL continued to engage with representatives of Libyan institutions and the international community on pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. On 14 February, UNSMIL convened a technical-level working group on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in Tripoli, with the participation of representatives from the Presidential Council, the Ministry of Labour and the National Security Council in Benghazi, as well as Member States, the European Union and the United Nations country team. Participants highlighted the importance of a code of conduct for the security apparatus and the demilitarization of residential areas.

57. UNSMIL and UNICEF continued to advocate for the adoption of legislation against child recruitment/association with armed forces and groups. The Ministry of Defence confirmed its commitment to strengthening legislation to protect children in armed conflict, including the development of a new law to criminalize the recruitment and use of children and the revision of Law no. 21 (1991), increasing the age of voluntary recruitment from 17 to 18 years. The Ministry of Defence shared the two legislative reform proposals with the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, for review and onward submission to the House of Representatives, for further discussion and enactment.

2. Arms and ammunition management

58. Mine accidents affecting civilians continued to be reported. On 7 January, a man was injured by an explosive remnant of war in Ayn Zarah, southern Tripoli. On 18 January, a vehicle hit a landmine in Ghadamis, western Libya, with no casualties reported. On 3 February, a seven-year-old boy sustained severe injuries from unexploded ordnance in Tawurghah, east of Misratah. On 11 February, a similar incident occurred in Tripoli, with two brothers, aged seven and eleven, being seriously injured. In response, the Forensic Police conducted clearance operations in Tripoli.

59. The operations of several mine action partners in Benghazi and Sirte remained suspended, since the 12 August decision by the Criminal Investigation Department under the Ministry of Interior of the House of Representatives-designated government (see [S/2023/967](#), para. 62).

60. On 20 December, UNSMIL conducted a three-week operations training course for 16 officers from the Libyan Mine Action Centre with a focus on quality assurance. On 30 January 2024, UNSMIL co-chaired with the Libyan Mine Action Centre the first quarterly in-person meeting of implementing partners in Tunis, to address challenges related to the registration of non-governmental organizations, the granting of visas, funding and the ongoing suspension of operations by mine action partners in the east.

3. Implementation of the ceasefire agreement

61. No ceasefire violations were recorded during the reporting period. UNSMIL continued to follow closely reports of large-scale military exercises and troop mobilization in the eastern region, in order to prevent ceasefire violations that might lead to an escalation of tensions.

62. UNSMIL international ceasefire monitors continued to support Libyan counterparts in the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. UNSMIL also continued to engage with the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, Libyan ceasefire monitors and the liaison committees from Chad, Libya, the Niger and the Sudan to enhance collaboration and exchange information on the withdrawal of foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya. On 18 December 2023, UNSMIL provided the 5+5 Joint Military Commission with equipment to establish a database on foreign forces, foreign fighters and mercenaries. The return of several hundred fighters from Libya to Chad constituted a positive development during the reporting period. However, the crises in neighbouring countries continued to hinder the withdrawal process and negatively affect the functioning of the liaison committees.

63. From 11 to 13 December, UNSMIL facilitated a technical workshop in Tunis on international ceasefire monitoring standards and best practices with the Libyan ceasefire monitors and representatives from the 5+5 Joint Military Commission.

D. Empowerment of women

64. On 10 December, UNSMIL and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) organized an online workshop with 20 Libyan women on the protection of women human rights defenders in Libya. The workshop followed the recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security dated 5 October 2022 ([S/2022/740](#)) to enhance system-wide accountability for the protection of women human rights defenders in conflict-affected countries.

65. On 25 December, the Council for Sharia Research and Studies at Dar Al-Ifta, headed by the Grand Mufti of Libya, published an explanatory note to its decision no. 2, issued on 2 October 2023, forbidding the use of the term “gender”. In the note, the term is described as a threat to Libyan society and Islamic values, and the relevant authorities are called on to implement applicable laws to punish those who advocate for and use the term.

66. On 16 January 2024 in Tripoli, the Public Liberties and Human Rights Committee of the High State Council organized a workshop attended by female members of the Council and the House of Representatives, as well as civil society representatives. Discussions focused on the quota for women in legislative, executive

and municipal bodies and issued recommendations to increase the representation of women in political, economic and financial institutions.

E. Youth and peace and security

67. In September 2023, UNSMIL, together with UNDP, UN-Women and UNICEF, launched “Ra’idat”, a one-year training programme for future leaders of Libya. In total, 30 young Libyan women will receive training on human rights, as well as legislation and policies, to promote women’s participation and counter hate speech. In February, the programme supported 12 young women to complete a study tour of the European Parliament in Brussels, where they interacted with Members of Parliament and engaged with young professionals in a foreign policy network on the impact of conflict on young people in Libya. A similar follow-up study tour is planned for April 2024 to the African Union.

68. From 9 to 12 December 2023, UNSMIL supported the Dialogue and Debate Association of Libya in the organization of a model United Nations simulation in Misratah. In total, 50 Libyan young people participated, including 25 young women, enhancing their debate and leadership skills.

F. Coordination of international assistance

69. On 24 January, the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations released a rapid damage and needs assessment of the floods that affected eastern Libya on 10 and 11 September 2023. The report covered damages and losses, as well as recovery and reconstruction needs, across sectors of the Libyan economy. Recovery and reconstruction needs were estimated at \$1.8 billion, affecting approximately 1.5 million people. The report underscored the importance of close collaboration and coordination among national stakeholders and support of international partners to advance a resilient, inclusive and sustainable recovery for the people of Libya.

70. UNSMIL continued to engage with stakeholders across the country to establish a national coordinated platform for reconstruction of flood affected areas and to support an equitable and transparent distribution of resources for reconstruction and sustainable development across Libya, in line with Security Council resolution [2702 \(2023\)](#).

G. Humanitarian, peacebuilding and development support

71. On 1 January 2024, the \$71.4 million United Nations flash appeal for the Libya flood response was extended until March 2024 to address residual humanitarian needs and facilitate the transition of assistance and support for affected people to the 2023–2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. As at 20 February 2024, humanitarian partners had reached 247,000 people with humanitarian assistance, out of the 250,000 people targeted. The flash appeal was funded at 84 per cent, as of February.

72. In an effort to continue to combat hate speech and misinformation, UNSMIL developed partnerships with media outlets, non-governmental organizations and local fact-checking initiatives, as well as with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. UNSMIL helped to counter digital activities aimed at disrupting peacebuilding efforts, with potential negative implications for social cohesion in local communities.

IV. Deployment of the Mission and security arrangements

73. The United Nations maintained an average presence of about 305 civilian staff members, comprising 89 national staff, 211 international staff and 5 United Nations Volunteers. Of those, 298 staff were stationed in Tripoli, 6 in Tunis and 1 in Sabha. UNSMIL also maintained three government-provided personnel, one located in Tripoli and two in Tunis. UNSMIL international staff and its offices continued to be accommodated at the Oea compound in Tripoli, protected by the United Nations Guard Unit.

74. As part of the emergency response in the wake of Storm Daniel, UNSMIL continued to provide security support to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes with an enhanced presence of security personnel in Darnah and Bayda'. Discussions between UNSMIL and United Nations agencies continued on the establishment of a United Nations office in Sabha.

V. Implementation of the recommendations of the 2021 Independent Strategic Review

75. UNSMIL continued its efforts to implement the recommendations outlined in the independent strategic review and in accordance with Security Council resolution [2702 \(2023\)](#). Taking into account key political, security, operational and logistic considerations, UNSMIL and the United Nations country team continued to advance all efforts to increase their footprint and other enabling capacities in Benghazi and Sabha. A joint UNSMIL-country team mission to Sabha took place on 27 February, to review ongoing efforts to advance local development and peacebuilding initiatives. Also, in accordance with the recommendations, UNSMIL and the country team collaborated on joint programming focusing on governance capacity-building; supported national reconciliation efforts and economic governance; and implemented programming directed at vulnerable groups, such as women, migrants and young people. Regular integration meetings continued to explore further links between UNSMIL political work and country team programming.

76. In addition, UNSMIL developed targeted communication strategies to bolster the good offices of the Special Representative. In an ongoing effort to combat hate speech and misinformation, the Mission fostered partnerships with media colleges, media outlets, non-governmental organizations and local fact-checking initiatives, as well as with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

VI. Observations and recommendations

77. The efforts of my Special Representative to convene an inclusive dialogue to resolve outstanding issues and enable all Libyans to exercise their right to choose their leaders are critical and need to be supported. In order for the political process to succeed, Libyan leaders should engage with the United Nations mediation in good faith and in a spirit of compromise and prioritize national interest. I therefore call on the key Libyan leaders to demonstrate their political will to hold credible, transparent and inclusive national elections as soon as possible, including by nominating, without delay, their representatives to the preparatory meetings to be convened under the auspices of the Special Representative.

78. Municipal elections are fundamental to effective, representative governance at the local level. I welcome the announcement by the High National Elections Commission of its intention to organize elections in 97 municipalities in 2024. It is

crucial that the Libyan authorities allow the Commission to operate on the ground and hold those elections without hindrance, including by providing the requisite funding and other necessary assistance in a timely manner.

79. The International Follow-up Committee on Libya of the Berlin process and its working groups continue to serve as an important platform to coordinate the actions of relevant international partners, including regional and international organizations, with Libyan actors. I welcome the convening of the working group on international humanitarian law and human rights, bringing together representatives of relevant Libyan institutions to underscore the importance of expanding civic space in Libya and creating the conditions for a successful political transition. I encourage the other working groups, in particular the political and economic working groups, to resume their work in support of the United Nations good offices.

80. In parallel to United Nations efforts to facilitate a political settlement, an inclusive and rights-based national reconciliation process, with the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women, young people and civil society, is a cornerstone for lasting peace and stability across Libya. I commend the efforts of the Presidential Council, supported by the African Union and its High-Level Committee on Libya, to advance preparatory steps towards the holding of a national reconciliation conference in Sirte. I further underscore the value of a victim-centred approach to reconciliation, on the basis of international principles of transitional justice. Successful national reconciliation also requires unified and representative State institutions that govern the country.

81. I remain concerned about the overall security situation across the country, amid continued tensions and sporadic clashes among armed groups, including in Ghadamis, Gharyan, Misratah, Zawiyah, Zintan, Ras Jdeir and other cities. I call on all security actors to actively engage in efforts to unify the country's security institutions and work towards ensuring a security environment conducive to the holding of elections throughout the country. I welcome the continued engagement of local and tribal leaders to deescalate tensions and underscore the importance of the continued implementation of the 23 October 2020 ceasefire agreement.

82. Widespread violations by western and eastern security actors of international law, including human rights law, and the lack of accountability of perpetrators are deeply concerning. Continued enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions highlight the excessive control by the authorities and security actors over civil society and people with dissenting views in Libya. I am also alarmed by frequent reports of extrajudicial killings or ill-treatment and torture of people in detention by security actors.

83. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers continue to be exposed to serious protection risks by trafficking and other criminal networks. It is imperative that those detained without due process are released. I also remain concerned about the deportations and collective expulsions of migrants and asylum-seekers, in inhumane conditions. Laws criminalizing irregular entry and stay should be repealed, while non-custodial measures should be considered as alternatives to detention. Establishing accountability remains paramount. Libyan authorities should conduct thorough and impartial investigations into all reported incidents of misconduct and human rights violations within Libyan detention centres, and UNSMIL and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes must be allowed unrestricted access to such facilities.

84. I commend the Central Bank of Libya for its strides towards organizational reunification. The new legal framework of the Libyan Credit Information Centre will facilitate transparent and centralized financial support for small and medium-sized enterprises. Full implementation of the recommendations from the United Nations-

facilitated international audit of the Central Bank, issued in July 2021, including the reactivation of its Board of Directors, is important to achieve reunification and reform of the Central Bank.

85. I welcome the release of the joint World Bank, United Nations and European Union rapid damage and needs assessment report on storm flooding in Libya. I am concerned, however, that effective reconstruction of the affected areas continued to be hampered by the lack of a coordinated approach among all Libyan authorities, as required for an inclusive and resilient recovery in the best interests of the affected people. I therefore reiterate my call on all Libyan leaders to establish a coordinated national platform for the reconstruction of flood-affected areas, to ensure an equitable and transparent distribution of funding and resources where they are most needed.

86. I thank my Special Representative, Abdoulaye Bathily, the Mission leadership, the staff of UNSMIL and the United Nations country team for their dedicated efforts and support to the Libyan people. I reiterate my gratitude to the United Nations Guard Unit in Libya, generously provided by the Government of Nepal. I also thank the Government of Tunisia for supporting UNSMIL staff and hosting an office in Tunis.
