

**Remarks of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Libya,
Hanna S. Tetteh, to the Security Council on the situation in Libya**

19 December 2025

Madam President, Excellencies, Members of the Council

Four months have elapsed since I first presented the Roadmap to this Council on 21 August and UNSMIL has been engaging Libyan stakeholders with regard to its implementation, which I admit has been quite challenging. During my last briefing, I reported that the prioritized first actions for the implementation of the Roadmap namely, the reconstitution of the Board of the High National Elections Commission (HNEC), and the consideration and passage of the amendments to the constitutional and legal framework for elections that were recommended by the Advisory Committee set up earlier this year, have not been achieved. This is not for lack of engagement with the two chambers.

In my last briefing, I had informed that the two committees on sovereign positions of the House of Representatives and the High Council of State had agreed on 4 October to reconstitute the HNEC within two weeks. Despite multiple efforts and engagements with these institutions, this did not happen. While the High Council of State provided names to the House of Representatives for selection of a Chair of HNEC, there was no further progress. UNSMIL subsequently convened on 20 November a plenary meeting of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya, with the participation of representatives of the two institutions, and invited them to brief on their progress on these two milestones, but it was clear that there was still a lot of work to be done to arrive at a consensus.

On 28 November after further engagement, the two institutional committees of the respective bodies in the presence of UNSMIL signed an agreement establishing a mechanism for the selection of the Board members of the HNEC. According to the agreed timelines, names of candidates should have been transferred by the High Council of State to the House of Representatives and the selection finalized by 11 December. However, this did not happen. It is my assessment that the delays are a manifestation of the lack of trust between the two institutions, their own internal

divisions, and the inability to overcome their differences and agree on the way forward to resolve the current impasse. I must acknowledge, however, the serious efforts by some members of these institutions to advance these two processes.

Regarding the amendment of the constitutional and legal framework for elections: The High Council of State had dissolved its delegation to the 6+6 Committee in 2023 in an internally contested decision, and it was only on Wednesday, the 17 December, that we received a communication from the Presidency of the High Council of State of it having reconstituted its delegation to the 6+6 Committee which now creates the opportunity to engage on these matters. We note that this has been an internally contested matter within the High Council of State with more than 75 members writing to UNSMIL expressing their support for the original 6+6 members to take this legislation forward.

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We believe that it is necessary to complete these two tasks in order to have credible elections. It would be desirable for HNEC to have a fully constituted Board to manage the process of conducting what would be the most consequential elections in the history of the country. The Board's legal framework requires that all regions of the country are represented on the Board, and currently the east is not represented. We note however that the Board has just enough members to have a quorum to facilitate the conduct of business, which is why it has been possible to conduct municipal elections across the country. Therefore, we will continue our work with HNEC to facilitate the conduct of presidential and legislative elections.

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On 28 November, House of Representatives Speaker Aguila Saleh released a statement calling for the holding of presidential elections, following simultaneous demonstrations in five cities in the eastern region demanding presidential elections. In response, HNEC released a statement on 30 November stating its readiness to begin preparations for presidential and legislative elections starting in April 2026. More recently, these calls for elections have been echoed by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh in his 16 December statement. In the same statement, the Prime

Minister announced his intention to conduct a government reshuffle of the Government of National Unity. We are not privy to the details of any intended reshuffle.

UNSMIL calls on the main political actors to facilitate an agreement on the legal framework for elections so that HNEC can proceed with its necessary preparations. We will also advance a mechanism to address changes in the electoral laws.

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On 14 and 15 December, UNSMIL launched the inaugural meeting of the Structured Dialogue which is one of the core components of the Roadmap. This is the first process of this magnitude to be held on Libyan soil. UNSMIL invited nominations from key sovereign institutions, civil society actors, political parties, academia, cultural and linguistic components and also invited representation from other state institutions. The Structured Dialogue brings together a representative spectrum of Libyan society with 124 Libyans personalities representing these different institutions and stakeholder groups. While its launch took place in Tripoli, it is the intention of UNSMIL to facilitate meetings of the thematic working groups across the country, and also encourage participation through digital platforms so that as many as possible have an opportunity to share their views on the matters under consideration. Libyan women comprise 35% of the participants, and we also ensured the representation of young people and persons with disabilities. We received over 1000 solicited and unsolicited nominations, reflecting the desire of Libyans who are not in government to contribute to developing a unified vision for the future of their country. While some did not join due to political circumstances, we hope that they will be able to join future meetings.

The Structured Dialogue is intended to define guiding principles for state-building and formulate policy and legislative recommendations in areas of governance, the economy, security and national reconciliation. This approach is expected to help facilitate the creation of the political conditions for a peaceful electoral process to be held, and also help maintain peace and stability in the aftermath of elections. It is also intended to solicit the views of Libyans themselves on addressing the critical challenges facing the country, as well as their views on the mechanisms and structures that should be developed for implementation of the Structured Dialogue

outcomes. The outcomes will be published for dissemination among the broader public. I would like to be clear that the Structured Dialogue will proceed in parallel with the other tracks of the Roadmap and is not a replacement of any of the identified milestones of the Roadmap.

We will consult with the members of the Structured Dialogue and consider their recommendations relating to the implementation of the first two steps of the Roadmap, and this will inform our proposals for a mechanism for progressing changes in the electoral laws.

I am pleased to report the positive and constructive spirit by members in both the plenary session and the four thematic tracks of the Structured Dialogue. They also reflected the responsibility they feel towards the Libyan people to address pressing issues facing the country and that directly impacts their lives.

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Libya's persistent fiscal fragmentation continues to undermine economic stability and the Libyan dinar, weaken service delivery, and erode public trust in state institutions. Against this backdrop, on 18 November, delegates from the House of Representatives and the High Council of State signed an agreement establishing a Unified Development Programme as a common framework for development spending. UNSMIL considers this a constructive step in the right direction intended to strengthen financial stability through implementing expenditure controls and advancing development initiatives across the country in a financially prudent, and inclusive manner.

If implemented with transparency, effective oversight, and alignment with Libyan law and international public financial management standards, it could help address core economic challenges including strengthening the provision of public goods and services to the population.

UNSMIL stands ready to support Libyan institutions in harmonising and strengthening the country's fragmented oversight and regulatory architecture to enable coherent implementation of the agreement. The Mission urges Libyan stakeholders to continue dialogue toward agreeing on a unified national budget.

On 18 October, municipal council elections were successfully held in 16 municipalities, following their interruption in August. Voter turnout was 68 percent. On 13 December, elections were conducted in nine municipalities, including Benghazi, Sebha, and Sirte, where the process had previously been suspended. As HNEC continues working towards the announcement of results, these elections are a welcome step in restoring the legitimacy of local governance. We commend the House of Representatives in the east and south for securing the electoral process and hope that this will give further stimulus for national elections.

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Following the agreement on new security arrangements in Tripoli, the security environment in the capital has stabilized to a certain extent. The truce continues to hold, however, the situation in Tripoli and western Libya remains fragile with sporadic outbreak of armed clashes in areas in southern Tripoli and elsewhere. I urge relevant actors to work together towards implementing the security arrangements agreed upon and advance the necessary reforms to achieve stability.

Through UNSMIL's facilitation, a *Joint Border Communication Centre* was established on 28 October in Benghazi, complementing the centre set up in Tripoli in April of this year. This is a constructive step in advancing a unified approach between the LNA and GNU towards border management and cooperation.

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We welcome Libya's Universal Periodic Review process that took place in the Human Rights Council on 11 November and stand ready to work closely with Libyan House of Representatives and stakeholders on the recommendations made.

Nonetheless, I remain deeply concerned about human rights violations including violence against women, migrants and minorities, and deaths in custody. The killing of Khansa Al-Moujahed, a prominent figure and blogger, on 21 November in Tripoli, sends a chilling message to women on participating in public life and risks silencing them at a time when their contribution is most needed.

I call on the House of Representatives to expedite an impartial and transparent investigation, prosecute those responsible and take urgent measures to ensure all

Libyans can safely engage in civic activities without fear, which would include the adoption of the law on the prevention of violence against women.

On 26 October, UNSMIL sadly confirmed another death in custody of a detainee in Benghazi following alleged torture and denial of medical care by a unit reportedly affiliated with the Minister of Interior in the East. This brings the total number of deaths in custody that have been verified by UNSMIL between March 2024 and November 2025 to 24. These deaths raise serious concerns about wider patterns of arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, and lack of accountability.

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Regarding the implementation of the decisions of this Council regarding the extension of the Mission's mandate in UNSC 2796 (2025), and taking into consideration the recommendations of the Strategic Review, UNSMIL has set up an internal Task Force to implement the decisions and recommendations, but in a gradual manner due to resource constraints. We have started with recommendations that can be implemented within existing resources to include among other things, increasing the Mission's presence in eastern Libya, and establishing a dedicated economic section in UNSMIL which is planned for early 2026. UNSMIL also intends to expand its presence in Sebha in 2027 should resources allow and will include this in its budget proposals to be submitted early next year.

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The political process should not be held hostage by the inaction of key political stakeholders who are willingly or not, maintaining the status quo. In my last briefing, I stated that if the two institutions fail to have agreed on the first two milestones of the political Roadmap, I would be prepared to seek an alternative mechanism and seek the support of this Council.

The launch of the Structured Dialogue gives us the opportunity to also consult Libyan interlocutors on the most effective way of proceeding on the first two elements of the roadmap, and we will draw on their recommendations to advance the creation of the political conditions needed for the holding of elections. In parallel, we will continue to engage with key political stakeholders to advance the

political roadmap. I intend to present this mechanism in my upcoming briefing in February.

In a few days, Libyans will celebrate Independence Day on 24 December—the same date that was set for national elections in 2021. Four years later, the country's path to elections remains fraught with complications that are challenging but we believe can be overcome. I call on all Libyan leaders to respond to the desires of the Libyan people and rise above their differences in the interests of the unity and integrity of the Libyan state and to advance the welfare of the Libyan people. The true spirit of independence lies in a nation's ability to shape its destiny through unity—paving the way for a secure, sovereign state with a government that enjoys the support of the majority of its citizens, renewed legitimacy and unified institutions. That is what we are working towards.

Thank you