

# National elections as the path to a stable Libya

- UK underscores “there is no place for foreign fighters and mercenaries in Libya”, and calls for urgent adherence to ceasefire
- UK affirms support for the Libyan decision to hold elections later this year and welcomes progress made in political talks

Mr President, let me start by yet again thanking acting SRSG Stephanie Williams for her leadership of UNSMIL. Stephanie, I want to thank you for your dedication to the Libyan people and to achieving peace. And I want to, through you, thank all of those working in UNSMIL.

And let me also take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Ján Kubiš as the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Libya and Ray Zenenga as UNSMIL Coordinator. We are delighted that they will be bringing their formidable experience and expertise to bear at this critical time for Libya, building on Stephanie’s excellent work.

Mr President,

The UK welcomes the progress made by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in recent weeks with the agreement on a selection mechanism for a new interim executive authority being of particular importance. We urge the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum and all Libyans to make the most of this opportunity to appoint a new unified, inclusive government. I think we all recognise how crucial this period is, and that we must give our full support to UNSMIL, making sure that everything we do clearly contributes to Stephanie’s and then Ján’s efforts to help Libyans work together towards a new government, and successful national elections on 24 December of this year. Ensuring that the High National Electoral Commission receives the correct support to facilitate these elections should be a priority for the interim executive.

Mr President,

I’d like to underline the importance of the Libyan Joint Military Commission’s work on the ceasefire and wider security issues. We support the Commission’s 24 January statement reaffirming its commitment to the ceasefire and again calling for the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries, noting with disappointment that the 23 January deadline passed without any sign of progress. Foreign military interference remains a blight on Libya, and a brake on progress. Let us be clear. There is no place for foreign fighters and mercenaries in Libya, whether those working for the Russian Wagner Group, the thousands of fighters from Syria, or any other external actor infringing Libyan sovereignty, failing to implement the 23 October Ceasefire Agreement, and breaching the United Nations Arms Embargo. It is crucial that all actors, Libyan and international, take all necessary measures to accelerate the implementation of the ceasefire, prioritising the opening of the Coastal Road between Abu Grein and Sirte, and the immediate

repatriation of all foreign fighters and mercenaries.

We welcome the Secretary-General's interim report on UN-led ceasefire monitoring and support his proposal rapidly to deploy an advance team to Tripoli, reflecting clear appetite from the Joint Military Commission. We look forward to hearing from the advance team how UNSMIL's mandate might be amended to further support implementation of the 23 October Ceasefire Agreement.

Mr President,

We remain deeply concerned by the economic situation in Libya and noted the Secretary-General's sobering warning in his report that the "Libyan economy is at a precipice". We welcome recent meetings by the Central Bank Board of Governors and the ongoing talks on budget unification. These are important steps to building united, inclusive economic institutions which serve all of Libya's people. But there is a long way to go and delivering a unified budget needs a unified government. This is urgent work and we welcome UNSMIL's commitment to driving it forward.

Mr President,

The Libyans have taken important steps over the last few weeks and months towards putting in place a new, unified transitional executive. They want to re-establish their sovereignty, to choose their own future through successful, national elections. There are still many steps to go, but the direction in which Libyans wants to go is clear. We, the international community, and the United Nations, must do all we can to support them on this path towards peace and security. We must live up to the promises that we made one year ago in the Berlin Conference and that we endorsed as a Council in Resolution 2510.