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United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2510 \(2020\)](#) and [2542 \(2020\)](#), covers political, security-related and economic developments in Libya, provides an overview of the human rights and humanitarian situation, and includes an outline of the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) since the issuance of my previous report on UNSMIL ([S/2021/62](#)) on 19 January 2021 and my progress report on the proposed ceasefire monitoring arrangements in Libya ([S/2021/281](#)) on 22 March 2021.

II. Political, security-related and economic developments

2. Since the issuance of my previous report on UNSMIL ([S/2021/62](#)) and my progress report ([S/2021/281](#)), UNSMIL has continued to convene the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum to pursue the implementation of the road map entitled “The preparatory phase for a comprehensive solution”, adopted in Tunis in November 2020. On 5 February 2021, the members of the Forum selected a new interim executive authority to lead the country towards national elections, to be held on 24 December 2021. Mohammad Younes Menfi was selected as President-designate of the Presidency Council, while Mossa al-Koni and Abdullah Hussein al-Lafi were selected as members-designate of the Council. The Forum members selected Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah as the new Prime Minister-designate.

3. On 8 February, my new Special Envoy on Libya and Head of UNSMIL, Ján Kubiš, took up his duties. He met with Libyan actors in Tripoli and Benghazi from 15 to 20 February, and subsequently held consultations with national, regional and international actors, virtually and in person. In his engagements, the Special Envoy highlighted the importance of advancing the implementation of the ceasefire agreement signed on 23 October 2020 at the United Nations Office at Geneva. He emphasized the need to support the new interim unified executive authority in its mission to unify Libya and its institutions, and stressed the importance of preparing for the holding of national elections on 24 December, as stipulated in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map.

4. Following discussions on the agenda and location of the next session of the House of Representatives, foreign fighters and mercenaries in and around Sirte were



repositioned to enable the reopening of Ghardabiya airport so that the members of the House could attend its meeting in Sirte from 8 to 10 March. However, most of the foreign fighters and mercenaries subsequently returned to their original positions.

5. On 10 March, with more than two-thirds of the total membership of the House of Representatives present, the new Government of National Unity proposed by the Prime Minister-designate received a vote of confidence, with 132 votes in favour of the proposed Government, 2 abstentions and 36 absent members. I welcomed the endorsement of the Government by the House in a statement issued on 10 March. The Security Council welcomed the vote of confidence in a presidential statement (S/PRST/2021/6) issued on 12 March. Several Member States and the Libya Quartet partners, namely, the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations, also welcomed the endorsement.

6. On 15 March, the Government of National Unity was sworn in by the House of Representatives during a ceremony held in Tubruq. The Speaker of the House, Agila Saleh Gwaider, the President of the High State Council, Khaled Mishri, and several international observers, including the Assistant Secretary-General and Mission Coordinator, Raisedon Zenenga, attended the ceremony. The new Government includes 35 ministers, 5 of whom are women, with the position of Minister of Defence currently occupied by Mr. Dbeibah. Separately, the President-designate of the Presidency Council and his two deputies-designate took the constitutional oath before the Supreme Court in Tripoli, also on 15 March. On 17 March, the House announced that it had received for its consideration from the Government a draft budget proposal in the amount of 96 billion Libyan dinars (approximately \$21 billion).

7. Following the swearing-in of the Government of National Unity, power was transferred from the outgoing Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord to the new Presidency Council and the Government of National Unity at a handover ceremony on 16 March at the seat of government in Tripoli. On 23 March, the Deputy Prime Minister, Hussein al-Qatrani, led a ministerial visit to Benghazi to mark the handover of responsibilities from the parallel eastern-based “interim government” to the Government of National Unity.

8. From 23 to 30 March, my Special Envoy travelled to Libya to encourage the implementation of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map, in particular to mobilize the support and resources required to hold national elections on 24 December. The Special Envoy met with the Presidency Council, the Prime Minister and members of the Government of National Unity. He also met with the Chair of the High National Elections Commission to follow up on technical preparations for the elections and the international support required, and with representatives of civil society organizations and women’s groups in Tripoli and Misratah.

9. Meanwhile, in response to the request made in the letter dated 4 February 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/110), the Libya planning team at United Nations Headquarters established a multidisciplinary and inter-agency advance team. From 3 to 28 March, the advance team conducted consultations with relevant stakeholders, including the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, in Benghazi, Misratah, Sirte and Tripoli. The advance team also conducted site visits to assess key operational, security, administrative, logistical and medical requirements pertaining to the ceasefire monitoring component to be established within UNSMIL in support of the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

10. On 22 March, I submitted to the Security Council a progress report on the proposed ceasefire monitoring arrangements in Libya (S/2021/281). On 7 April, I submitted additional information on the composition and operational aspects of the

proposed UNSMIL ceasefire monitoring component in a letter addressed to the President of the Council (S/2021/353). The Council approved my proposals through its resolution 2570 (2021), adopted on 16 April.

11. While the ceasefire agreement continued to hold, UNSMIL received reports of fortifications and defensive positions being established along the Sirte-Jufrah axis in central Libya, and of the continued presence of foreign elements and assets. Despite the commitments made by the parties, air cargo activities reportedly continued, with flights to various military airbases in the country's western and eastern regions. Reports indicated that there was no reduction in the number of foreign fighters or in their activities in central Libya.

Implementation of the intra-Libyan dialogue tracks, facilitated by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

12. Sustained efforts were made to advance the UNSMIL-facilitated intra-Libyan political, security and economic dialogues, within the framework of the conclusions of the Berlin Conference on Libya. As a result, a power was peacefully transferred from the Government of National Accord and the eastern-based parallel authorities to the Government of National Unity. Moreover, further progress towards the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement was made.

13. On 19 January, the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum voted to approve the proposed selection mechanism for a new interim executive authority to govern Libya in the lead-up to the national elections, with 73 per cent of the votes in favour. A one-week nomination period resulted in the nomination of 24 candidates for the three-member Presidency Council and 21 candidates for the post of Prime Minister. The selection process approved by the Forum was based on a proposal adopted by consensus by the Forum's 18-member Advisory Committee, established on 4 January.

14. From 1 to 5 February, UNSMIL convened the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Geneva, with the support of the Government of Switzerland. On 2 February, none of the candidates for the Presidency Council attained the required threshold of 70 per cent in the electoral colleges, resulting, as the next step, in the formation of lists composed of candidates for the Council and the position of Prime Minister. On 5 February, the Forum held two rounds of voting to select one of four competing lists. The winning list received 39 votes (out of 73) while the second-placed list, which was composed of Mr. Gwaider as candidate for the post of President of the Council, Osama Juwaili and Abdul Majeed Seif al-Nasr as candidates for the posts of member of the Council, and Fathi Bashagha as candidate for the post of Prime Minister, received 34 votes. The candidates in the second-placed list promptly accepted the outcome of the vote. The outgoing President of the Council, Fayez Serraj, congratulated the winning list and commended the Forum on agreeing on a new interim executive authority. The voting process was live-streamed for the benefit of all Libyans and the international community.

15. From 8 to 12 February, the Constitutional Committee established by the House of Representatives and the High State Council to determine a constitutional basis for the national elections met in Hurghada, Egypt. The Committee formulated a proposal in accordance with which a referendum on the 2017 draft constitution would be held prior to the presidential and legislative elections. The proposal includes a potential amendment to the Constitutional Declaration to enable the holding of the elections, should the High National Elections Commission, House and Council assess that the referendum cannot be organized before the elections. The proposal envisions the election of the Head of State and the members of the House by universal and direct suffrage in accordance with electoral laws to be promulgated by the House in

agreement with the Council. The Committee's proposal was adopted by the Council on 16 February but is yet to be considered by the House.

16. On 11 February, UNSMIL convened a plenary session of the Libyan economic dialogue to seek the views of economic experts on recent economic reforms and receive recommendations on the way forward. Participants stressed the need for subsidy reform and increased transparency, in view of the prospective selection of a new Government.

17. On 26 March, UNSMIL convened a virtual meeting of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, the first since the formation of the Government of National Unity on 5 February. My Special Envoy highlighted the continued relevance of the Forum as an instrument to ensure follow-up on the implementation of the Forum road map.

18. From 7 to 9 April, UNSMIL convened a meeting of the legal committee of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Tunis. The committee made progress in finalizing a draft constitutional basis that provides constitutional arrangements for the exercise of legislative and executive powers after the elections and a process for reviewing the 2017 draft Constitution before submitting it to a referendum after the elections. On 4 May, my Special Envoy transmitted the committee's proposal to the Forum, which he intends to convene in plenary session in the second half of May to deliberate on the proposal.

19. In the framework of national reconciliation, the Government of National Unity, in coordination with the leadership of the Libyan National Army and western armed groups, facilitated the release of combatants and political detainees on 31 March. On that day, 107 combatants from the western region, who had been captured by the Zawiyah Security Directorate, were released by the municipality of Zawiyah. The following day, the Libyan National Army Command approved the release of 8 women from Grenada prison in the east, in addition to 27 other detainees from the east. Subsequently, the Command released a total of over 200 detainees, mostly from the eastern city of Darnah, in various batches. In addition, on 7 May, dozens of detainees were released by the Command, which reiterated its commitment to release more detainees, with more releases expected after Eid al-Fitr.

20. The 5+5 Joint Military Commission continued to provide leadership and build confidence among the parties, including by providing security assurances for the meeting of the House of Representatives in Sirte from 8 to 10 March. The Commission held six meetings during the reporting period, including three with the security working group of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya. It also continued to work towards the reopening of the coastal road connecting Misratah with eastern Libya, to prepare for ceasefire monitoring and the deployment of joint security forces, and to advocate the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from the country. The Commission met with the advance team deployed by the Secretariat to inform their deliberations on the UNSMIL ceasefire monitoring component. They also met with my Special Envoy on 27 April in Sirte to discuss progress in ceasefire implementation and the remaining steps required to reopen the coastal road.

International Follow-up Committee on Libya

21. The International Follow-up Committee on Libya met virtually at the senior level twice during the reporting period. On 25 February, the participants reaffirmed their full support for UNSMIL and its new leadership in facilitating international efforts to promote a Libyan-led solution to the conflict. On 21 April, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas, delivered opening remarks and Mr. Dbeibah provided an update on developments since the swearing-in of the Government of National Unity on 10 March. In a joint statement, the co-chairs of the Committee, namely, my Special Envoy and Germany, noted that holding elections was the primary

task of the interim executive authority and other relevant institutions, and called on the House of Representatives to clarify and enact, at the latest by 1 July, the constitutional basis and legal framework for elections. They emphasized that the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement remained critical and urged all actors to expedite the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya without delay, and to fully comply with the United Nations arms embargo. The four working groups, covering security, political, economic, and international humanitarian law and human rights aspects, continued to meet in support of the three intra-Libyan track dialogue process.

22. The security working group, co-chaired by France, Italy, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the African Union, held seven meetings during the reporting period, including one with the participation of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission. The working group played an important role in maintaining international consensus on the 23 October ceasefire agreement, and reinforced the efforts of the Commission to implement the ceasefire provisions, including the reopening of the coastal road, and the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries and operationalization of the Libyan Ceasefire Monitoring Mechanism.

23. On 21 January, the economic working group, co-chaired by Egypt, the United States of America and the European Union, convened a plenary meeting with the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya and the two ministers of finance to seek agreement on unifying the budget under the facilitation of UNSMIL. The following week, UNSMIL held meetings with the ministers of finance and the Central Bank of Libya; as a result, an agreement was reached on a consolidated two-month interim budget for January and February. However, with the formation of the Government of National Unity, the interim budget was put aside pending the promulgation of a new unified national budget by the incoming Administration. The economic working group convened a second plenary on 22 March with the new Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. The meeting was intended to focus on the need for emergency spending to stabilize the electricity grid, which was in danger of collapsing. The meeting, however, was postponed at the request of the Prime Minister in order to review the Government's cooperation with the economic working group.

24. The political working group, co-chaired by Algeria, Germany and the League of Arab States, convened three plenary sessions to review the progress achieved by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum and the efforts of the unified interim executive authority. During its meeting on 25 February, the then President-designate of the Presidency Council and the then Prime Minister-designate stated their commitment to forming an inclusive national unity cabinet and highlighted their priorities. On 18 March, the Chair of the High National Elections Commission briefed the working group on preparations for the national elections. He emphasized that, while the Commission was ready to start preparations for the elections, the lack of a constitutional basis and an electoral legal framework prevented it from taking concrete steps in that regard. He indicated that the constitutional and legislative frameworks should be ready by early July at the latest so that the Commission could prepare for the elections scheduled for 24 December.

25. The international humanitarian law and human rights working group, co-chaired by the Netherlands and Switzerland, convened three plenary sessions. The first plenary focused on arbitrary detention and its impact, including on the political process and local and national reconciliation activities. At the second plenary, held in cooperation with the Libyan Civil Society Commission, the working group discussed the imperative of preserving and expanding humanitarian space and of ensuring that the ceasefire resulted in peace dividends for civilians, including freedom of movement and access to essential services and markets.

International and regional engagement

26. Regional and international stakeholders continued to offer support and engage with the Libyan parties to promote progress in the tracks of the intra-Libyan dialogue. Egypt hosted the meeting of the Constitutional Committee of the House of Representatives and the High State Council from 8 to 12 February in Hurgada to formulate proposals on a constitutional basis for elections. On 17 March, the President of Tunisia, Kaïs Saïed, became the first foreign head of State to visit Tripoli since the election of the new Government of National Unity. Subsequently, the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and Italy, the Prime Ministers of Egypt, Greece, Italy, and Malta, and the President of the European Council visited Tripoli. Several embassies have relocated to Tripoli or are in the process of doing so.

27. Mr. Menfi undertook visits to Egypt, France and Turkey in March, while Mr. Dbeibah visited Kuwait, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates in early April. On 13 April, Mr. Dbeibah and a large delegation of ministers from the Government of National Unity travelled to Ankara for a two-day visit.

28. My Special Envoy held consultations, virtually and in person, with senior representatives of Member States participating in the Berlin process and other stakeholders. He also undertook visits to Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. At his meetings, the Special Envoy highlighted the importance of advancing the three-track intra-Libyan dialogues, including the full implementation of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map, and the critical importance of holding national parliamentary and presidential elections on 24 December and supporting the new interim executive in its efforts to unify Libya and its institutions. The Special Envoy also stressed the need to fully implement the ceasefire agreement, including the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign forces.

29. On 26 March, the European Union renewed the mandate of its military operation in the Mediterranean for two years, until 31 March 2023.

30. My Special Envoy and UNSMIL maintained regular contact with the other members of the Libya Quartet (namely, the African Union, the European Union and the League of Arab States). From 11 to 13 April, he held consultations in Addis Ababa with senior African Union officials. On 15 April, he met with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States in Cairo.

31. On 20 April, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, chaired the sixth meeting of the Libya Quartet. The meeting was attended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Monique Nsanzabaganwa, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell. A joint communiqué was issued after the meeting.

Situation in the western region

32. Latent rivalry and renewed competition among armed groups resurfaced in Tripoli and the western region in the lead-up to and following the selection of a new executive authority by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum. Ahead of the meeting of the Forum in Geneva from 1 to 5 February, some Tripoli-based armed groups and the armed groups from western Libya issued a statement on 31 January urging the then President of the Presidency Council to reunite the Council and form a national unity Government until the elections on 24 December.

33. On 21 February, a security incident in Tripoli's Janzur district, involving the security staff of the then Minister of the Interior, Mr. Bashagha, and members of the Stability Support Apparatus, left one person dead and another injured. The Prosecutor's Office ordered the arrest of one of the members of the Minister's staff and two members of the Stability Support Apparatus, who were placed in the custody of the Deterrent Agency for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism, formerly known as the Special Deterrence Force.

34. On 23 January, demonstrations by families of victims of human rights violations in Tarhunah resulted in vandalism and the burning of five unoccupied houses belonging to two pro-Libyan National Army families and supporters of the Ninth Brigade. Additional mass graves were discovered in Tarhunah during the reporting period, bringing the total number of graves discovered to 101. Despite challenges related to the lack of resources, national authorities have been using secondary identification processes to identify the bodies. In total, 44 bodies, including those of 3 women and 3 children, were identified and handed over to their families.

Situation in the eastern region

35. In eastern Libya, there were continued reports of criminal activity, including killings, kidnappings for ransom, carjackings and extortion. A series of demonstrations was held in February by wounded Libyan National Army veterans demanding payment for medical care. On 28 February, the Libyan National Army dispatched a large military force from its 166th Infantry Battalion to Darnah, east of Benghazi, reportedly to establish law and order and target Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) elements still operating in the area. On 2 March, protestors stormed the Central Bank of Libya branch in Benghazi. The branch subsequently suspended its activities, demanding adequate protection.

36. On 24 March, Mahmoud al-Werfalli, a commander in the Al-Saiqa Brigade, which is affiliated with the Libyan National Army, who had been indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes, was shot dead in Benghazi.

Situation in the southern region

37. Criminal activity and violent confrontation between armed groups reportedly increased in the southern region. On 16 February, UNSMIL condemned what appeared to be a targeted mortar attack in the city of Sabha during a celebration held to mark the tenth anniversary of the February Revolution. A 10-year-old child was killed in the attack and 29 others, including 2 children, were injured.

38. The Libyan National Army increased its activities and assets at airbases in the region, in part because of recent events in Chad. Over the past several months, the Libyan National Army has continued to operate mostly in the areas around the Sharara oil field, Awbari and the Shati' junction checkpoints, maintaining control over key points of access to the southern region.

39. The region also experienced a significant increase in the number of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases, which prompted a lockdown for several weeks.

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Libya and Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

40. Although no operations were attributed to them over the past several months, ISIL and a support network of the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb remained a threat in Libya. Their presence and activities in Libya represent a direct threat against civilian targets, government institutions and the United Nations.

41. In early March, the Joint Security Room of the Government of National Accord coordinated a counter-terrorism operation in southern Tripoli, which led to the arrest of elements reportedly affiliated with ISIL. On 14 March, the Libyan National Army announced that its forces had carried out an operation in southern Libya, which led to the arrest of a prominent ISIL leader, Muhammad Miloud Muhammad. Separately, a member of the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb who had participated in the attack on the Birak al-Shati' airbase on 18 May 2017, Omar Abdeen al-Mahmoudi, was shot and killed during a family dispute.

Economic situation

42. On 16 March, the Office of the Prime Minister requested the National Oil Corporation to unfreeze oil revenue held in its accounts since September 2020, when the eight-month-long blockage of oil production had been lifted. The Corporation, which had accrued over \$8 billion in revenue during that time, promptly complied with the request. The end of the freeze was the result of numerous reforms by Libyan authorities, including the reactivation of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Libya on 17 December 2020, the unification of foreign exchange rates through the devaluation of the Libyan dinar on 3 January 2021, an effort to address the banking crisis through the provision of a 5 billion dinar (approximately \$1.1 billion) loan to the commercial banks on 1 February, the launching of a comprehensive audit of the Libyan Investment Authority on 12 January and progress in the international financial review of the two branches of the Central Bank of Libya.

43. On 17 March, the Office of the Prime Minister submitted a draft unified budget to both the House of Representatives and the High State Council for review. On 19 and 20 April, the House met and decided to return the budget to the Government of National Unity for review, stating that spending should not exceed 78 billion Libyan dinars (approximately \$17.4 billion). The adoption of the budget is urgently needed in order to address the immediate needs facing the country, including the growing electricity crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

A. Electoral support

44. The UNSMIL-led integrated electoral assistance office, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), continued to provide technical assistance to the High National Elections Commission and the Central Committee for Municipal Council Elections, including support in the coordination of international electoral assistance. UNSMIL also worked with the Commission to advance the planning and process design for the voting cards that the Commission intends to introduce ahead of the upcoming national elections. The UNDP electoral assistance project entitled "Promoting elections for the people of Libya" initiated a procurement process for purchasing 12,000 ballot boxes to be used in the elections.

45. On 9 February, the Chair of the High National Elections Commission briefed the Constitutional Committee of the House of Representatives and the High State Council on the technical aspects of the implementation of a constitutional referendum before the national elections. The Chair reiterated his position that holding a referendum before the presidential and legislative elections would compromise the scheduled date of 24 December. On 23 March, Mr. Dbeibah visited the headquarters of the Commission in Tripoli, where he conveyed to the Chair the commitment of the

Government of National Unity to supporting the Commission in fulfilling its mandate, in line with the electoral legislation, once issued.

46. In January and February, mayoral elections were completed for the eight newly elected municipal councils of Rujban, Zawiyah West, Qarabulli, Qasr Khayar, Zlitan, Sabratah and Sawani Bin Adam, as well as Tripoli Centre. Municipal elections for the Greater Tripoli municipality of Suq al-Jum'ah were held on 3 April. Since 2019, elections have been held for 40 municipal councils, while 74 other council elections are to be held before the end of 2021.

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

47. While the ceasefire has resulted in a dramatic reduction in civilian casualties, violations of human rights continued. UNSMIL documented killings; enforced disappearances; conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, arbitrary arrests and detentions; attacks against activists and human rights defenders; and hate crimes. During the reporting period, UNSMIL documented at least 31 civilian victims, including 3 dead and 28 injured.

Unlawful deprivation of liberty, detention and torture

48. On 2 February, UNSMIL conducted a joint mission with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to the Judaydah detention centre in Tripoli to assess the situation of women and children detained for their alleged affiliation with ISIL. At the time of the visit, 39 women and 59 children, from Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Nigeria, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia, were detained at the facility, having been transferred in September 2020 from Misratah. Many had spent over five years in arbitrary detention, with some children born in detention. On 11 February, in cooperation with the Tunisian Embassy in Libya, UNSMIL conducted a mission to assess the needs of the women and children held at the Mitiga detention centre in Tripoli. A total of 14 women and 22 children had been held there for over five years for their alleged affiliation with ISIL. Some of the children had spent most of their lives incarcerated, while others had been born in the facility. Accounts suggested that most of the women had been captured by unknown armed groups from Sabratah and subjected to torture and sexual violence, including rape. As a result of UNSMIL advocacy and cooperation by Libyan and Tunisian authorities, all the Tunisian women and children were repatriated to Tunisia between 12 and 17 March.

49. On 17 March, the newly appointed Minister of Justice announced the establishment of a 15-member committee to address the issue of arbitrary detention, particularly for the thousands of pretrial detainees.

Conflict-related sexual violence

50. UNSMIL continued to document numerous reports of conflict-related sexual violence, including in places of official detention. Female migrants and refugees continued to face heightened risks of rape, sexual harassment and trafficking by transnational smugglers, traffickers and armed groups, and, in some cases, by officials of the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration. The Libya Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements Technical Working Group and Secretariat were established on 25 February, in an effort to enhance protection for victims of rape and other forms of conflict-related sexual violence, and in line with Security Council resolution [1960 \(2010\)](#). The Secretary-General, in his latest annual report on conflict-related sexual violence ([S/2021/312](#)), reiterated the recommendations that the Libyan authorities adopt anti-trafficking legislation in order to increase protection from sexual violence for women and children migrants and refugees, and strengthen their

rule of law institutions to promote accountability for crimes of sexual violence, in line with resolution [2242 \(2015\)](#).

Migrants and refugees

51. The International Organization for Migration indicated in its most recent Displacement Tracking Matrix that there are more than 571,000 migrants in Libya, most of whom come from neighbouring countries, including Chad, Egypt, the Niger and the Sudan.

52. On 23 and 26 February, guards at the Abu Salim detention centre, operated by the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration, indiscriminately opened fire, killing at least five migrants and injuring many more. A similar incident occurred on 8 April at the Al-Mabani detention centre, when guards shot and killed a migrant and injured several others. On 2 March, the Ministry of the Interior announced the capture of the lead suspect in the killing of 27 Bangladeshi and 4 sub-Saharan African migrants and refugees in Mizdah, southern Libya.

53. Between 5 and 13 March, the 444th Battalion, operating under the Deterrent Agency for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism, conducted multiple raids on Bani Walid-based human traffickers and made several arrests. Migrants and refugees captured as a result of the operation were subsequently detained.

54. The number of migrants and refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean increased in early 2021. By the end of April, the Libyan Coastguard had intercepted and returned to Libya 6,800 migrants and refugees who had been attempting to cross, a 115 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2020. In addition, over 500 migrants and refugees died on the Central Mediterranean route.

55. Increasing numbers of migrants and refugees continued to be arbitrarily detained in official detention centres of the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration, without due process and in extremely poor conditions, with reported deaths and injuries. As at 2 May, over 4,300 migrants and refugees were being held at detention centres across the country, with significantly increased humanitarian and protection concerns, including the imposition by the Directorate of new restrictions on humanitarian access and monitoring by humanitarian agencies.

Human rights defenders and members of civil society

56. Human rights defenders and members of civil society continued to be subjected to arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture by various armed groups. Freedom of expression continued to be undermined, with activists and defenders subjected to hate crimes. Human rights defenders who spoke up continued to be targeted and subjected to violence, abuse, social media vilification and threats.

Corruption

57. On 9 March, the Libyan Audit Bureau issued its annual report for 2019, which included allegations of corruption and serious financial crimes concerning a number of national institutions, including the former Presidency Council and the former Ministries of the Interior, Defence, Health, Foreign Affairs and Local Government. The former Minister of the Interior rejected the allegations as false and politically motivated. The Attorney General's Office announced that it would launch an investigation into the allegations raised in the report.

58. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Egyptian Anti-Corruption Academy organized a four-day training workshop in March, with 19 participants from the Libyan law enforcement authorities, prosecution service, judiciary and financial information unit, in order to strengthen the criminal justice

response of Libya to corruption. The workshop was conducted as part of the Office's project, implemented jointly with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, to prevent and combat corruption and money-laundering in Libya.

Rule of law

59. On 28 February, the High Judicial Institute announced the resumption of its regular education programme following a four-year suspension. UNSMIL is coordinating the roll-out of the second phase of training for the six judges of the two newly established courts for violence against women and children, in cooperation with UNDP, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). UNSMIL also provided technical assistance to the Libyan Bar Association to develop its first code of ethics.

Transitional justice and rights-based reconciliation

60. On 12 February, during an intervention in Tubruq, Mr. Menfi highlighted national reconciliation as one of his priorities, alongside the unity of the armed forces and service delivery by unified institutions. Those priorities are in line with the commitments set out in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map. In addition, on 5 April, Mr. Menfi announced the establishment of a High National Reconciliation Commission to address past human rights violations and promote national reconciliation based on justice and the rule of law.

61. UNSMIL initiated consultations with the African Union to discuss areas in which the Libyan authorities could be supported in promoting human rights-based reconciliation. From 5 to 6 April, UNSMIL and UNDP, in coordination with the African Union, supported the Office of the Prime Minister in the organization of a workshop to discuss the establishment of a national reconciliation commission. In addition, my Special Envoy discussed collaboration with the African Union in the provision of support for Libyan national reconciliation efforts, during his visit to the African Union on 11 and 12 April.

Human rights due diligence policy

62. The United Nations system in Libya continued to implement the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces (see [A/67/775-S/2013/110](#), annex), with a view to preventing and mitigating the identified risks of grave violations of international humanitarian law, human rights law or refugee law by Libyan security forces receiving United Nations support.

C. Security sector

Implementation of the ceasefire

63. Significant progress was made in clearing explosive remnants of war from the coastal road by military engineers from the west and the east. With the technical advice and coordination support of UNSMIL and the Mine Action Service, and despite serious shortages of human resources and materiel, the teams cleared 120 kilometres of the road and removed 7.5 tons of explosive ordnance during the operations. Clearance operations were completed on 21 March, with the final 10 kilometres cleared jointly with and coordinated by the Libyan Mine Action Centre. However, the road has not yet reopened, reportedly owing to political obstacles and tensions between western-affiliated armed groups and pro-Libyan National Army mercenaries in the vicinity of Abu Qurayn.

64. The 5+5 Joint Military Commission continued to prepare for the establishment of the Joint Libyan Security (Police) Force and the Joint Libyan Military Force, including the development of detailed requirements for possible international assistance. On 29 April, following its meeting in Sirte, the Commission issued a statement in which it welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution [2571 \(2021\)](#), and the participation of the President of the Presidency Council and my Special Envoy in the meeting. The Commission also noted in the statement that it had selected the head of the Joint Libyan Military Force.

65. On 29 April, the Security Council held an informal interactive dialogue on the issue of foreign fighters. In their briefing, my Special Envoy and the Assistant Secretary-General and Mission Coordinator underscored the importance of the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries, as well as security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation.

Arms and ammunition management

66. Recently completed mine action surveys in south Tripoli provided evidence of the impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas during the 2019–2020 conflict. Surveys identified 750 areas that are known or suspected to be contaminated. Most areas had explosive remnants of war contamination, with some suspected to have landmines. To date, survey teams have recorded more than 3.8 million square metres as confirmed or suspected hazardous areas that require mine action intervention. Ongoing clearance operations in Benghazi, Misratah, Sabha and Sirte have yielded positive results. Additional resources and partnerships need to be mobilized to clear the areas in a timely manner to facilitate safe returns, livelihood activities and reconciliation.

D. Women's empowerment

67. UNSMIL facilitated the engagement and participation of women from across the spectrum of Libyan society in the intra-Libyan dialogue tracks. A total of 23 per cent of the participants in the meeting of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Geneva were women. UNSMIL and the International Follow-up Committee on Libya highlighted the importance of honouring the pledge made by all candidates for the position of Prime Minister to increase women's participation in the affairs of the State. On 26 February, Mr. Dbeibah stressed his commitment to appointing women to no less than 30 per cent of senior executive positions, during a meeting with the women's caucus of the Forum.

68. In response to concerns raised by women's groups over the limited participation of women in the economic dialogue, three additional women joined the economic track, increasing the number of women participating to 7 of the 34 members.

69. From 8 March, UN-Women, in collaboration with UNSMIL and the United Nations country team, held a five-day virtual conference with support from partners, including Canada and the European Union. The conference brought together 60 Libyan women from a broad spectrum of Libyan society, including the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, academia, civil society and human rights defenders. The participants discussed the situation of front-line Libyan women amid the pandemic. They highlighted a range of concerns in areas such as security, human rights, economic empowerment, the media, youth empowerment and humanitarian response. They reiterated their commitment to ensuring the integration of the perspectives of women and girls in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes in all spheres and stages of the pandemic response and recovery.

70. On 1 April, my Special Envoy gave a briefing to the Security Council Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. He provided an update on the efforts of the United Nations to support women's participation in elections as both candidates and voters. He stressed that United Nations support to ceasefire monitoring should be inclusive of women and youth, and that women should be included in the subcommittees of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission.

E. Young people, peace and security

71. UNFPA continued to partner with the Libyan Red Crescent, UN-Women and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to empower young people engaged on the front lines of the humanitarian crisis in Libya by awarding 14 microgrants to youth-led initiatives and mentorship programmes. UNFPA organized and chaired regular monthly meetings of the youth working group, responsible for developing an action plan for United Nations engagement with youth in Libya, in line with resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) on youth, peace and security and the 2019–2020 United Nations Strategic Framework for Libya.

F. Coordination of international assistance

72. The United Nations country team began preparations for the conduct of a common country assessment and the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

G. Humanitarian, stabilization and development assistance

73. Insecurity, lack of basic services, economic and governance crises, and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to increased humanitarian needs across Libya. The 2021 humanitarian needs overview contains the assessment that 1.3 million people need humanitarian assistance in 2021, including 173,000 internally displaced people, 228,000 returnees, 304,000 migrants, 44,000 refugees and 502,000 vulnerable host community members, compared with 900,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020. The situation was exacerbated by increasing food prices, which remain 20 per cent above pre-COVID-19 levels. Moreover, in the Libya Humanitarian Response Plan, 153,000 people were identified as at risk of gender-based violence and requiring specialized prevention and response programming.

74. Since its inception, the UNDP Stabilization Facility for Libya, aimed at restoring public trust in national and local authorities, thereby generating peace dividends and fostering national unity, has supported 24 municipalities and completed 298 community-endorsed projects through inclusive community consultations. In 2020, the facility completed 114 projects to support the rehabilitation of educational, medical, and public facilities and improve health and sanitation services to the benefit of over 2.5 million people.

75. Since July 2020, the number of internally displaced persons decreased from an estimated 429,000 to 278,000. Although more such persons are returning to their homes, a lack of basic services and the presence of explosive remnants of war and landmines in return areas, especially in southern parts of Tripoli, continue to present impediments to return. During the reporting period, 15 people were killed and 5 were injured by explosive contamination in Tripoli and Sirte. More explosive contamination continued to be discovered and removed for disposal.

76. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to overwhelm the health system in Libya. As at 29 April, approximately 177,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 had been reported, including 3,023 deaths, with the actual number of cases likely much higher. Testing capacity, including human resources and supplies, remained very limited. Several health facilities were still closed owing to a lack of oxygen cylinders and sufficient health workers to care for the increasing number of sick patients. Numerous municipalities across the country remained in lockdown owing to an increasing number of COVID-19 cases.

77. In March, the Government of National Unity endorsed the national deployment plan for COVID-19 vaccination in Libya, which was developed with support from UNICEF and the World Health Organization. In accordance with the plan, 426 health facilities or vaccination sites in 102 municipalities will support vaccination efforts. Through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, Libya secured 2.8 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. In April, Libya received over 258,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, of which 57,600 were delivered through the COVAX Facility. The national COVID-19 vaccination campaign was launched in Tripoli on 17 April, followed by the western, eastern, and southern regions. As at 29 April, a total of 63,152 doses had been made available at 430 sites across the country; 88 per cent in the western and 11 per cent in eastern region. In the first stage of the campaign, high priority is given to medical personnel and the elderly suffering from chronic diseases. On 29 April, the National Centre for Disease Control and UNICEF launched a campaign to increase people's confidence in the vaccine.

78. Humanitarian partners continued to face access constraints owing to bureaucratic impediments and insecurity. Some 283 access constraints were reported in February, the lowest number in months. However, delays in the issuance of visas for aid workers and the clearance of critical relief items, particularly health supplies, continued, impacting the delivery of assistance to affected people.

79. As of the end of 27 April, humanitarian partners had assisted almost 203,000 people, about 45 per cent of the target group of the most vulnerable people in need. An additional 63,000 people in need received assistance with humanitarian activities outside the Humanitarian Response Plan. As detailed in the 2021 Plan, \$189 million, of which only \$36.1 million, or 19 per cent, has been secured so far, is required in 2021 to meet the humanitarian needs of 451,000 of the most vulnerable people in Libya.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and security arrangements

80. UNSMIL increased its international staff presence to 120 staff, on a rotational basis, considering the improved security situation in the Tripoli area and the requirements for staff to engage with Libyan interlocutors to continue the ongoing political, security, economic, and international human rights law and humanitarian law tracks, and the requirements for the provision of humanitarian assistance. All international staff in Tripoli continued to be accommodated at the Oea compound, protected by the United Nations Guard Unit. National staff continued to report to work in the compound on a rotational basis, when their presence was required. Alternatively, they worked remotely.

81. Comprehensive protective and preventive measures to safeguard staff and interlocutors from contracting or potentially spreading COVID-19 remained in place, and adherence to the measures was closely monitored. The measures were regularly reviewed and adjusted in accordance with evolving advice by the World Health Organization and UNSMIL medical staff, and to ensure alignment with measures put

in place by the Libyan and Tunisian authorities. Strict COVID-19 preventive measures continued to be applied on all flights. Road movements in Tripoli were conducted in compliance with security risk management measures.

V. Observations and recommendations

82. The smooth transfer of power to a new Presidency Council, Prime Minister and Government of National Unity brings renewed hope for the reunification of the country and its institutions, and for a lasting peace. The Council and the Prime Minister now have the important task of leading Libya towards presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 December. I commend the members of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum for the key role they played in achieving that outcome. The momentum should be maintained and progress needs to be continued on the political, security and economic tracks, to enable the holding of national elections on that date, in accordance with the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum road map and as requested in Security Council resolution [2570 \(2021\)](#). Similarly, the international community should remain aligned in its support for Libya and the Government of National Unity.

83. The vote of confidence of the House of Representatives in the Government of National Unity, in which participation was high, was a significant political milestone. The House must continue to fulfil its responsibility and complete the next tasks necessary to enable the political process to move forward. Those tasks include the approval of the budget and the adoption of a constitutional basis and legal framework for the national elections, including the passing of electoral laws and other necessary legislation.

84. The Government of National Unity must provide the High National Elections Commission with timely support, including through relevant line ministries and government institutions, so that the national elections can be held on 24 December. That support includes the provision of sufficient funds, the ensuring of a conducive security environment, and support for COVID-19 health and safety measures in the conduct of the process. The Government's support will be complemented by the provision of international electoral assistance to the Commission, coordinated by UNSMIL.

85. The holding of municipal elections, despite the political, security and pandemic-related challenges, is an important achievement and a sign that many Libyans are eager to participate in democratic processes. The time is ripe for the two committees managing municipal elections in the west and the east to unify and complete the elections for the remaining municipalities in a safe and secure manner, following appropriate COVID-19 health and safety measures.

86. The full inclusion of women and youth in the Libyan political process and State institutions is essential. The women's caucus in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum played an instrumental role in securing a pledge by the new interim executive authority to appoint women to at least 30 per cent of senior executive positions. I urge the Government of National Unity to honour that important commitment.

87. Recent positive developments in the political process would not have been possible without the continued commitment by Libyan parties to the 23 October ceasefire agreement. I call on the Government of National Unity and all Libyan actors to continue supporting the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and its efforts to fully implement the ceasefire agreement. The reopening of the coastal road and progress in the priorities identified by the Commission will generate dividends for the political process. To help support its implementation, and pursuant to Security Council resolution [2570 \(2021\)](#), a scalable UNSMIL ceasefire monitoring component will be

deployed to Libya, if the General Assembly approves supplementary resources covering security, logistical, medical and operational requirements; the related proposal will be submitted to the Assembly in the near future.

88. Prioritization of security sector reform by the Government of National Unity is also necessary to consolidate and build on political and security gains. Important elements to that end include filling senior civilian and military appointments, delivering a road map for the reunification of the Libyan army, and addressing the proliferation of non- and quasi-State armed groups. Bringing one of the world's largest uncontrolled stocks of arms and ammunition under State control is vital. I reiterate my call to Member States and Libyan national actors to put an end to violations of the arms embargo and facilitate the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from the country. Those steps are essential to lasting peace and stability in Libya and the region.

89. The establishment of the High National Reconciliation Commission to lay the groundwork for a national reconciliation process to promote unity and social cohesion is a significant development. The United Nations stands ready to work in close collaboration with the African Union to support an inclusive process grounded in the principles of justice and human rights. Such a process is essential to ensuring long-term peace and stability.

90. I am gravely concerned about the continued arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees at formal detention centres and informal smuggler sites, and the poor conditions and treatment to which they are subjected at those sites. There is a clear and urgent need to put in place measures to protect detainees from sexual violence, provide assistance to victims, and ensure that allegations of sexual violence are effectively investigated and prosecuted. The Libyan authorities should also secure the release of refugees and migrants from detention centres as a matter of urgency, provide them with safe shelter and a humane living environment, and ensure that they are included in the country's COVID-19 planning and response. Moreover, Member States should revisit policies that support the interception at sea and return of refugees and migrants to Libya, which is not considered to be a safe port of disembarkation. I call on international partners to continue their support and to contribute generously to the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan.

91. I thank my Special Envoy, the Mission leadership, the staff of UNSMIL and the United Nations country team for their dedication and efforts to support Libya and its people on the path to peace and stability.