

Minister Cleverly address at Paris Conference on Libya



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Excellencies, colleagues

I warmly express my gratitude to President Macron for hosting us here together in Paris today, and thank him and Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Draghi, Prime Minister Dabaiba and the Secretary General of the UN Guterres, for organising this important conference at a crucial time. I would also like to thank Special Envoy Kubiš, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Under-Secretary General DiCarlo, and the UN for their tireless work to facilitate a Libyan-led and owned process, which the UK supports unreservedly.

We are at a pivotal point in Libya's political process. Libyans and the international community must now work together across the political, security and economic tracks to strengthen Libya's sovereignty.

First, Libyans must coalesce around a framework for free, fair, and inclusive Presidential and Parliamentary elections on 24 December. These elections must allow for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth. Only through elections can all Libyans express their will over the decisions that affect their lives. Libya's institutions, including the House of Representatives, must immediately cooperate and compromise in order to agree a final and comprehensive set of electoral laws.

Actions that undermine the electoral process only risk a return to division, violence, and conflict. This will cause the Libyan people, who have already tolerated so much, further suffering. After a decade of conflict, Libyans deserve the right to vote for their executive and legislative representatives.

Libyan sovereignty now rests on Libya's political class putting the interests of the people they represent first.

I thank the High National Election Commission for their work in preparation for voting, including the registration of 2.8 million Libyans on the electoral lists. But technical bodies cannot secure successful elections alone. All candidates participating in elections must act in good faith before, during and after elections, agree to put aside partisan differences, and accept the results. The international community will not hesitate to act against those who undermine this process.

Second, the 5+5 Joint Military Committee has made important progress on the security track. I welcome their comprehensive Action Plan for the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries. However, the international community has not lived up to its side of the bargain in implementing international obligations. The 23 October Ceasefire Agreement, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2570, and the 5+5 JMC Action Plan are unequivocal: all foreign forces and mercenaries must be withdrawn without delay.

I therefore welcome the deployment of UN ceasefire monitors in support of the Libyan Ceasefire Monitoring Mission. The Mission must now work to monitor and verify the presence and withdrawal of those foreign forces and mercenaries. Only when free of foreign military interference will Libyans truly be able to claim sovereignty over their own country.

Finally, recent attacks by armed groups on the National Oil Corporation are clear attempts to control Libya's natural resources at the expense of the Libyan people. I call on the Libyan authorities to safeguard the integrity, unity and independence of the National Oil Corporation. Libya's political process must benefit all Libyans through the transparent management and equitable distribution of resources, and the delivery of public services.

The UK stands ready to work with Libya and international partners to build a peaceful, stable, prosperous and sovereign Libya.

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