

Speech: “It’s clear that Libya now faces a simple choice: a future of stability and security or a return to a past of violence and uncertainty”

Thank you Mr President and thank you Olof for updating us on the work of the Libyan Sanctions Committee and to Ghassan for your thorough and fascinating briefing.

It’s certainly been an eventful two months since you set out your Action Plan for Libya to the General Assembly. Under your guidance, there have been important steps forward to revitalise the Libyan political process. Yet, in recent weeks, violence has escalated again, and it’s clear that Libya now faces a simple choice: a future of stability and security or a return to a past of violence and uncertainty.

Let me start with the positives, and there have been positive developments on the political process. The dialogue committees from both the House of Representatives and the High State Council worked hard to secure agreement on amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement. This has taken courage and compromise, but of course it is only a start. Further commitment from all parties is now needed to sustain the momentum and move Libya forward.

In doing so, we shouldn’t lose sight of what is at stake. It’s a real chance now for Libya to establish a truly national government, one that will enjoy the support of both the House of Representatives and the High State Council, and one that will be able to deliver for all its citizens. Further delay however will only prolong the suffering of ordinary Libyans who, I think we can all agree, have suffered for far too long.

We need only look at the recent escalation in violence to see the consequences of delay. The strikes on Derna, which killed 16 civilians, and the recent apparent summary executions in al-Abyar and Warshefana are examples; there are many others. These escalating acts of violence make it unambiguously clear that a political solution is no longer a choice, but a critical necessity for the Libyan people.

We should all be concerned by these continuing human rights violations and abuses across the country, so many of them at the expense of civilians, including migrants. Let us all condemn extra-judicial killings by all parties from all sides of the conflict. The climate of impunity must stop and I reiterate our support for Libyan and international efforts to bring to account those responsible for such crimes.

It is clear from the recent escalation in violence that the existing arms embargo has not cut off the flow of illicit weapons in and out of Libya. This is not only undermining the peace and security of Libya and the region; it is

also playing into the hands of terrorists groups who continue to threaten global security. I urge all Member States to make every effort to ensure that the arms embargo is strictly observed.

Engagement between both sides is not only needed for the political process, but also for the economy. A prosperous economy will only be realised if key economic institutions take the steps necessary to introduce important reforms. It is also vital that Libya's oil resources are used to benefit the country as a whole. I call on all Member States to make sure they continue to do all they can to prevent illegal oil smuggling and to enforce the sanctions regime designed to protect Libya's oil wealth for the benefit of the Libyan people.

Let me close Mr President by reiterating that the Libyan Political Agreement remains the only valid framework for Libya's transitional period into 2018. The UK will continue to support the immediate next steps to amend the Agreement and agree a reformed Presidency Council. We will also support subsequent efforts to promote national reconciliation, to agree a longer-term constitution and to prepare for elections. We believe the United Nations must remain firmly in the lead, and the international community must be united and steadfast in our support.

Because put simply, conflict and instability in Libya are hurting the region, they are hurting globally, but most of all, they are hurting Libya's citizens. So I close by calling on Libya's leaders, from all sides, to show that they are committed to delivering peace and security for all Libyan people. They must look beyond immediate personal considerations and towards the long-term future of their country. They have a responsibility to make progress, and I urge them to continue to work with Special Representative Salamé and to take the bold steps required to move Libya forward.

Thank you.