

Sustaining momentum towards elections in Libya

Thank you, Mr President, for convening this discussion. And I thank Special Envoy Kubiš for his briefing. I am pleased we are joined by Prime Minister Dabaiba and Foreign Minister Maas, and the Secretary General of the Arab League Aboul Gheit.

Mr President, ministers, colleagues, the UK welcomes the progress made in Libya over the last year, supported by UNSMIL and the Berlin process. However, there is still as we've heard, work ahead to complete Libya's political transition. I'd like to highlight three urgent steps today:

First, it is time to deliver on the commitment to free, fair and inclusive national elections on 24 December 2021 with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. So I urge all relevant Libyan authorities to work together, with the support of UNSMIL, to agree the legal basis for elections and ensure that they go ahead on 24 December as agreed. Members of the House of Representatives, and the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, have a particular responsibility here. The UK will not hesitate to act against those who deliberately undermine holding elections.

Second, we urge the full implementation of the October Ceasefire Agreement. This includes the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries without delay. We support efforts by the UN and Libyans to operationalise this withdrawal immediately. We also encourage the Libyan parties to press ahead with their commitment to open the coastal road, building confidence in the transition away from conflict.

Finally, we must not lose sight of the essential services that ordinary Libyans rely on – including electricity, water, education and healthcare. Delivering these means agreeing a balanced, national budget, and ensuring that resources are used for the benefit of people across Libya. It also means re-unification of Libya's institutions and rebuilding citizens' trust in government.

Mr President, thanks to the efforts and the will of Libyans, the country has made important progress in the last year. But that momentum must be sustained. The next steps in the transition are critical. Libya – and all Libyans – will continue to have the UK's full support in the process.

Thank you, Mr President.