

Statement by H.E President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
at
the High Level Event on Libya
New York, September 20, 2017

H.E António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Excellencies,

Allow me at the outset to express my pleasure at attending this important event. Our meeting today aims to provide a renewed momentum to efforts to resolve the political crisis that has been ongoing in Libya for more than six years, and thereby providing an opportunity for Libyans to rebuild their state and combat terrorism.

Any accurate assessment of the latest developments in Libya will clearly indicate that the requisite elements for political settlement already exist. We have the Political Agreement, which represents the only acceptable solution for a comprehensive settlement in Libya. Furthermore, we have recently witnessed a noticeable decline in the level of terrorist activity in Libya, largely due to a marked decrease in support provided by some parties to terrorist groups over the past months. The Libyan National Army has also achieved notable advances in that regard. All these developments provides a genuine opportunity to deal a devastating blow to terrorism and regain stability in Libya, assuming good faith and unified efforts by all stakeholders.

Hence, the ground has been set for a real breakthrough in Libya; one that would entail turning this painful page in the Libyan people's history and embarking on a new period of reconstruction. This, however, is conditional on the achievement of the following:

First: The provision of support by the international community to UN-led efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement in Libya. This settlement should be freely arrived at by the Libyans themselves without any foreign imposition. Let me be clear: there is no longer any scope, nor any usefulness, for multiple approaches or frameworks for a solution in Libya. There is only one acceptable framework, and that is the Skhirat Agreement. That agreement could of course be the subject of limited amendments in response to the Libyan parties' concerns. These amendments would be subject to the mechanism set forth in Article 12 of the said agreement, and under the supervision of the United Nations.

Second: There is a need to rapidly arrive at a comprehensive settlement prior to the expiration of the transitional period set forth by the Political Agreement on the 17th of December. Clearly, this would serve to prevent a dangerous political and security vacuum. The over-arching purpose of this comprehensive settlement would be of course to address all outstanding issues in the Political Agreement. The targeted settlement would involve establishing a legitimate and constitutional framework, agreed to by the Libyans, to manage the remainder of the transitional process, leading up to the holding of presidential and legislative elections in 2018. It is important here to stress that it is impossible to "fragment" the elements of a settlement in Libya. Rather, a successful conclusion to the current political crisis could only be achieved through a single package deal covering the issues of governance (the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord), the management of the transitional period, unifying the military establishment under legitimate rule, agreeing on an electoral law, and finally the inclusion of all of these elements in a constitutional amendment to be endorsed by the House of Representatives. I am confident that it will prove impossible to come to an agreement on any of the above elements separately.

Third: It is also important to encourage the leadership of the legitimate Libyan institutions to engage more in

the political process, and to exhibit more political flexibility in order to arrive at a settlement of the aforementioned outstanding issues. It is equally important that they refrain from any unilateral actions which could potentially complicate the situation or deepen the lack of trust between the parties.

Fourth: It is vital to step up counter-terrorism efforts in Libya. A settlement of the Libyan crisis simply cannot have a real chance to succeed without a comprehensive and decisive confrontation with extremist organizations, and all regional and international parties that support them, either politically, financially, or with weapons and fighters.

And while I commend the recent successes achieved against extremist terrorist groups, most notably in Benghazi and Sirte, I also have to reiterate the utmost importance of supporting the Libyan National Army and efforts to unify it, in parallel with continuing military pressure against all terrorist groups.

Excellencies,

Within the framework of the deep historical, social, and political relations that bind the Libyan and Egyptian people, we have continued to host a series of meetings with Libyan leaders from the House of Representatives, the Presidency Council, and the High State Council. These meetings aim to bridge the gap between these leaders. In parallel, Cairo is also hosting meetings aimed at unifying the military establishment, as well as hosting meetings aiming to achieve societal and tribal reconciliation between different towns and regions across Libya.

These meetings have succeeded in building a consensus among those involved on the importance of preserving the Libyan Political Agreement, with minor amendments, as the framework for a settlement. Participants also committed to work under the auspices of the UN, with all other efforts being complimentary to that main UN effort, with no foreign interference. Participants expressed as well a fervent desire to provide conditions conducive for the institutions emanating from the Political Agreement to assume their responsibilities in a secure and suitable environment.

In this context, it particularly pleases me to note the success of the meeting hosted in Cairo two days ago, which included military officers from all around Libya, and the ensuing consensus on the importance of supporting the unity of the Libyan army and upholding its professionalism, and building its capacity to enable it to fulfill its duties in protecting the Libyan State and the legitimate institutions thereof. During said meeting, it was agreed that a technical committee will be formed, and will convene in Cairo to implement these principles. Naturally, Egypt will continue to support every effort that aims to empower the Libyan National Army.

I am confident that the sum of our efforts, under the auspices of the UN, will be successful in establishing a comprehensive political framework to end the bloodshed in Libya, preserve it from further divisiveness and strife, and empower the Libyan people and their leadership in the fight against terrorism, and in their efforts to rebuild their state and re-establish control over their destiny.

As I mentioned before, all the elements of a settlement already exist. The necessary material resources to rebuild the Libyan state likewise exist. All that is required are sincere and unified efforts to achieve the much sought after political settlement, and I can assure you that Egypt will be at the forefront in support of UN efforts towards these ends.

Thank you.