

Speech by H.E. Ms Karen Van Vlierberge, Ambassador,
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to the United Nations Security Council

Libya Briefing

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Mr President,

Allow me to start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ghassan Salamé, for his presentation.

I would like to commend your work, and that of the entire mission staff, who operate in a particularly challenging environment.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Schulz for his briefing.

Mr President,

The situation in Tripoli remains extremely worrying: Libyan civilians, migrants and more generally the most vulnerable people suffer daily as a result of the fighting. It is high time that the protection of civilians became a genuine concern for the warring parties. In particular, Belgium is calling on the parties to refrain from any serious violation against children, including their recruitment and use in combat.

Belgium also strongly condemns the recent bombings of a school and field hospital south of Tripoli. It applauds the bravery of the medical and humanitarian personnel who paid a high price for their determination.

The security vacuum created in southern Libya, benefits terrorist groups and continuing military action will only lead to further chaos and a lasting destabilisation of the country. It is already threatening the political progress accomplished over the last two years.

Belgium wishes to reiterate once again that those guilty of grave violations of IHL and, more broadly, those who would jeopardise peace in Libya, must be held accountable. All military or civilian leaders who exercise effective control, authority and command over their subordinates could be held criminally responsible for crimes committed by them and prosecuted in the national courts or the International Criminal Court.

Belgium is calling on the parties to return unconditionally to the negotiating table. I urge them to work in good faith and constructively on the proposals and ideas put forward by Special Representative Salamé. An urgent ceasefire is still needed and rumours of a new offensive around Tripoli are alarming.

In this context, Belgium wishes to stress the importance of the meaningful and equal participation of women. The systematic inclusion of women and a variety of women's organisations is essential in order to reach an inclusive and sustainable solution. Belgium calls on the Libyan authorities to protect and support women, including female human rights activists so that they can actively participate in the public arena without fear of reprisals.

Finally, Belgium wants everyone to comply with the arms embargo decreed by this Council. Violations of this embargo have indeed prolonged the conflict and the suffering of the Libyan people. In this regard, it is important to highlight the essential work carried out by the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), a group with which this Council has urged all States to cooperate fully.

Mr President,

The main Libyan actors continue to favour the military solution. The aggressive rhetoric is increasing, the fighting continues, violations of the arms embargo persist, International Humanitarian Law is violated and the use by both sides of terrorist and criminal elements listed by the UNSC is commonplace.

No one seems truly interested in establishing a ceasefire and returning to political dialogue.

This is partly also due to the lengthy silence of this Council; I hope that we can express ourselves soon by adopting a resolution so that no one in Libya will doubt the will and determination of the Security Council.

Thank you.