

Closing the impunity gap for atrocity crimes in Libya

Thank you Mr President.

Mr President, I'd like to start by offering our thanks to the Prosecutor, Karim Khan, for his powerful briefing today on the occasion of his 22nd report on the situation in Libya. As this is the first time he is addressing this Council as the Prosecutor of the ICC, I'd like to assure him of my country's support for him as he carries out his important duties. The United Kingdom welcomes the Prosecutor's report and his intention to visit Libya early next year. We urge the GNU to facilitate the visit and allow the ICC to investigate with independence in accordance with the Rome Statute and resolution 1970 of this Council. The United Kingdom is committed to providing our full support to the Prosecutor's ongoing investigations in Libya, which are as important as ever at this crucial time in the political process.

We share the Prosecutor's concern on the conclusions of the Independent Fact Finding Mission October 2021 Report. The report only serves to highlight the importance of the mission and to this end, the UK welcomes the renewal of the Independent Fact Finding Mission's mandate. We call on the Libyan government to support the mission by facilitating unrestricted and unfettered access throughout Libya.

We share the Prosecutor's on the conclusions contained in the October 2021 report of the Independent Fact Finding Mission on Libya. The report only serves to highlight the importance of that mission and the UK welcomes the renewal of the Independent Fact Finding Mission's mandate. We call on the Libyan government to support the mission by facilitating unrestricted and unfettered access throughout Libya. We urge the GNU to put an end to crimes committed in detention centres and investigate crimes committed at Mitiga Prison, and the Gernada detention facility. The GNU should also investigate and address violence against women and girls, including the fates of the female detainees at Al-Kuweifya detention centre that remain unknown.

The United Kingdom takes this opportunity to commend the efforts of the Joint Military Commission to develop an action plan for ensuring the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya. The UK has been clear that their withdrawal should happen without delay and the Action Plan represents a Libyan-led practical step forward towards their withdrawal. The UK draws attention to statements of the Office of the Prosecutor that crimes committed by those foreign forces and mercenaries in Libya potentially fall within the jurisdiction of the ICC.

The United Kingdom is clear that civilians must be protected in conflict and that those responsible for violations of international law must be held to account. We are deeply concerned by the discovery of yet more graves in Tarhouna and encourage the GNU to continue its investigations, and take all possible actions to hold those responsible to account.

The UK has funded humanitarian assistance to provide psycho-social support and access to healthcare, and other basic services and assistance for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. The UK appreciates the cooperation that the Prosecutor's office has been able to offer the national authorities in combating people smuggling and human trafficking.

We underline the importance of the process of national reconciliation and providing accountability and justice for atrocity crimes, and we encourage the GNU to work with the Office of the Prosecutor to achieve these goals. We reiterate our call for all relevant states, including both states parties to the Rome Statute and states that are not party to it, to cooperate with the ICC in the arrest and surrender of individuals subject to arrest warrants. The UK fully supports the Prosecutor's important investigation into the Libya situation that was mandated by this Council and we will continue to work with his Office and with international partners to close the impunity gap for atrocity crimes in Libya and achieve justice for the people of Libya.