



Security Council

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Provisional

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Wednesday, 24 November 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico)

Members:

China	Mr. Dai Bing
Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
France	Mr. De Rivière
India	Mr. Tirumurti
Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya	Mr. Kimani
Niger	Mr. Ousman
Norway	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis
Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

The situation in Libya

*Reissued for technical reasons 13 December 2021.

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya; and Ms. Lamees Bensaad, Assistant Professor at the University of Tripoli, political activist and member of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum.

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

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Kubiš, Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti, Permanent Representative of India, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, and by Ms. Bensaad.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: My briefing today comes at a crucial time, with one month left until elections in Libya and following the conference hosted by President Macron in Paris on 12 November — co-chaired by Libya, France, Germany, Italy and the United Nations — with the participation of 30 Member States and regional organizations, which represented an opportunity to strengthen international consensus in support of the implementation of a Libyan-led and -owned political process, facilitated by the United Nations, leading to a political solution to the Libyan crisis. The participants in France, including the Libyan interim executive authority, reiterated their backing for holding the long-awaited presidential and parliamentary elections.

The final declaration agreed upon at the Paris International Conference for Libya stressed the importance of all Libyan stakeholders committing unequivocally to the holding of free, fair, inclusive and credible presidential and parliamentary elections

on 24 December, as stipulated in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map and endorsed in resolutions 2570 (2021) and 2571 (2021), as well as the conclusions of the second Berlin Conference, of 23 June, and accepting the outcomes of the elections. I echo the call on all Libyan stakeholders and candidates to respect their commitments towards holding the elections on 24 December, to publicly commit to respecting the rights of their political opponents before, during and after the elections, to refrain from using hate or revenge speech and threats, incitement to violence and boycott, to accept the results of the elections and to uphold their commitment to the code of conduct prepared by the High National Elections Commission.

The Conference highlighted the importance of avoiding any vacuum of power and that the transfer of power from the current interim executive authority to the newly elected executive authority should take place following the simultaneous announcement by the High National Elections Commission of the final results of both the presidential and the parliamentary elections.

In my most recent briefing, on 10 September (see S/PV.8855), I informed the Security Council that the Speaker of the House of Representatives had transmitted to the High National Elections Commission law No. 1/2021, setting the legal framework for the presidential elections. On 4 October, the Speaker of the House of Representatives transmitted law No. 2/2021, concerning the parliamentary elections, which is largely based on the electoral law of the 2014 parliamentary election. Law No. 2/2021 stipulates that the House of Representatives will determine the polling date for the parliamentary elections to take place after 30 days from the first round of the presidential elections, upon a proposal made by the High National Elections Commission. The Elections Commission is expected to propose the specific dates for the elections after finalizing the list of candidates for the presidential elections in early December following the complaints and appeals adjudication process. It is necessary that the House of Representatives promptly endorse the polling dates for both the parliamentary and the presidential elections, as proposed by the Elections Commission.

Following the failure of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum to agree on a constitutional basis for a legal framework for the elections, and with the aim of mitigating the risks around electoral disputes, the Mission has continuously urged the House of Representatives and other institutional and political

actors to address the concerns expressed by Libyan stakeholders regarding the procedural and substantive shortcomings of the electoral laws and to adjust the electoral framework. We urged the House of Representatives and the High Council of State to follow the consultative process as prescribed by the Libyan Political Agreement, and we urged holding inclusive presidential and parliamentary elections simultaneously, bringing it in line with the respective Security Council resolutions. Throughout the months of October and November, only some technical amendments requested by the High National Elections Commission were issued by the House of Representatives to both the presidential and the parliamentary electoral laws.

Following the receipt of the amended electoral laws by the House of Representatives, at a press conference on 7 November the Chairman of the High National Elections Commission announced the start of the candidates' registration process for the presidential and parliamentary elections on the following day. The process for the presidential elections closed on 22 November. This afternoon the Elections Commission intends to announce a preliminary list of candidates from among 98 candidates, including two women, from across the country who registered for the presidential elections. Thus far, 2,001 candidates, including 276 women, have registered for the parliamentary elections in the ongoing registration process, which should conclude on 7 December.

During the 7 November press conference, the High National Elections Commission confirmed the plan to hold the first round of the presidential elections on 24 December, while the second round of the presidential and the parliamentary elections would take place approximately 50 days after 24 December so as to accommodate the results tabulation and possible electoral challenges and appeals. It also stated that the final results of both elections would be announced simultaneously.

In parallel, on 8 November the High National Elections Commission started the nationwide distribution of voter cards to more than 2.8 million registered voters. To date, more than 1.84 million voter cards have been distributed at 1,906 electoral centres across the country in the ongoing process, by now covering some 64.3 per cent of the total number of registered voters.

As of 5 October, the High National Elections Commission has been accrediting domestic and international observers and media. To date, more than 3,200 domestic observers, 320 national media representatives, 20 international media and nine international observation organizations have submitted their applications to be accredited by the Elections Commission for the upcoming elections. I call on further domestic, regional and international organizations to submit their accreditation applications to the High National Elections Commission in time to send observers for the December elections.

While I praise the continued efforts of the High National Elections Commission to implement the elections despite the technical challenges and the short time frame, I must report that the political climate remains heavily polarized. The number of candidates for the presidential and the parliamentary elections, as well as registered voters, confirm that the Libyan people, from across the country, are eager to go to the polls and democratically elect their representatives.

At the same time, vocal opposition to the holding of elections on the basis of the existing legal framework persist, as some leaders and constituencies continue questioning the legality of the electoral laws issued by the House of Representatives on different grounds and thus the legitimacy of the whole process. They also note less than desirable conditions for the holding of the elections.

In addition, as the process moves forward, tensions are rising over the eligibility of some high-profile presidential candidates, along with fears of armed confrontation or that the current framework may take the country back to authoritarianism. I call on all those that challenge the process or the candidates to channel their challenges through the existing judicial mechanism and to fully respect the verdict of the judicial authority.

At the same time, even those who oppose the elections based on the current legislative framework and constitutional basis, without a permanent Constitution and in less-than-optimal conditions, agree that Libya needs free and fair democratic elections. As they said, the way towards a stable and united Libya is through ballot boxes, not through ammunition boxes. Those in favour of the elections stress that political confrontations must not, and will not, turn into an armed confrontation, that they will not follow that path

and that Libyans will find solutions to their problems among themselves if left without foreign interference.

I therefore echo the call on Libyan stakeholders to take steps, including with the good offices of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), to increase mutual trust and build support for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections and the acceptance of the results, and for all relevant Libyan authorities and institutions to provide the High National Elections Commission with the required support to deliver free, fair, inclusive and credible elections in a safe and peaceful environment and with the full, equal and meaningful participation and representation of women and the inclusion of young people.

On the security file, while the ceasefire continues to hold, the presence of foreign fighters, foreign forces and mercenaries remains a cause of grave concern for Libya and the international community, including countries of the region, notably Libya's neighbours. However, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) has continued to make progress. With UNSMIL support and facilitation, the 5+5 JMC convened in Geneva on 8 October and developed an action plan for the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces in a synchronized, phased, gradual and balanced way. The plan aligns with the ceasefire agreement of 23 October 2020 and resolutions 2570 (2021) and 2571 (2021), as well as the outcomes of the Berlin Conferences, and it should pave the way for the initial stages of the withdrawals of mercenaries and foreign fighters, taking into full account the needs and concerns of Libya and its neighbours as a step towards the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement and resolution 2570 (2021).

The action plan was presented at the Libya Stabilization Conference held in Tripoli on 21 October, convened by the Government of National Unity, which I welcome as the first such international gathering held in Libya since the beginning of the crisis and as an important testimony of Libyan ownership and leadership of the political process towards the unification and stabilization of the country.

Building on those positive developments, the Arab Republic of Egypt hosted 5+5 JMC coordination talks with Libya's southern neighbours — Chad, the Niger and the Sudan — in Cairo from 29 October to 1 November. Positive discussions among the four countries concluded with an agreement on a concept

for an effective communication and coordination mechanism to support the implementation of the action plan for the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces from Libyan territory.

As we meet today, the 5+5 JMC and a high-level African Union delegation are meeting in Tunis. I am also pleased to report that the 5+5 JMC is welcome to conduct similar consultations in Ankara and Moscow and intends to consult with other countries in the region, notably neighbouring ones. To complement and support those positive steps, the first group of United Nations ceasefire monitors was deployed to Libya on 10 October.

As we welcome that important progress, we are mindful that, as elections approach, there is a risk that entrenched political and institutional divisions will turn into confrontation fuelled by uncompromising attitudes, inflammatory rhetoric and fake news. In the western region, and in particular in the capital, tensions are high and could escalate further amid election-related polarization. The fragmentation of the political context, the lack of an inclusive and consultative political and electoral process, the ensuing lack of trust and consensus and continued controversies surrounding the electoral process could undermine its implementation.

Some incidents affecting the electoral centres for issuing voter cards were recorded. The Ministry of the Interior established an electoral security cell to ensure the security of polling stations and is committed to addressing security incidents impeding access to electoral centres. The activities of groups opposed to the elections might result in cases where citizens are prevented from collecting their voting cards and, later, casting their votes. The ability to freely campaign in the east, south and west is also at stake. Legal challenges aimed at annulling the results of the elections might revive an institutional and constitutional crisis following the elections. Moreover, an increasing likelihood of asymmetric activities perpetrated by violent extremist organizations aimed at disrupting the stabilization processes cannot be excluded.

The human rights situation in Libya remains critical. In this pre-election period, restrictions on fundamental freedoms through legislative measures are of concern. Documented incidents involving the targeting of journalists, civil society activists and individuals expressing views against State agencies, armed groups and political actors are increasing.

Measures to curtail civil society organizations continue to be imposed. Civil society organizations can be denied registration or dissolved by the executive authority on overly broad grounds. I call on the Libyan authorities to lift those restrictions and ensure a safe civic space for all individuals and organizations and to protect human rights defenders and activists.

I am also deeply concerned by the continuing use of hate speech and incitement to violence, including sexual violence, against civil society activists and human rights defenders, particularly against politically active women. Many have been targeted with violence, abuse, social media vilification and threats, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, and in some instances with fatal consequences. Promoting women's rights and empowerment, together with addressing violations and ensuring the protection of women, is particularly important in the current political context and with the upcoming elections.

High rates of arbitrary and unlawful detention in Libya, as well as enforced disappearances victimizing both men and women, continue to be reported and documented. As members of the Council are aware, one of the starkest reminders of the horrors of the Libyan conflict was the discovery of mass graves on the outskirts of Tarhuna following the recapture of the city by pro-Government of National Accord forces in June 2020. As the exhumation progresses, Libyan authorities have discovered yet more mass graves in the area. I reiterate UNSMIL's consistent calls for a thorough and transparent investigation into those atrocity crimes and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

The Mission is strongly concerned with the dire situation of several thousand migrants and refugees who were made homeless as a result of large-scale forced evictions and destruction of their homes by security forces using excessive and disproportionate force in early October. The efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide humanitarian and protection assistance to those refugees and asylum seekers at UNHCR premises in Tripoli is being obstructed by groups of violent individuals using threats and extortion against them.

I welcome the Government's cooperation in the resumption of the International Organization for Migration- and UNHCR-facilitated voluntary humanitarian flights of migrants and refugees out of Libya. Humanitarian return flights represent one of the

few options for irregular stranded migrants and refugees in Libya at extreme risk of arbitrary detention, serious human rights abuses and exploitation by smuggling and trafficking networks and State actors.

I am pleased to report that the number of internally displaced persons in Libya continues to decrease, with just under 200,000 people still displaced, as compared to 278,000 people at the start of the year. Still, those numbers are huge. The humanitarian community is working with Libyan authorities at the national and local levels to accelerate the voluntary, safe and sustainable return of displaced communities, including as part of national reconciliation and stabilization efforts.

Libya continues to be at a delicate and fragile juncture on its path to unity and stability through the ballot box. While the risks associated with the ongoing political polarization around the elections are evident and present, not holding the elections could gravely deteriorate the situation in the country and lead to further division and conflict.

As demonstrated by the high number of registered voters and candidates, the Libyan people are yearning for an opportunity to elect their representatives and give them a mandate to govern Libya through democratic legitimacy. The aspiration and determination of the majority of Libyans to participate in the presidential and parliamentary elections as candidates or voters must be fulfilled.

It is important that the international community remain united in its support for elections as demonstrated at the Paris Conference. At the same time, pragmatic engagement is required to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process and minimize the risks of polarization and confrontation. We will continue to make every effort to address concerns and mitigate the risks of a disputed electoral process to build consensus for holding the elections and dealing with the post-election situation. The judiciary has the final word regarding the objections raised about the process, as well as some presidential candidates. Their verdict must be respected.

The final decision is for the Libyan people, who will be making their choice through the elections. It is the Libyans that have their future and the future of Libya in their hands. They should participate in the elections and vote for those who are committed to a stable, prosperous, united, sovereign and democratic Libya, governed by the rule of law and committed to fighting

corruption and pursuing national reconciliation, justice and accountability.

It is high time that Libya, led by the authorities and institutions with strong democratic mandates derived through elections, liberate itself from external interference. Libya cannot continue destroying itself by continuing to offer itself as a playground for foreign interests and ambitions.

In conclusion, in the light of the ongoing political and security transitions, as well as the delicate and complex electoral processes in Libya, the need for a United Nations-mediated process and good offices within Libya has intensified. It is therefore, in my view, necessary to urgently relocate the Head of UNSMIL to Tripoli, ideally based on a Security Council resolution authorizing the return of UNSMIL to its previous configuration. Just to note, from the very moment of my appointment, I expressed support for splitting the positions of the Special Envoy and the Head of Mission, and for locating the Head of Mission in Tripoli. In order to create conditions for this, on 17 November, I tendered my resignation.

In my resignation letter to the Secretary-General, I also confirmed my readiness to continue as the Special Envoy for a transitional period — and that, in my opinion, should cover the electoral period — to ensure business continuity, provided that it is a feasible option.

I hope an appropriate solution will be found. In response to my letter of resignation dated 17 November, the Secretary-General in his letter dated 23 November accepted my resignation, effective as of 10 December.

Therefore, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Security Council for all the support provided to me and the mission in the past period during my tenure of the Office.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Kubiš for the information he has shared with us.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Tirumurti.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): 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 by the same resolution. The report covers the period from 11 September to 24 November, during which time the Committee concluded its work using the silence procedure.

At the outset, I would like to note that, on 25 October, the Committee included an additional individual on its sanctions list as subjected to the travel ban and assets freeze measures: Mr. Osama Al Kuni Ibrahim, the de facto manager of the Al-Nasr Detention Centre in Zawiyah, Libya, was listed for engaging in, or providing support to, acts that meet the sanctions designation criteria.

With respect to the sanctions list, the Committee also received a second communication from the delisting focal point established pursuant to resolution 1730 (2006), in connection with the submission of a delisting request by an individual. The focal point process is still ongoing.

With regard to the arms embargo, the Committee received a notification from Tunisia concerning the transfer of light weapons and non-lethal equipment for diplomatic protection. The Committee also received two vessel inspection reports from the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI.

In connection with the assets freeze, the Committee received additional information from Switzerland on an exemption notification submitted previously pursuant to paragraph 19 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011), to which the Committee responded. Furthermore, no negative decision was taken by the Committee in relation to an exemption notification submitted by the United Kingdom, also invoking paragraph 19 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011). The Committee also received a letter from Libya transmitting a communication from the Libyan Investment Authority, a listed entity, to which the Committee responded.

With regard to the travel ban, the Committee approved one request for exemption, invoking paragraph 16 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011), submitted by Libya on behalf of Mr. Abu Zayd Umar Dorda. The Committee also received two travel notifications from Ms. Aisha Al-Qadhafi and Ms. Safia Farkash Al-Barassi, respectively, under a travel exemption granted previously for unlimited travel within a six-month period for humanitarian purposes. The first notification was received within the previous reporting period, but after the text of my previous report had already been shared among the Committee members.

On 22 November, the Panel of Experts on Libya submitted to the Committee its interim report pursuant to paragraph 13 of resolution 2571 (2021). The discussion of the report will take place on 1 December.

Lastly, during the reporting period, the Committee received four implementation reports — from Belgium, Monaco, Switzerland and Thailand.

I would like to recall that the primary responsibility to implement sanction measures rests with Member States. The Committee is committed to facilitating the implementation of those measures and seeks to contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in Libya.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Tirumurti for the information he has shared with us.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bensaad.

Ms. Bensaad: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Security Council as the Libyan people prepare to embark upon our nation's first-ever direct presidential elections. As a women's rights activist, a member of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum and a candidate for the upcoming parliamentary elections, it is a true privilege to join the Security Council today.

Our meeting could not come at a more important time. We are weeks away from elections that have the capacity to be a true turning point for Libya, marking a historic transition from a decade of instability, conflict and war, to stability, democracy and peace. I cannot overstate how significant a milestone these elections are for people who have suffered not only a decade of war, but also decades of brutal autocracy.

I am addressing the Security Council today from Tripoli, where hopes are high as my fellow citizens embrace the new practice of democracy. My fellow countrymen and countrywomen are eagerly establishing new political parties, defining electoral programmes and running for office.

This historic moment would not have been possible without the resolve of the Libyan people to achieve a peaceful solution, the ongoing efforts of the United Nations special mission in Libya and the difficult, but necessary, compromises reached by all parties. It is those combined efforts that led to the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum agreeing a national road map, subsequently endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2570 (2021).

As a member of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, I have a responsibility to the Libyan people

to ensure that the upcoming elections deliver on their hopes and aspirations. That means that the elections must be conducted freely and fairly, in keeping with the road map agreed in November 2020. We must all do our utmost to ensure that the upcoming elections contribute to — and do not detract from — the renewal of legitimacy and national stability.

It is for that reason that I am concerned about the upcoming elections. The elections, currently scheduled for 24 December, should abide with the road map, which set out a clear sequencing through which elections were to be held on a constitutional basis.

Parliamentary and presidential elections were to occur simultaneously on 24 December. Yet that plan is not being respected. The current conditions are not in line with either the Libyan road map or resolutions 2570 (2021) or 2571 (2021). Nor are they in line with the second Berlin Conference on Libya. Just weeks ahead of the elections, there is still no consensus among the key stakeholders about the legal framework for the elections to be held, and no confirmation from the parties that electoral results will be accepted. That ambiguity threatens the outcome of the electoral process.

Like so many of my fellow Libyans, I desperately want to participate in free and fair elections. A democratic process is vital for the future of my country. Yet I fear that if steps are not taken now to strengthen the electoral environment, these elections could exacerbate geographic divisions and contribute to civil unrest.

The Libyan people do not wish to see a moment meant to foster peace end in division and violence. War has continued for far too long in Libya. Our people deserve a free and fair democratic process. For the first time in a long time, our people have hope that a genuine solution may be in reach. We owe it to the Libyan people to do everything we can to deliver an electoral process that is worthy of their aspirations.

I therefore urge the Security Council to support Libyans and help us move beyond the divisions and paralysis that have stood in the way of peace for too long. There is so much more the Council can do to secure the electoral process in Libya and protect a free and fair process.

First, it is critical that the Security Council ensure that parliamentary and presidential elections are held simultaneously with no delay, as stipulated in the road map.

Secondly, international observers must be present to ensure that elections are free and fair and that there is no electoral fraud, coercion, discrimination or intimidation of voters, candidates or political parties. The Council can do more to insist that such observers are in place ahead of the elections.

Thirdly, security must be maintained throughout the electoral process to ensure no intimidation or coercion takes place. Security guarantees must be provided to ensure the electoral process is not used as an excuse to foment violence and civil unrest or to cast doubt on Libya's democratic experiment.

Fourthly, we need to insist on firm public guarantees by all parties that they will accept the results, win or lose. For that reason, I strongly urge the Council to call on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to exercise its mandate and mediate between all parties, which includes responding to the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum's repeated requests to convene a meeting in which differences between the parties can be addressed and basic consensus on the legal framework forged.

Fifthly, the Council should insist on the active participation and representation of women in the electoral process. At present, only 32 out of 200 parliamentary seats have been earmarked for women. That falls far short of the 30 per cent quota set out in the road map. Although domestic legislation continues to fail Libyan women, we still see powerful examples of women's determination. For the first time in our history, we have female candidates running for the presidency.

In conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the beginning of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, I pay tribute to all of the brave women who have lost their lives raising their voices and acknowledge the courage of those who continue to risk their lives for change.

Finally, I strongly urge the Council to support a process of national reconciliation and transitional justice that will promote societal healing and lead to sustainable peace.

Libya is at an inflection point. A historic electoral process with the potential to bring a new era of stability, democracy and independence has begun. It is therefore imperative that the process not be aborted or spoiled. I urge the Security Council and the international

community as a whole to do their utmost to secure Libyan democracy and help us deliver free and fair elections.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Bensaad for her briefing.

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

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Envoy Kubiš and Ms. Bensaad for briefing the Council today, as well as Ambassador Tirumurti for his update from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya. In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Kubiš for all his work throughout his tenure as Special Envoy. We are grateful to Ms. Bensaad and to all other women peacebuilders for their work in Libya.

As Mr. Kubiš said, we have now entered a crucial period that will determine the path towards stability in Libya. I would like to make three points today.

First, I would like to reaffirm the United Kingdom's full support for the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned process that has gotten us to this stage. We are clear that the elections must be free, fair and open, and that they allow for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth. The United Kingdom strongly urges all Libyan actors to respect the electoral calendar, refrain from actions that would disrupt the process and resolve any disputes through legitimate pathways. Actions that undermine the electoral process only risk a return to conflict and entrenched divisions within Libya. We should not hesitate to use all the tools available, including sanctions, against those who attempt to undermine the process.

Libya's leaders now have an opportunity to begin a new chapter for the country. To avoid instability, the candidates for the presidential election must work together in good faith before, during and after elections. It is crucial that there be a smooth, peaceful transfer of power following the elections. After a decade of conflict, it is time that Libya's political class put the interests of the Libyan people first.

Secondly, I welcome the comprehensive action plan from the 5+5 Joint Military Committee for the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries and the deployment of United Nations ceasefire monitors to support the Libyan ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

The onus is now on international actors to deliver on the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries without delay. The ceasefire monitoring mechanism should monitor and verify that process.

Finally, I would like to express the United Kingdom's concern about recent attacks by armed groups on the National Oil Corporation. Such attempts to control Libya's natural resources at the expense of the Libyan people are unacceptable. It is now more important than ever that Libyan authorities safeguard the integrity of their financial institutions so that the political process benefits all Libyans.

The United Kingdom stands ready to work with Libya, the United Nations and all our international partners to build a more peaceful, stable and prosperous future for the Libyan people. To that end, we welcome the unity of the international community in support of the Libyan elections, as expressed by the Paris declaration and the presidential statement that we will adopt today.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Envoy Ján Kubiš for his briefing on the situation in Libya, as well as the Permanent Representative of India, Mr. Tirumurti, for his statement as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya. We will also listen very carefully to the representative from Libya.

Given his announced intention to resign as Special Envoy, we would like to thank Mr. Kubiš for his efforts to stabilize the situation in and around Libya. He assumed the post at a time when the direction had to be sustained and strengthened. Many issues in the political process have been resolved thanks to his contribution. Clearly, there are still many challenges on this path. In that regard, we note that ongoing United Nations support during such an important pre-election period for Libya remains crucial.

In general, we assess the situation in Libya as stable. We believe that the main challenge at this stage of the political process is to organize the presidential and parliamentary elections. The House of Representatives adopted the relevant laws, thereby establishing the necessary legal framework for holding the national election.

We note the robust process for nominating candidates for the presidential election. In that regard,

we emphasize the fact that there are candidates from all political groups and regions, including representatives of the former Government, among those who have declared their intentions to run for the post of President. We believe that such a scenario merits our common support and increases the chances of successfully holding the upcoming elections. We are convinced that a successful political process can be ensured only if it is truly inclusive. We trust that, on that basis, Libyans will be able to overcome the persistent tensions and grievances, which will contribute to national reconciliation.

At the same time, we note that some voices are still being heard, including in Libya itself, in favour of postponing the electoral process. We believe such a development could threaten serious repercussions for the fragile peace and might deepen the internal divisions in the country.

We also note some progress on the military track. From 6 to 8 October this year, at a meeting in Geneva, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission agreed an action plan for the phased, balanced and synchronized withdrawal of all mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces from Libya. The integrated approach on which it is based is in line with our position. We have also consistently advocated such a withdrawal of non-Libyan armed groups and military units. Otherwise, there is a risk of undermining the balance that has maintained the ceasefire in Libya for more than a year. We await the details of the agreed mechanism for implementing that withdrawal.

We believe that the Libyan National Army, whose leaders have very valuable knowledge and experience for the development of the country, has an important role to play in strengthening the Libyan armed forces. For our part, we encourage all Libyan forces to work together constructively.

We intend to continue to participate actively in international efforts to promote a political settlement in Libya, both through targeted work with the Libyan parties themselves and in multilateral formats. We are grateful to our French colleagues for organizing the Paris International Conference for Libya on 12 November. The outcome document is in line with previous conferences on the Libyan issue. The main thing in those decisions is the call to follow the timetable for the political process, including the elections, which they themselves agreed a year ago.

Mr. Ousman (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Libya, and Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, for their briefings. I reiterate my delegation's congratulations to them on their commitment to stabilization in Libya. I also commend Ms. Lamees Bensaad, member of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, for her perspective.

The Niger welcomes the significant progress made since the previous Security Council meeting on 10 September (see S/PV.8870), in particular the decision taken on 1 November by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, whereby the representatives of Chad, the Niger and the Sudan agreed to establish an effective communication and coordination mechanism to support the implementation of an action plan, endorsed in Geneva on 8 October, for the withdrawal of mercenaries, fighters and foreign forces from Libya in a gradual, balanced, synchronized and phased process.

Coordination with Libya's neighbours and addressing their concerns remain crucial to a sustainable and successful withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters. That will also be a crucial step in implementing the ceasefire agreement of 23 October 2020 (2011), in line with resolutions 2570 (2021) and 2571 (2021).

My delegation also welcomes the adoption of the electoral law governing the legislative elections at the beginning of October, which fills the legislative gaps to pave the way for the presidential elections on 24 December, for which key figures in the process have already announced their candidacies.

Those elections, which we want to be free, fair, inclusive and credible, are a key step in Libya's path towards stability. All stakeholders have a historic responsibility to do their utmost to bring the process to a successful conclusion in a peaceful manner and in compliance with the commitments that they have made.

In that regard, I would like to reiterate my Government's encouragement to the United Nations Support Mission in Libya for its tireless efforts to assist the Libyan authorities, and I reaffirm that the Niger supports the recommendations of its strategic and independent review.

In that context, I would like to recall that the Niger remains steadfast in its commitment to working for a

lasting political solution to the Libyan crisis, as well as to fully playing its part in helping the brotherly Libyan people to recover from the effects of the decade of conflict that has scarred the country.

In that regard, my delegation reiterates its support for the declaration adopted at the Paris International Conference for Libya, held on 12 November, which calls for an inclusive and consultative electoral process. We also affirm our support for the High National Elections Commission, the stakeholders and all Libyan candidates in honouring their commitments to hold elections on 24 December and refrain from any statements that could jeopardize the ongoing electoral process. It is also important that those actors publicly commit to respecting the rights of their political opponents before, during and after the elections, and accept the results.

In addition, we condemn any acts of foreign interference and violations of the arms embargo and the relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as the commitments made during the two Berlin Conferences by some actors involved in the crisis in Libya.

The continued implementation of the ceasefire agreement remains crucial. We therefore welcome the recent reopening of the coastal road linking eastern and western Libya.

On the humanitarian front, while we welcome the overall improvement since the ceasefire was established, the situation remains worrisome. Despite recent efforts by the Government, the provision of basic social services still falls short of the country's humanitarian needs. The effects of the crisis on the health system also continue to make it difficult to control and vaccinate against the coronavirus disease pandemic in the country.

The humanitarian issue cannot be addressed without mentioning the appalling and inhumane living conditions of migrants and refugees in Libya. It is high time to take the necessary measures to put an end to the abuses and violations to which they are continually subjected.

Finally, the Niger recalls that, as matters stand, the repatriation and deportation of migrants rescued at sea to Libya violates international humanitarian law. Those vulnerable people rescued at sea need protection, not to be brought back to Libya, where they will be subjected to arbitrary detention and other abuses by jailers who are often outside of Government control.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I also thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy for Libya, and Ms. Lamees Bensaad for their comprehensive briefings, as well as Mr. T. S. Tirumurti, Permanent Representative of India, for the forty-second report of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Libya, Ambassador Taher Elsonni, to this meeting.

Libya is at an important historic juncture. Exactly one month from today, Libyans are expected to hold their inaugural parliamentary and presidential elections, which we hope will be conducted in an inclusive, free, fair and credible manner, with the full participation of women. We welcome Libya's impressive achievements in recent months leading towards these important elections, including last month's Libya Stabilization Conference.

The constructive efforts of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, and those of the African Union, the League of Arab States, the European Union and other international partners in accompanying Libya's political process remain crucial. Accordingly, we welcome the recent declaration of the International Conference for Libya, which was held in Paris. The international community must continue to support Libya, within the parameters of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We commend the technical preparatory work of the High National Elections Commission to facilitate a smooth electoral process and wish to implore the relevant Libyan authorities to ensure that all the necessary arrangements on the electoral legal framework will be concluded for Libyans to exercise their franchise. Elections remain a first and significant step towards Libya's democratic transition and ought to be conducted in a safe environment.

That brings me to my next point — the security situation. Approximately one year following the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the progress in its implementation is minimal. We welcome the ongoing efforts of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) and applaud the agreement reached on the action plan for the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters from the country. The importance of the action plan cannot be overstated given the repeated calls by the Security Council for mercenaries and foreign fighters to depart Libya in a supervised and orderly manner.

We therefore hail the recent 5+5 JMC meeting held in Egypt, with the participation of Chad, the Niger and the Sudan, on establishing an effective communication and coordination mechanism to support the implementation of the action plan. We also underscore the need for the strict implementation of the arms embargo.

The quickening pace of the on-rushing global challenges, including the coronavirus disease pandemic, have made it pellucidly clear that Libya's many-sided challenges need to be addressed effectively and through durable parallel solutions. The need to prioritize the unification of Libya's institutions is central, and we note with satisfaction the ongoing work on the economic and financial tracks, including the international financial audit of the Central Bank of Libya. Those efforts should serve to unite Libya's Central Bank, while also ensuring that important mechanisms be established to address socioeconomic and humanitarian challenges and delivering basic services to the Libyan people. We therefore take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of preserving Libya's natural resources for the sole benefit of Libyans.

Equally, we encourage greater efforts to address human rights challenges, especially the challenges facing groups made most vulnerable, including refugees and migrants, internally displaced persons, youth, women and girls. Once more, we endorse the Secretary-General's assertion that Libya remains an unsafe port for the disembarkation of migrants and refugees and repeat our call for their full protection and safety, especially those in detention centres. We also agree with him that States need to revisit policies that support interception at sea and the return of refugees and migrants to Libya.

Over the past decade, we have witnessed the painful experience of our Libyan brothers and sisters, who have paid the high and awful price of external intervention and the scourge of war. From the lessons of history, we know that peace and prosperity are indivisible, and reconciliation is necessary for rebuilding processes. In that vein, we are satisfied with the commitment of the African Union in support of the Libyan national reconciliation process.

Libyans have endured and suffered enough, and through their own resolve and willingness, have decided they need peace and stability. Like all independent and sovereign nations, they deserve to live in peace. They deserve a future that offers prosperity. In that regard,

we underscore the plea made by Ms. Bensaad earlier today. Let us continue to accompany and support Libya during this important stage and beyond, to ensure our brotherly country returns to its rightful path of peace, stability and sustainable development.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I would like to thank Special Envoy Kubiš for his briefing, as well as Ambassador Tirumurti for his update regarding the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya. I also want to thank Ms. Bensaad for her heartfelt messages. Her appetite to participate in free and fair democratic elections was well understood in this Chamber, and I want to say that we have an obligation to help Libya to deliver on that aspiration, as she has asked us to do. As this will be the final briefing by Mr. Kubiš to the Security Council in his capacity as Special Envoy for Libya, I would like to thank him sincerely for his dedicated service. I also want to welcome our friend and colleague Ambassador Taher Elsonni to our meeting today.

We meet today precisely one month from Libya's scheduled presidential and parliamentary elections, as stipulated by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map and Council resolutions. The elections mark a crucial stage in the work of securing a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for all Libyans. We say to the people of Libya that the future of the country is in their hands — as it should be — and we assure them that the international community continues to support them on the path to peace. For our part, Ireland will certainly keep faith with that.

We welcome the recent successful International Conference for Libya, convened in Paris and co-hosted by France and Libya, with Germany, Italy and the United Nations. The outcome was clear: the Libyan authorities and the international community are committed to the holding of free and fair elections on 24 December.

We know that the electoral process must be Libyan-led and Libyan-owned. We commend the work of the High National Elections Commission, and we welcome the progress achieved to date. Ensuring that presidential and parliamentary elections take place simultaneously will be key to preserving the integrity of the process. We believe that it is incumbent upon the authorities in Libya to meet the challenge of ensuring an inclusive and consultative electoral process with the wide acceptance of all Libyan stakeholders in a spirit of cooperation,

inclusivity and national unity. It is also incumbent upon all Libyan stakeholders to foster mutual trust and build consensus at this particularly sensitive juncture, including through an inclusive legal framework. The role of regional and international observers will, of course, be crucial.

A Libyan-owned process must also mean one owned by Libyan women. I echo the remarks of Ms. Bensaad earlier on that critical issue. The meaningful participation of women as well as young people in these elections is fundamentally important to the goal of achieving an inclusive and sustainable peace in Libya. As elections draw near, we also call on the Libyan authorities to guarantee a free, safe and independent civic space for all. Ms. Bensaad reminded us that today we are on the eve of Orange the World, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. I want to emphasize how critical it is that women in Libya — all women — be spared the gender-based violence they have faced. It can end, and it must be prevented.

Ireland welcomes progress made to date in implementing the provisions of the October ceasefire agreement, and we reiterate our call for fulfilling all remaining provisions. The Libyan ceasefire monitoring mechanism is vital to ensuring that the hard-won gains of the agreement are preserved. Ireland was encouraged by the deployment of the first United Nations ceasefire monitors in October, a positive if long-awaited step. It is now critical that a gender perspective also be streamlined into the work of the monitoring mechanism and that it inform the important work going forward.

The continued presence of foreign fighters, mercenaries and forces poses a grave threat to Libya's fragile peace and stability and risks furthering insecurity in the region. Everyone at this table knows that is true. I therefore welcome the adoption last month of an action plan by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the subsequent announcement that will see the plan operationalized through departures under a United Nations-supervised disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in the coming weeks. We want to see all efforts made to sustain this momentum and to ensure the full implementation of the action plan, while also taking into account the needs and concerns of Libya's neighbours.

Finally, with all eyes now on Libya's political and military transition, we must not lose sight of the

human rights situation. The most recent report of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya was deeply concerning. The ill treatment of vulnerable individuals, such as migrants in detention, is quite simply abhorrent. In that regard, we welcome the addition of an individual to the sanctions list in October. National peace and reconciliation in Libya will require that the human rights and dignity of all the Libyan people — men, women and children — be upheld and respected. We call on the authorities and all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It is also key that the authorities work to ensure accountability by holding all those responsible for violations of international law to account, including through fulfilling their obligations to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I wish to thank Mr. Kubiš, Special Envoy for Libya, for his briefing, and Ambassador Tirumurti for the periodic report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya. I also want to thank Ms. Lamees Bensaad for her insightful briefing today.

Let me start by reiterating the need for both presidential and parliamentary elections to be held as planned on 24 December. That is the expectation not only of the international community — including the Security Council — but also, as we heard, of the Libyan people themselves. It is essential that their voices be heard. We commend the efforts of the High National Elections Commission to prepare the technical aspects of the elections. With 2.8 million voters already registered, we are concerned that a delay of the elections may lead to increased violence and instability and prolong the divisions in Libyan society. The ceasefire is already fragile, and Libya's institutions have been divided for too long, creating serious security and economic consequences. It is critical that the transfer of power be facilitated in a way that minimizes the risk of a vacuum. The plans to announce the results of the presidential and parliamentary elections simultaneously are important in that regard.

My final point on the elections is to reiterate the importance of women's full, meaningful and equal participation in the elections. As was underscored by Ms. Bensaad, Libyan women have the right to play an equal role in shaping their country's future, both as voters and as candidates.

Norway fully supports the declaration from the 12 November Paris International Conference for Libya. It is in line with the clear expectations expressed by the Council and is a strong signal of the international community's commitment to Libya's democratic process. We are encouraged by the fact that Libya — with both Mr. Dbeibah and Mr. Al-Menfi — co-hosted the conference. That is essential to secure and highlight the Libyan ownership of the political process. We sincerely hope that the Council will continue to speak with one voice to support the political process in Libya.

Furthermore, we continue to urge the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement of October 2020, where the Libyan parties themselves agreed that foreign fighters and mercenaries should leave the country. While we are seeing reports of some fighters leaving, the large majority are still in Libya. That poses a challenge for Libyan sovereignty and the unification of Libyan security institutions. Also, acknowledging the concerns of neighbouring countries, we reiterate the need for a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process for armed groups returning to countries in the region.

In the last weeks we have witnessed migrants being arrested in the streets of Tripoli. We have also heard of the reported crimes and violence in detention centres, including sexual and gender-based violence. Norway is deeply concerned, and we call for an immediate and unconditional release of vulnerable groups, including children.

Finally, as Special Envoy Kubiš will be resigning from his post, as we heard, on 10 December, let me take this opportunity to sincerely thank him for his efforts to move the political process forward and for his dedicated work with the Libyan parties in preparing for the elections.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the Special Envoy for Libya for his briefing. We commend the role of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), which is supporting Libya on the path to a political solution. We reiterate Tunisia's commitment to continue to provide help and support to UNSMIL and its mandate. We also thank the Ambassador of India, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, for his briefing on the Committee's activities. Furthermore, we thank Ms. Lamees Bensaad for her briefing, and we welcome the participation of the

Permanent Representative of Libya, Mr. Taher Elsonni, in today's meeting.

Libya has promoted its national interests and has upheld dialogue and consensus. That is how the country has managed in the past two years to move from conflict and military escalation to a peaceful political process that is led and monitored by Libyans themselves, guaranteeing that the Libyan people can achieve their aspirations of democracy and stable institutions, within a framework of freedom, transparency and equality. The participation of women is crucial. Today we are one month from the Libyan elections, which are scheduled for 24 December, and we very much hope to see the people of Libya build a new era for their country. In that regard, Tunisia welcomes the exceptional efforts made to allow the parliamentary and presidential elections to be held on time, according to the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map and pursuant to resolution 2570 (2021).

Tunisia calls on the international community to redouble efforts during this crucial period to promote a political settlement in Libya, support Libyans so that they can meet their challenges and help Libya overcome various shortcomings and create conditions that are conducive to successful elections. In that regard, we welcome the Libya Stabilization Conference held in Tripoli as well as the Paris International Conference for Libya. The role of neighbouring countries is crucial.

Tunisia reiterates the importance that all the parties respect Libya's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and refrain from any interference in its domestic affairs. We therefore renew our call to all the parties to respect the full implementation of the provisions of the ceasefire agreement as agreed on 23 October 2020, in particular on speeding up the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters from Libya. Measures must be taken for a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to promote stability in Libya and protect any neighbouring countries from security repercussions. In that regard, Tunisia welcomes the efforts of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission. We also welcome efforts by the United Nations via UNSMIL and hope those efforts will be reinforced by the deployment of the first group of United Nations ceasefire monitors. We stress the importance of respect by all parties of the arms embargo imposed on Libya.

With our mandate on the Security Council coming to an end, we would like to highlight the commitment of all Council members to supporting efforts for security and stability in Libya and to safeguarding peace and stability in the region. We also welcome the attitude and positive approach that has been taken on the Libyan dossier, as Tunisia shares a common fate with Libya in terms of security, stability and development. We are certain that unity within the Council on Libya, in particular on the various aspects of the Libyan dossier, will help to drive progress towards a holistic political settlement and national reconciliation in Libya.

In conclusion, Tunisia reiterates its commitment to the aspirations of the Libyan people as they move beyond this period of transition and towards reconstruction, with the help of the United Nations and regional and international organizations. We are certain that the wisdom of our brothers and sisters in Libya will support national interests, movement out of this transition phase and allow the national deadline to be maintained so that Libya can re-establish its stability as well as its place among nations.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy for Libya, Mr. Tirumurti, Permanent Representative of India, and Ms. Bensaad for their briefings today. The efforts of the team of the Special Envoy to guide the Libyan people on the road to elections beginning on 24 December have been noteworthy, and we appreciate his perseverance in engaging Libyan political figures, generating dialogue on the electoral process and encouraging progress on the implementation of the ceasefire agreement.

As others have highlighted already, we are now just 30 days from the beginning of elections in Libya. The High National Elections Commission has made real progress in planning for the elections. Millions of Libyans have registered to vote, and many candidates have registered to stand for presidential and parliamentary elections. We see strong signals of increased Libyan ownership of the electoral process. We will support a Libya-led process that reflects the maximum consensus achievable in the time allowed.

The Paris International Conference for Libya on 12 November was an unambiguous demonstration of international support for Libya and a clear call for progress. We must hold Libyan leaders to their commitment to elections while helping them implement their election plan. Democracy is a competition of ideas

in service of the people. We call on all Libyan leaders to embrace and participate in the democratic process while adhering to electoral regulations. The threat of boycotts by factions claiming systemic bias will not serve the Libyan people, advance peace or help achieve prosperity. We remind those who would interfere with Libya's elections or stoke violence that the Security Council may impose sanctions on anyone — Libyan or otherwise — who obstructs or undermines the elections as planned for in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map. The Council must target election spoilers to promote accountability if need be.

The Libyan authorities were clear during the 21 October Libya Stabilization Conference in Tripoli: they reject foreign interference in Libya and seek the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces. We commend the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and its comprehensive action plan for the withdrawal of the armed groups. With over 20,000 foreign fighters in Libya, it is essential to continue discussions on implementing the withdrawal of foreign forces. We welcome Special Envoy Kubiš' update on the deployment of the first ceasefire monitors to Libya and next steps in implementing the action plan. We call on all States, including those on the Council, to adhere to resolutions 2570 (2021) and 2571 (2021) and to support the withdrawal of foreign forces.

We take note of the Special Envoy's decision to resign and the reports that the Secretary-General has accepted his resignation. We thank him sincerely for his service. As with all Head of Mission nominations, we will await the Secretary-General's decision on whom he will nominate to serve as the Special Envoy. We impress upon all Council members the importance of facilitating a quick and smooth transition of responsibilities during this critical juncture. In the interim, we will continue to work with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and all United Nations leadership to advance progress toward elections on 24 December and the implementation of the ceasefire agreement.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy for Libya, for his briefing. I would also like to thank him for his work in promoting the political process. I wish also to thank Mr. Tirumurti, Permanent Representative of India and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, for his briefing. I welcome the presence of Mr. Elsonni, Permanent Representative of Libya, at this meeting.

For some time now, the ceasefire in Libya has been generally maintained. The political process has continued to advance. The Libya Stabilization Conference and the Paris International Conference for Libya were recently held. Those conferences expressed a unified message in support of elections to be held as scheduled and the full withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries, which we welcome.

There is only one month left before the elections. China supports the parties in Libya, on the basis of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map, to hold simultaneously, as scheduled, presidential and parliamentary elections that are fair, inclusive and transparent in order to usher in a new phase of national development. All parties in Libya should put the interests of the country and the people first, commit to dialogue and consultation, strengthen unity and cooperation and resolve differences emerging during the election process by peaceful means so as to avoid affecting the hard-won peaceful situation.

Libya has made great efforts to prepare for the elections and has made noticeable progress. However, to keep the elections on schedule, much remains to be done. China encourages the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to continue, in line with its Council mandate, to provide the necessary support for the elections. The international community should respect Libya's sovereignty, independence and their territorial integrity and abide by the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.

The presence of foreign forces and mercenaries in Libya is one of the main obstacles to achieving durable peace and stability in the country. In October, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission agreed upon an action plan for the full withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries, reflecting the unanimous will of all parties and the will of the Libyan people. China looks forward to progress on the implementation of the action plan as soon as possible. All countries with forces in Libya should cooperate actively in that regard. There can be no exceptions. The departure of foreign forces and mercenaries should be guided by the need to avoid negative impacts on the security situation in the Sahel and the surrounding areas. China welcomes the strengthening of communication between Libya and its neighbours on that point, including the launch of the quadripartite border management mechanism, jointly staffed by Libya, the Sudan, Chad and the Niger.

The coronavirus disease pandemic exacerbated the issue of livelihoods in Libya. In the implementation of the Security Council sanctions against Libya, caution must be exercised to avoid negative impacts on the country's economy and the well-being of the people. The Security Council should actively explore effective ways to use Libya's frozen assets for the country's reconstruction and respond in an appropriate manner to Libya's legitimate concerns with regard to its losses as a result of the frozen assets.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy for Libya, for his briefing and to wish him all the best in his future endeavours. I also thank Ms. Lamees Bensaad, member of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, for her insightful remarks. I also welcome the presence of our colleague the Permanent Representative of Libya.

We are approaching the date of 24 December, which was set by the Libyan people for presidential and parliamentary elections. That was an objective that was endorsed subsequently by the Security Council. There is a sense of cautious hope that the political momentum will be sustained towards holding simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections in a free, fair, inclusive and credible manner exactly one month from now. In that regard, we welcome the outcomes of the Paris International Conference for Libya, including its commitment to the success of the Libyan political process and to the full implementation of the 23 October 2020 ceasefire agreement, and look forward to the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 December.

This security scenario also calls for optimism from the international community. We have noted the 8 October agreement on the 5+5 Joint Military Commission action plan for the departure of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces from Libyan territory, and subsequent developments in that regard, including meetings conducted with representatives of Chad, the Niger and the Sudan with regard to the implementation of the action plan.

At the same time, we also note from the briefing of the Special Envoy that challenges remain, including impediments to the holding of elections in a free, fair, inclusive and credible manner. The involvement of external forces in the internal affairs of Libya has negatively impacted the progress on the political track, and terrorist forces have been raising their heads

once again in Libya. Continued violations of the arms embargo are equally alarming, as repeatedly reported by the Panel of Experts.

As Libya embarks on its journey towards peace and stability, it is incumbent upon the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to continue to provide the necessary support to the country so that the political progress achieved in the country is not whittled away. In that regard, I would like to make the following suggestions.

First, the most important priority for Libya is the holding of elections as planned on 24 December in a free, fair, inclusive and credible manner. The efforts by the High National Elections Commission to advance preparations for the elections are to be commended.

Secondly, the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Libya needs to be safeguarded. The peace process must be fully Libyan-led and Libyan-owned, with no imposition or external interference. We also encourage all Libyan parties to continue to make concerted efforts towards the unification of all national institutions.

Thirdly, the provisions of the ceasefire agreement and successive Security Council resolutions need to be respected. The 5+5 Joint Military Commission action plan is an important step, which also shows the commitment of the Libyan parties to the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries. It is important that the call of the Libyan parties be honoured.

Fourthly, we must ensure that terrorist groups and affiliated entities are not allowed to operate unchallenged in Libya. The continued presence and activities of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Libya is of serious concern, including due to the potential cascading effect it is already having throughout the Sahel region. It is unfortunate that the issue is not drawing the attention it deserves. The international community must speak with one voice against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

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

Sixthly, an inclusive and comprehensive national reconciliation process is the need of the hour. We hope

that the forthcoming elections will be an important step in that direction.

In conclusion, India has traditionally enjoyed close and mutually beneficial bilateral ties with Libya, and we remain committed to supporting Libya and the Libyan people in their endeavour to bring about lasting peace in the country.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank the briefers for their comprehensive overviews on the latest developments in Libya. I would like to express Estonia's full support for the work and the mediation efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), and I thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy for Libya, for his work.

Libya today stands at a critical juncture. The planned and highly anticipated presidential and parliamentary elections are exactly one month away. While important progress has been made in preparation for the elections, including on voter registration, there are still a number of issues that need addressing. We urge all Libyan parties to work together to ensure the holding of free, fair, inclusive and credible elections on 24 December that would pave way for a lasting peace in Libya.

For the longer-term stability and the success of the electoral process, it is essential to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the inclusion of youth at all stages of preparation as well as in the elections themselves. In that connection, we highly value the presentation by Ms. Bensaad. It is quite apparent that women face a multitude of hurdles in participating in the electoral process, and that requires our continued attention. Women need to be able to participate in all aspects of political life, as candidates, activists and voters, without fear of retaliation.

On the military track, Estonia welcomes the progress on the implementation of the 23 October 2020 Libyan ceasefire agreement. We commend the important steps that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission has taken, with the participation of UNSMIL and together with the neighbouring countries, in moving forward with the action plan on the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries. It is essential that all outside actors leave Libya without delay.

Estonia welcomes the deployment of the first group of United Nations monitors to support the Libyan-led ceasefire monitoring mechanism. We

look forward to the further operationalization of the international support team to the Libyan Joint Military Commission monitors.

The human rights and humanitarian situation in Libya remains extremely concerning. It is important to ensure adequate access for humanitarian aid and humanitarian workers to all those in need. It is crucial to end the arbitrary detentions and exposure to violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, of migrants and asylum seekers. All alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by all parties in Libya need to be thoroughly investigated. Combating impunity and ensuring accountability will pave the way to restoring trust in society.

Estonia welcomes the important work of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, including its October report (A/HRC/48/83), and calls for the Mission to be granted full, safe and unhindered access to all Libyan territory to fulfil its mandate.

Finally, Estonia welcomes the declaration of the Paris International Conference for Libya held on 12 November. It is important to reiterate that the United Nations-led mediation efforts within the framework of the Berlin process remain the basis for international efforts in support of achieving peace and stability in Libya.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Envoy for his briefing, and in particular for his commitment from the start of his mandate to achieving peace in Libya. I also thank the Permanent Representative of India, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), and Ms. Bensaad for their briefings.

We are on the eve of a crucial deadline for the future of Libya. The holding of parliamentary and presidential elections, to begin on December 24, offers a unique opportunity to set the country firmly on a sustainable path to peace and stability. Libyans have very clearly signalled their desire for elections. More than 2.8 million Libyans are registered to vote, and 1.7 million have collected their voter cards. Ninety-eight candidates have registered for the presidential elections, and 1,766 candidates for the legislative elections. That is proof that inclusive elections comprising the participation of all components of Libyan society are within reach.

France encourages the participation of women in the electoral process.

With a view to meeting those broad civil society expectations, President Macron took the initiative to co-chair — with Germany, Italy, Libya and the United Nations — the Paris International Conference for Libya on 12 November. The conference reaffirmed the international community's support for the electoral process to proceed under the auspices of Libya's High National Elections Commission. The international community demonstrated its commitment to the process by unanimously supporting the holding of elections according to the timetable set by the High National Elections Commission. France welcomes the endorsement of the outcomes of the Paris Conference in the presidential statement to be adopted by the Council this afternoon. Libya's co-chairing of the Conference also confirmed the commitment of Libyan actors to holding elections in accordance with the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We must now work to implement the commitments made in Paris. Together with its European partners, France is working to deploy election observers to ensure the transparency and credibility of the process and that all stakeholders accept the outcome of the election. We continue to extend our full support to the electoral process led by the High National Elections Commission and to the electoral calendar it will soon issue. We urge all actors to do the same and to commit to accepting the election results. France will strongly condemn any attempts to disrupt the election process or to call into question its results. The Sanctions Committee may designate any individual or entity that hinders the electoral process.

The Paris Conference also demonstrated the international community's support for the action plan agreed on by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission for the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces. The adoption of the action plan, in early October at Geneva, was an essential step in implementing the ceasefire agreement signed on 23 October. By endorsing the action plan in the presidential statement that we will adopt today, we will all assume the responsibility to help implement Libya's request. In that regard, France welcomes the announcement of the withdrawal of 300 African mercenaries from Libya, which constitutes an important first step towards that implementation.

We call for continued coordination with countries in the region, particularly Egypt, to facilitate similar withdrawals, with the assistance of the United Nations. In that regard, France urges Libyan actors to set deadlines for the implementation of those withdrawals as soon as possible. We encourage the United Nations to support the process, including by strengthening its ceasefire monitoring mechanism. France recalls that we are all bound to strictly comply with the arms embargo.

Achieving progress on these political and security fronts is the only way for us to consolidate a stable and sovereign Libya, to unify all Libyan institutions and to put an end to human rights violations, to which migrants are particularly vulnerable. France will continue to take action against impunity for those crimes. Elections are the key to the fair, equitable and transparent distribution of resources for the benefit of all Libyan people. France will remain fully engaged with its partners and in the Council in anticipation of the crucial start to the election period.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I thank Special Envoy Kubiš and Ambassador Tirumurti for their comprehensive briefings. I also thank Ms. Bensaad for sharing her thoughts and assessment. I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya in today's meeting.

The people of Libya are approaching a new chapter in realizing their hope and determination for long-term peace, stability and development. We commend the progress made on the political and security tracks in recent weeks, particularly the commitments made by the Libyan parties to holding the presidential elections on 24 December and the action plan agreed regarding the withdrawal of foreign mercenaries and fighters. At the same time, the ongoing challenges related to those crucial processes require strengthened and consistent efforts by all parties and support from the international community. In that connection, I wish to highlight the three following points.

First, we call on the relevant parties in Libya to expedite all necessary arrangements, including legislative, administrative and logistic measures, for the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections successfully and in a timely manner. The post-election period will also need adequate attention in order to ensure sustained progress. It is imperative to promote dialogue and facilitate reconciliation and confidence-building measures among the different

parties in order to resolve the current difficulties at this critical time.

We commend the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and regional and international actors over the past weeks to foster and support dialogue among the Libyan parties, particularly through the Paris International Conference and the Libya Stabilization Conference. The role of the United Nations, neighbouring countries and regional and international partners will remain crucial in supporting the Libyan-led and -owned political process during the coming period.

Secondly, it is crucial to maintain a security environment conducive to the preparation and holding of the elections and the continuation of the political process in the post-election period. We call on all relevant parties to fully uphold the provisions of the October 2020 ceasefire agreement, including the implementation of the ceasefire monitoring mechanism, with the support of UNSMIL. We call on all relevant parties to fully respect and implement the action plan regarding the withdrawal of foreign mercenaries and fighters from Libyan territory, which we commend. The arms embargo in line with the relevant resolution on Libya must continue to be upheld.

Thirdly, strengthened efforts are needed to further tackle the humanitarian challenges in Libya and promote reconstruction in the country. We share the concern on the increasing challenges related to migrants and refugees in Libya. We call on international partners to continue to provide support for the country, especially to address the needs of, and challenges faced by, vulnerable groups, especially women, children, migrants and refugees. In addition, we commend the continued efforts to protect civilians in Libya from the risk of mines and explosive remnants of war, with the support of the United Nations Mine Action Service.

In conclusion, Viet Nam stands in solidarity with the people of Libya in this critical period. We reaffirm our support for the work of UNSMIL. I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the tireless efforts of Mr. Kubiš in promoting peace in Libya over the past months. We wish him all the best.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Libya, for his briefing and his service to the people of Libya. I also thank Ambassador Tirumurti, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution

1970 (2011), and Ms. Lamees Bensaad, member of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, for their briefings. I welcome the presence of our colleague Ambassador Taher Elsonni, Permanent Representative of Libya.

Kenya acknowledges the important role played by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in support the peace process, especially at this critical time. We also acknowledge the great support that neighbouring States, other States and regional organizations have lent in that regard.

During yesterday's briefing on Libya (see S/PV.8911), we reminded the Security Council of the need for all of us to remember the genesis of the conflict. We welcome all members of the Council and the international community at large to undertake their own assessments of the past decade in Libya to identify the lessons we need to learn to avoid a repetition of the blunders and self-interested interventions that have characterized the international community's interaction with Libya and the region. Notwithstanding that history, commendable progress has been made to resolve the political conflicts that have generated so much violence and suffering. The people of Libya have conveyed their resoluteness to rebuild and restore. The first international Libya Stabilization Conference, hosted by the Government of National Unity on 21 October in Tripoli, is testament to that.

To secure the gains achieved so far, foreign interference in Libya must end. Such interference is also characterized by the continued presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries, with a destabilizing effect, not only on Libya but also on the broader region. Kenya therefore welcomes the comprehensive action plan for the gradual, balanced and sequenced withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces from Libya, signed by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission on 8 October, and we emphasize the importance of its implementation. We urge the international community to strongly support that.

We also welcome the arrival in October in Tripoli of the first group of United Nations monitors to support the Libyan ceasefire monitoring mechanism, and we re-emphasize the need to guard that process as a truly Libyan-led and -owned one. We call for support from Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations to the requisite corresponding security sector reforms and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts.

As Libyans move closer to 24 December, we commend the work that has already been done, and that is ongoing, in preparation for the elections, such as voter registration and the registration of candidates for the presidential elections. However, we note that there remains a deep divergence of views regarding the legal framework for the elections. Additionally, campaign seasons easily give rise to inflammatory and divisive comments and speeches, some which in this case have already been spewed out. We call on Libyans to draw from the importance of dialogue and the national reconciliation process to resolve those contentions with a view to attaining the country's common good. As always, we want to remind African countries, of which Libya is one, that elections do not bring countries together; however, they must be held while always paying heed to the process of reconciliation that is required.

We must not forget or abandon the thousands of migrants who are suffering intolerable treatment as they seek to reach the shores of Europe. As I make this statement in the aftermath of the disappointing outcomes in Glasgow, we can conclude only, as has been done often in the last few days, that unless there are determined efforts to invest in climate adaptation in the Sahel and in West Africa, the boats in the Mediterranean will continue to fill with desperate refugees. Intercepting migrants or aiding their interception at sea and return to Libyan ports will in the end become an even bigger global crisis. We call for greater responsibility in taking actions in response to the link between climate change and the political and economic crises it produces, which lead to the growing number of African climate refugees seeking to traverse the Sahel, the Sahara, Libya and the Mediterranean.

We supported the proposed Security Council presidential statement, as it constitutes the much-needed Council voice in support of Libyans. We also look forward to the substantial renewal of the UNSMIL mandate to reflect the gains so far, signal the Security Council's support and pave the way for the implementation of improvements under the mandate. We recall that all of Libya's frozen assets are to be preserved and eventually returned to, and for the benefit of, the people of Libya. We therefore emphasize the need to consider appropriate reviews in that respect. We also encourage the implementation of the sanctions, in liaison with Libyan authorities, and welcome relevant discussions in that regard.

Finally, Kenya continues to express solidarity with the people of Libya and calls for respect of Libya's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

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

I thank the Special Envoy and Ms. Bensaad for their briefings. I also thank our colleague Ambassador Tirumurti, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), for his briefing on the work of the Committee. I wish to underscore my appreciation to Mr. Ján Kubiš for the work he has accomplished for the people of Libya as Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and wish him every success in his future activities.

With exactly one month to go before the presidential and legislative elections in Libya, my delegation believes that the international community should focus all of its efforts on creating the best possible conditions for the electoral process. In that regard, we welcome the results of the Paris International Conference for Libya, held on 12 November, and call for the implementation of its conclusions. We urge all Libyan political actors to act responsibly to resolve the outstanding issues with the help of UNSMIL. We urge them in particular to work collectively to finalize the legal framework for the electoral process.

We also reiterate the importance of respecting the parameters that were agreed by the Libyans themselves in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum framework and endorsed by the international community through the two Berlin Conferences. It is important to remember that the road map agreed in Tunis this past year provides for women to occupy at least 30 per cent of leadership positions. In that regard, Mexico notes Ms. Bensaad's comments with the deepest of interest. We salute the courage of the Libyan women who have decided to run in the elections and encourage the authorities to continue working with the UNSMIL team towards the adoption of the law to combat violence against women.

We also welcome the adoption within the framework of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission of an action plan for the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters. We urge that the countries of origin of those forces commit to implementing the action plan and hope that the ceasefire monitoring mechanism will contribute to that end.

On the other hand, Mexico regrets that, despite the Council's continued calls to address the situation of migrants in Libya, we continue hear reports, such as those we have heard today, of inhumane treatment of migrants. Those incidents, including one that occurred in recent days in which at least 75 people perished while attempting to cross the Mediterranean, are the result of the lack of comprehensive attention to the migration phenomenon. We therefore urge that concrete measures be taken to protect the lives and rights of migrants.

Finally, my delegation draws the attention of the Council to the report of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya published in October (A/HRC/48/83), which documents serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The report states that the proliferation of weapons was one of the factors that led to the deterioration of the situation in Libya. It is therefore essential that the arms embargo be fully respected in order to prevent weapons from fuelling conflicts in neighbouring countries. The information gathered by the Mission must be used to ensure accountability. No political or electoral consideration can take precedence over the justice to which the victims are entitled.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I would like to recall the content of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages participants to deliver their statements in five minutes or less.

I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Elsonni (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on Libya, and Mr. Ján Kubiš for his briefing. It is regrettable to know that he has tendered his resignation at a critical moment. However, we understand the personal reasons behind that resignation and call on the Secretary-General and the Security Council to clarify the alternative plans for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) during this sensitive time. I would also like to thank Mr. Tirumurti for delivering the report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, and Ms. Lamees Bensaad for her valuable briefing. My statement today is very important, and I have a great deal to say. Please excuse me, therefore, if I take more time.

We meet today at a pivotal juncture in the crisis, following years of my country suffering division, differences and wars. We meet today with a glimpse of hope of exiting the dark tunnel that we have been in for so long, thanks to God's mercy and the efforts of loyal Libyans. In that context, we appreciate all international initiatives with genuine intentions to find a peaceful resolution to the Libyan crisis. In that regard, we thank France for organizing the recently held Paris International Conference for Libya, as well as Germany for having held the two Berlin Conferences. We also thank all sisterly and friendly countries for their various efforts.

At the same time, we must stress that national initiatives constitute the basis on which we can work to resolve the crisis and achieve stability, for there is no alternative to a Libyan-owned and -led political process to lead the country to that stability. We must ensure that the Libyan State exercises its sovereignty throughout its entire territory. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the National Unity Government therefore launched the ministerial-level Libya Stabilization Conference, which took place this past month in the city of peace — the capital, Tripoli — with the participation of nearly 30 countries, as well as international and regional organizations. That is a clear indication that Libya is now present and that it should lead, and not be led.

In that regard, on the topic of stability, we would like to commend the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) and its outcomes. We reiterate the need to respond to the sovereign demand of the Libyan people, that is, to put an end to any form of foreign presence on Libyan territory, regardless of labels or categories, in accordance with the action plan and timetable of the JMC. There is a need for Libya to have a seat at all negotiating tables, and there must be respect for the will of Libyans to protect their national security and define their interests with whomever they want and any way that they choose, without guardianship.

Libya's current executive authority, represented by the Presidential Council and the Government of National Unity, remains committed to implementing its road map, which stipulates that presidential and parliamentary elections be held simultaneously and on time, and provides for all the resources necessary to ensure their success. It also states the need to transfer power to the elected bodies in a democratic and civil manner, without leaving a political vacuum, as provided

for by the road map, the relevant Security Council resolutions and the outcomes of various international conferences, the most recent of which was the Paris International Conference for Libya. It was a national and historical choice to end the conflict of legitimacy and political rivalries.

The Council has noted the significant number of candidates registered and the high level of participation in the elections. We must ensure free and fair elections with a wide range of international monitoring, with the participation of all stakeholders, without exclusion or marginalization, in line with fair legal criteria. There must be simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections, with a clear timetable, and their results must be accepted. The objective of such elections is to take us from chaos to peace and stability. They should not be used by some as a means to fuel conflict and bring back the spectre of war and infighting. But is there any way that can be guaranteed?

We are all well aware that there are no ideal solutions to the current crisis; however, it is also important to make every effort possible to ensure a minimum level of national consensus. Therefore, although there are many who call for elections to be held no matter what happens, the Council must also understand the legitimate concerns of a large segment of Libyans about the uncertain future, as well as their sincere desire to not fall into the same traps of the past.

Members of the Council have all followed the different and divergent opinions in Libya and the legal and constitutional debate that has taken place over the past days and months, which is basically the result of a crisis of confidence that has built up over years. Now, in the absence of an agreed-upon constitution or a consensual constitutional basis, the elections could ultimately prove vulnerable, their legitimacy may be questioned, and their results might not be accepted. That could lead to violence and chaos. We do not want to revert to that stage.

Today we heard a briefing from Ms. Bensaad, who represents quite a large segment of Libyans. We have gleaned hopes and aspirations for the election from her briefing, but we also heard concerns and challenges. We do not want to make the elections an obstacle. We have to listen to everyone.

We call on everyone to transform the elections into a means of stability and an end to the crisis. They cannot be a means to an end or the start of a new crises.

The elections must be a means to achieving our true objectives: a permanent and consensual constitution and an end to fragile transitional phases. They should not fulfil the desires of some to usurp authority, and neither should they end the dream of a civil State and the peaceful transfer of power.

Yesterday, during the briefing by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on the situation in Libya (see S/PV.8911), we outlined our country's position on human rights issues. We reiterated that our specialized national institutions, especially the Libyan Attorney General's Office, in cooperation with the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya of the Human Rights Council, are working in accordance with their mandates to conclude the necessary investigations into the crimes that have been committed over the past years in Libya, especially war crimes and crimes against humanity, to ensure accountability and end impunity. As we have said before, those crimes have no statute of limitations. The mass graves will always be a dark part of our history.

The discussion at this meeting leads us to the problems regarding frozen Libyan assets and funds. The state of those funds — which belong to the Libyan people — is very dire. Unfortunately, the freezing of assets, which began as an apparent attempt to protect Libyan money, has become a politicized mechanism aimed at enabling some to seize the wealth of the Libyan people. That was made clear when our repeated requests to allow the Libyan Investment Authority to manage its frozen assets were met with rejection. And we were not calling to unfreeze them, rather only to manage and preserve them in these difficult circumstances and the volatile global economic situation.

In that context, I regret to inform the Council that we are being blackmailed again, and the same country's name has come up: Belgium. After its first failed attempt in February to seize €50 million worth of Libyan assets was thankfully rejected by the Sanctions Committee, we were surprised by the Public Prosecutor of Belgium's recent issuing of a memorandum to launch an investigation of the head of the Libyan Investment Authority, without communicating with the Libyan authorities to clarify the matter or respect the relevant diplomatic channels. That came after the Belgian authorities seized approximately €15 billion from the Authority's frozen accounts, which was treated like a suspect in a criminal case, without any explanation of

the reason. This step could lead to the unlawful arrest of the head of the institution.

In his turn, the Prime Minister announced his total rejection of this escalation and attempts to tamper with the money of the Libyans, in deviation from any diplomatic norms, stressing that any dispute and settlement must take place between Governments, and not through blackmail or by subverting the money and institutions of Libya's sovereign and threatening its citizens. We therefore call on Belgium to stop taking such provocative measures and to cooperate with the Government to find a diplomatic and practical solution to the crisis. We also call on the Security Council and the Sanctions Committee to work to fulfil their obligations and promises to preserve these assets and warn all countries not to touch them or seize them under any justification, which is in clear violation of the resolutions of the Council. We have sent a letter to the Council and to the Committee with regard to that matter.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that this important juncture requires that we work to ensure the success of the political process and counter any local or international spoilers who stand in the way of the aspirations of the Libyan people to self-determination and to express their will. Today's briefings to the Council addressed Libya and told us what we should do. However, members of the Council should also heed us and correct the mistakes they have made to the detriment of the Libyan people. Council members have a moral responsibility for the developments in my country over the past 10 years. Libyan citizens, especially young people, have become more aware and

have uncovered all the conspiracies that were and are being engaged against them.

The Council has also seen genuine national reconciliation, synergy and the start of the end to a painful chapter in the history of Libya. That is best evidenced by the participation of all political movements, regardless of their affiliations, in the current democratic process. Do not belittle us. The Libyan people will recover from this crisis. We will become stronger than before. But we ask only that those who interfere in our internal affairs stop. And as we say in the Libyan dialect, "Leave us alone and our situation will be fixed." Despite all the challenges, Libya will remain steadfast, together as one and united. That is the secret of our strength, no matter what.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank the Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2021/24.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I thank Ms. Bensaad for participating in this meeting.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.