

The Libyan crisis: Suffering and an Unknown Fate



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FDHRD

January 2023

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Forum for Development and Human Rights
Dialogue

Non-partisan organization – **registered No. 6337 of 2005** – non-partisan.

Non-profit and its statute is subject to **Law No. 149 of 2019** on NGOs and private foundations.

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❖ **Introduction:**

Despite the passage of more than a decade since the popular uprising against the regime of Colonel "Muammar Gaddafi", Libya has not witnessed any stability, as it has become an arena of struggle for armed militias competing for power, which in turn summoned regional and international powers, which turned the country into an arena of regional conflict. Therefore, the Libyan citizen alone pays the bill for these conflicts and political divisions, which in turn led to a collapse in all fields, including health, education, the economy, severe fuel shortages, worsening unemployment and corruption, and consequently increasing burdens on Libyan families.

Libya is now witnessing a critical stage, as the Libyan presidential elections were scheduled to be held on 24 December 2021, as it was a golden opportunity to push the economy forward, and lay the foundation for a stable democratic society. However, the proposal of the High Electoral Commission in Libya to postpone the presidential elections for one month broke the hopes of the people to open a new page of democracy, and soon attempts to hold presidential elections again in 2022 failed because of the lack of consensus between the two parties, namely the State Council and the House of Representatives, on a constitutional framework on the basis of which the organization of the electoral process will be resumed because of differences over the conditions for candidacy for the presidency.

Therefore, the report addresses some points related to the Libyan crisis, which are:

1. An overview of the conflict in Libya.
2. The impact of the deteriorating situation on the Libyan citizen.
3. The position of Arab countries on the crisis.
4. The international position on the crisis.
5. Recommendations.
6. Conclusion.

❖ **Current situation in Libya**

The Libyan crisis currently represents one of the most sensitive regional crises at all levels, as two main parties, namely the Libyan parliament elected in 2014, which supports the government of "Fathi Bashagha" and the National Army that led by "Khalifa Haftar" and controls eastern and southern Libya, are fighting for power. While the Government of National Unity represents the second party, supported by the High Council of State and a number of deputies, and a military alliance of a number of existing armed groups that control western Libya. This conflict called the United Nations to think about a solution through an initiative in March 2022 to form a committee of the Libyan House of Representatives and the Council of State to agree on a constitutional basis on which elections will be held to renew the legitimacy of the legislative and executive bodies in the country. However, that year ended without anything being achieved from the UN plan due to differences between political parties on the conditions for candidacy for the presidential elections, as the State Council insists on excluding military personnel and dual nationals from running. On the other side, the House of Representatives insists on providing all Libyans with the opportunity to run.

With the beginning of 2023, these disputes continue to disrupt the development process in the country, as the Prime Minister of the temporary government of National Unity "Abdul Hamid Dabaiba", opposed the electoral law issued by the House of Representatives, which is the legislative authority in the country, in addition to an attack occurring by armed militias in the west of the country on electoral headquarters, which prompted the Electoral Commission to suspend the electoral process under the pretext of "force majeure", as well as rejecting the Libyan State Council and the House of Representatives invitation to the Presidential Council in the presence of the UN envoy to Libya "Abdullah Batili", to resolve the Libyan crisis by agreeing on a constitutional rule that leads to elections as soon as possible.

The State Council voted to resume dialogue with the House of Representatives, and the two parties agreed during a meeting in Cairo, in the presence of the Speaker of the Egyptian House of Representatives, "Hanafi Gebali", on the need to hold elections and the approval of the High Council of State headed by "Khaled Al-Meshri" to overthrow the government of

"Abdul Hamid Dabaiba" in Tripoli for its inability to secure elections throughout the country.

❖ **The impact of conflicts in the State of Libya on the citizen:**

The human right to health, housing, and a secure life is recognized in many international instruments. **Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** affirms that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate to ensure the health and well-being of himself and his family, in particular in terms of food, clothing, housing, medical care, and other necessary social services".

Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights states that "States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, to adequate food, clothing, and shelter, and to a continuous improvement of his living conditions." These dire conditions have transformed Libya, which has Africa's largest oil reserves and is blessed with abundance, into a collapsing economy and into a country whose population has turned into the poor and destitute.

The political division, which resulted in the presence of two governments in the country and militias fighting among themselves, and therefore two central banks – the one in Tripoli, and the other financed by the government in eastern Libya, was reflected in the deterioration of services from the provision of fuel or medicines due to the growing phenomenon of smuggling them to neighboring countries, including Tunisia, Sudan, Chad, and Niger, or selling them on the black market at double prices, under the eyes of state agencies, in addition to European countries that receive fuel through smuggling ships, where several events have followed that emphasize. **These include:**

1. About 9 people died and dozens were injured as a result of the explosion of a fuel truck on 1 August 2022, during a stampede for gasoline after the truck broke down on the main road in the "Al-Zwaya" area of the city of "Ubari" in southern Libya.
2. About 17 people were injured in a fuel tank explosion in the southern Libyan city of Sabha on 14 September 2022.
3. Dozens of people were injured as a result of the explosion of a gas station in the "Tajoura" area, east of the Libyan capital, Tripoli, on 9 January 2021, in addition to the outbreak of a large fire in the station and its surroundings, as a result of the fact that the station was crowded with citizens suffering from a shortage of fuel, which led to the closure of the main roads leading to it.

In addition to the queues in front of bakeries that were swept by several crises, starting with the repeated shortage of flour and the rise in its prices to more than half, which caused an increase in bread prices, through the continued disregard of the government and the concerned authorities for the flour crisis, which made the mills and their owners depend on personal imports from abroad, so flour of the worst types arrived in the country, in addition to the presence of carcinogens such as "potassium bromate" in it, and ending with many bakery owners having to close the doors to customers because of ongoing problems and high prices of materials used in the manufacture of bread.

In this regard, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) announced in 2022 that about 32,000 children in Libya suffer from acute malnutrition, explaining that the prevalence of acute malnutrition reached 3.8%, while the southern region is located by 6.1% below the level of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, and the organization added that about 70,000 fall under moderate malnutrition, as indicated by a World Bank report on Libya entitled "Libya Economic Outlook - September 2022". The citizen's income collapsed after the economy was exhausted by the conflict, until the per capita GDP in 2022 reached half its value before 2011, and the turmoil also brought the country a setback in education, as Libya was exited the international classification of the quality of education, due to the absence of factors of this quality, according to the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The crisis in Libya was not limited to food, but also withdrawn to water, and in this context, UNICEF confirmed that more than 4 million people, including 1.5 million children, will face imminent water problems if immediate solutions are not found and implemented, based on repeated attacks on man-made river systems, which caused about 190 wells to go out of service.

Malnutrition and economic crises reflected on the health conditions in Libya, where tumors spread and 9 children died of this disease as a result of negligence and lack of treatment and an opportunity for them to be treated abroad, given that many imported oncology and heart drugs are corrupt, and in a related context, Libya suffered for months from the lack of anti-scorpion vaccines and vaccinations for children, which caused the death of a number of victims.

During the first five months of this year, Libya witnessed 137 killings, as a result of the spread of economic destitution, the spread of lawlessness and the weakness of security institutions, in addition to the global financial crisis and high prices, the salaries of citizens in various departments were cut off for

several months. This crisis has increased with the political division and the existence of two parallel governments east and west, as the Central Bank, according to statements from human rights institutions and statements from the House of Representatives, refrained from paying the salaries of millions of Libyans in the eastern and southern regions..

According to the latest statistics of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 143,419 Libyans were internally displaced during this year 2022, and the UNHCR continued in its report that more than 23,000 Libyans and migrants left Libya to escape the situation in it and were intercepted or rescued and returned to the country, during the same year..

The deteriorating political and economic situation in Libya has fueled a wave of anger in the street, which despaired of the ability of all political parties in the country to get the country out of its chronic crises, especially after the new failure in constitutional negotiations. Between the House of Representatives and the State, causing widespread protests in Tripoli, Tobruk, Misrata, Sebha, and many other Libyan cities in the east and west of the country on July 2, 2022, and in Tobruk, protesters set fire to the parliament headquarters after storming it with bulldozers to protest the deteriorating situation in the country, and a group of young people from the city of Misrata announced a state of civil disobedience, due to the spread of corruption in state institutions, and demanded that elections be held as soon as possible.

❖ **The suffering of citizens:**

1. A resident of southern Libya, Mahdi Nouri, pointed out: "We do not consider ourselves inside an oil state that subsidizes fuel, because it simply does not reach the south except every now and then, and there is a lot of congestion around it, and black market traders sell it at high prices, sometimes up to 3 dinars per liter, which is equivalent to 20 times its official price."
2. A resident of the city of Zawiya, west of Tripoli, "Abdel Moneim Al-Saqri": "I live near the largest oil refinery in Libya, and on the other hand, filling my car tank with fuel is a very complicated issue".
3. Citizen "Abdul Azim Karwat" pointed out: "The amount of 450 dinars (about \$ 100) is not enough to buy the needs of a Libyan family of six people, unless we focus on buying some basic goods and dispensing with others, as the price is increasing every day and salaries are the same. He explained that the price of a kilogram of rice rose to 4 dinars, and tomato paste to 3.5 dinars.

4. Tariq Oraibi, who works in a real estate company, said: "The real estate sector has been greatly affected by the economic conditions that the country is going through from political instability, the Corona pandemic and the devaluation of the currency, and therefore there is a decrease in profit margins because of the rise in iron prices by 100% and the instability of cement prices in the markets", and added: "I work as a taxi driver to provide a daily expense for the family amid the living crises that besiege us and inflation that breaks our back".
5. The citizen, "Khairia Al-Wafi ", indicated that she is facing great difficulty in buying the daily needs of her home, especially with the crazy rise in prices, and added, "Prices have risen dramatically and things are suffocating us, and I cannot buy most of the daily goods of food and vegetables," and gave an example of this rise, saying, "About four months ago, the price of a kilogram of lamb meat was only 35 dinars, but today its price ranges from 45 to 50 dinars, I think that many Libyans They can't buy meat at such a high price."
6. Hajj "Salah Al-Madani" Among those who suffer in Libya, he is looking for medicine for his daughter who suffers from a mental disorder, which requires permanent treatment, moving between government health centers to no avail, Al-Madani said that "the medicine required by my daughter's health condition "I earn 738 Libyan dinars (about US\$158) as an employee of the General Company for Water and Sanitation, knowing that the salaries of the company's employees are often delayed for several months," he said. However, al-Madani expressed his lack of confidence in the government's promises, noting that "my daughter's medicine used to be given free of charge in government hospitals specializing in psychiatric and mental illness, but it has been no longer available there for three years, and has become confined to private pharmacies where it is sold at a high price."
7. Mukhtar Abu Fakhira, a citizen who suffers from a shortage of medicines for heart disease that afflicted him many years ago, said: We remain suffering from the crisis of high costs of medicines, which are as important as food and all the necessary needs for life, as I see my medicines paved on the shelves of private pharmacies without being able to buy them because of their high prices, as they disappeared from the hospitals that used to provide me with them."
8. Abdul Karim al-Marafi, who lives in Benghazi, complaining about the high prices in light of low salaries, said: Libyans today are living a lot of crises, and they do not lack the high price of bread, especially since salaries

have not been paid for three months, in addition to that they are not commensurate with the high prices.

9. "Dibaj Trabelsi", a political science student, said that electricity works in her home in the "Salah al-Din" area only two hours a day, which makes it impossible to study in hot summer weather, and added, "This affects the level of education".
10. A resident of the capital, Tripoli, "Mohammed Ashour," explained that "for 10 years, Libya has been suffering from an electricity crisis, and we only receive promises from successive governments," noting that the situation is very difficult, especially in the summer and winter..

❖ **The Arab position towards the Libyan crisis:**

1. The Tunisian Foreign Ministry announced in January 2017 that it was preparing to launch an initiative to resolve the Libyan crisis and disengage the Libyan parties, and the proposed initiative, the contents of which were announced in detail after the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt, on 20 February 2017, **was based on the following:**
 - To continue to strive for comprehensive reconciliation in Libya without exclusion within the framework of the Libyan dialogue with the assistance of the three States and under the auspices of the United Nations;
 - Adherence to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Libyan state and to the political solution as the only way out of the Libyan crisis, on the basis of the Libyan Political Agreement signed in Skhirat on December 17, 2015, as a frame of reference, and to agree to support the consensual proposals of the Libyan parties in order to reach complementary formulations and amendments that enable them to be advanced.
 - Rejection of any military solution to the Libyan crisis and any external interference in the internal affairs of Libya, considering that the settlement will only be between the Libyans themselves, and affirmation that the dialogue should include all Libyan parties, regardless of their political orientations and affiliations.
 - Work to ensure the unity of the Libyan civil state institutions stipulated in the political agreement - the Presidential Council, the House of Representatives and the High Council of State - including maintaining the unity of the Libyan army in accordance with the terms of the Libyan Political Agreement, to play its national role in maintaining security and combating terrorism, cross-border crime and irregular migration.
 - The three countries continue their efforts at the ministerial level to coordinate among themselves and with the various Libyan political parties to overcome differences, and the results of the ministerial meeting are

submitted to the Tunisian President, Beji Caid Essebsi, the Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and the Egyptian President, Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, in preparation for the tripartite summit in Algiers.

- The three countries will jointly and formally brief the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the Tunis Ministerial Declaration, as an official document of the three organizations.

However, the initiative did not achieve satisfactory results, given that the initiative, as presented in the Tunis Declaration, did not include innovative mechanisms other than the mechanism of dialogue between the various Libyan parties, nor did it specify a specific time frame to be agreed upon to start implementing the initiative and a maximum date for the completion of its contents, which made it, like other initiatives that preceded it, turn into meetings for consultation and the issuance of the usual diplomatic statements that express concern and launch calls for calm without achieving anything new. The majority of regional and international parties reveal a clear position on the initiative, whose success requires explicit regional and international support, which has not happened.

2. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi announced on 6/6/2020 an initiative under the name of the "Cairo Declaration" to resolve the Libyan crisis, which was reached with the commander of the Libyan National Army, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, and the Speaker of the Libyan House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh. **The following are the items included in the "Cairo Declaration" to resolve the crisis Libyan:**

- Affirming the unity, territorial integrity and independence of Libya, respecting all international efforts and initiatives and Security Council resolutions, and the commitment of all parties to the ceasefire as of 8 June 2020.
- The initiative is based on the outcomes of the Berlin Conference, which resulted in a comprehensive political solution that includes clear implementation steps (political, security and economic tracks), respect for human rights, and investing in the consensus that resulted from the conference among the leaders of the countries concerned with the Libyan crisis.
- Completing the work of the military committee track (5 + 5) in Geneva, under the auspices of the United Nations, and the United Nations and the international community obliging all foreign parties to remove foreign mercenaries from all Libyan territory, dismantling militias and handing over their weapons, so that the armed forces, in cooperation with the

security services, can move forward with their military and security responsibilities and tasks in the country.

- Work to restore the Libyan state to its national institutions, while identifying the appropriate Libyan national mechanism to revive the political track under the auspices of the United Nations, and investing in the efforts of the international community to resolve the Libyan crisis.
- Restoring state control over all security institutions and supporting the military institution, with the national army assuming its responsibilities in combating terrorism, and affirming its role in cooperation with the security and police agencies to protect Libyan sovereignty and restore security in the maritime, air and land fields.
- Each of the three regions of the State shall form an electoral college whose members shall be chosen from the House of Representatives and the State representing each region, along with tribal sheikhs and notables, and taking into account an acceptable representation ratio for women, youth and political elites from intellectuals and trade unions.

This item stressed that the three committees shall meet under the auspices of the United Nations and be agreed upon, and each region shall choose its own representative, whether by consensus or by election, within a period not exceeding 90 days.

- Each region selects its representative of the Presidential Council and a qualified and patriotic Deputy Prime Minister, with the aim of forming a Presidency Council consisting of a president and two deputies, and then the Presidential Council nominates the Prime Minister to form a government and present it to the Presidential Council, in preparation for referring it to the House of Representatives to give it confidence.
- The Presidential Council shall take its decisions by majority, except for sovereign decisions related to the armed forces, and decisions or proposals submitted by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army in this case shall be taken unanimously and in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief.
- Each region obtains a proportionate number of ministerial portfolios according to the number of inhabitants, after agreeing on the members of the new Presidential Council and naming the head of government, provided that no region combines more than one presidency of the three authorities (the Presidential Council, the House of Representatives, and the Council of Ministers)..

This item explained that the region of "Tripoli" must receive 9 ministries, the region of "Cyrenaica" on 7 ministries and the region of "Fezzan" on 5 ministries, provided that the six sovereign ministries are divided among

the three regions equally, two ministries for each region with the appointment of two deputies for each minister from the other two regions..

- The adoption by the Libyan House of Representatives of the amendments to the Constitutional Declaration through a legal committee formed by the President of the Council, Counselor "Aguila Saleh", after the committee (which includes representatives of members of the House of Representatives and the State) agreed on the points to be amended in the Constitutional Declaration within a period not exceeding 30 days, starting from the date of the first session.
- The United Nations supervises the electoral colleges in general to ensure the integrity of the special process of selecting candidates for the Presidential Council.

Although several regional countries welcomed the Egyptian initiative and the UAE was the first country to welcome the Egyptian initiative, as the UAE Foreign Ministry expressed its "support for the benevolent Egyptian efforts, calling for an immediate ceasefire in brotherly Libya and a return to the political track," the Government of National Accord was quick to reject the initiative.

3. On 23 June 2020, the Arab League issued a package of resolutions related to the Libyan crisis, **stressing the following:**

- "Commitment to the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity, national cohesion and stability of Libya, the welfare of its people and their democratic future, and the need to work to restore the Libyan national state and its institutions to their role in serving the Libyan people."
- "The importance of a comprehensive political solution to the Libyan crisis. The Council's support for the full implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement signed in the city of Skhirat in 2015, and the emphasis on the role of all legitimate institutions resulting from the Libyan Political Agreement, and the outcomes of the various international and regional tracks, the latest of which is the Berlin Conference."
- "The pivotal and fundamental role of Libya's neighboring countries and the importance of coordination among them in efforts to end the Libyan crisis, and welcoming the final communiqué issued by the meeting of foreign ministers of Libya's neighboring countries, which was held in Algiers in January 2020".
- "The need to prevent external interference of any kind and source that contributes to facilitating the movement of foreign terrorist extremist

fighters into Libya, as well as violating international resolutions on the arms embargo."

- "A political settlement among all Libyans of all affiliations is the only solution to restore security and stability and eradicate terrorism."
- "Reject all illegal foreign interventions that violate international laws, resolutions and norms, and contribute to the spread of terrorist armed militias seeking to spread extremist ideas and fuel violence and terrorism, and demand the withdrawal of all foreign forces present on Libyan territory and within Libyan territorial waters."
- Full support for the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) aimed at reaching a settlement of the crisis through the three tracks in light of the results of the Berlin Conference and Security Council resolution (2510), and urged the Secretary-General of the United Nations to expedite the nomination of his Special Envoy in order to avoid the disadvantages of the vacuum on achieving the desired progress in all tracks.
- The importance of the United Nations and the international community obliging all external parties to remove mercenaries from Libyan territory, working to unify the military and security institutions in Libya within the path of a political solution, dismantling militias and handing over their weapons in accordance with the conclusions of the Berlin Conference.

❖ **The international position towards the Libyan crisis:**

1. On 19 January 2020, Germany hosted the "Berlin International Conference on Libya" to find a path for peace in Libya with the participation of 12 countries (the United States, Russia, Britain, Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Congo, China, Italy and France), and 4 international organizations "the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the Arab League". German Chancellor Angela Merkel had launched the call for the Libya Conference in Berlin to support the efforts of the United Nations to achieve peace and reconciliation and invited the government of National Accord, Fayeze al-Sarraj, and the commander of the Libyan National Army, Khalifa Haftar. The conference sought to reach an international understanding on the disposition of the Libyan conflict as a first step to a political solution. Merkel said that the goal is to give Libya the opportunity to become a country enjoying peace and sovereignty, and according to the decisions of the Berlin Conference, separate committees were formed to negotiate in each file, the most important of which is the Security and Military Committee, which has already held two meetings in February 2020.

2. On 23 June 2021, the German capital witnessed the second round of Berlin talks on Libya under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the parties of the Libyan conflict, officials of the transitional government, and the most prominent international and regional actors, including Germany, the United States, Russia, China, Turkey, the European Union and NATO. as well as the League of Arab States and the African Union, in order to create the appropriate conditions for the political track and end operations. The military is in order to reach the organization of the next general elections, bringing to an end the chapters of the conflict that has lasted for years.

The topic of elections dominated the items related to the political aspect, so the participants agreed to support the comprehensive political track under the auspices of the United Nations in order to achieve access to the elections that were scheduled to be held in December 2021. The final statement called on the Libyan authorities represented by the executive authority with its two heads, both the Presidential Council and the government. In addition to the legislative authority represented in the House of Representatives, to take the necessary measures in order to prepare for this electoral entitlement, with the need to enact the constitutional and legal basis before reaching the station. As well as emphasizing the importance of ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth, providing all the necessary financial and organizational requirements for the High National Elections Commission to successes this democratic process, in accordance with the requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 2570. The countries participating in the conference affirmed their commitment to support the Libyan government in organizing and preparing for these elections.

3. On 12 November 2021, Paris held an international conference aimed at achieving the security and stability of Libya, which is suffering from civil war. France and other international partners sponsored the conference, and the objectives of the conference were providing support for the presidential elections on 24 December 2021, withdrawing foreign and mercenary forces from the country and end external interventions. On the economic side, the conference worked to emphasize a fair distribution of wealth, implement structural reforms for the financial sector and work to unify Libyan financial institutions, but the conference did not achieve tangible results.

❖ **Conclusion:**

Libya is one of the countries that must unite the Arab peoples of all parties, rulers and politicians, to provide support and assistance to them because they

enjoy many natural and cultural elements such as Islamic heritage and economic such as oil, which made it coveted by foreign countries. This is the most basic right of the Libyan citizen due to his suffering from forms of political and security crises and conflicts in which no international actor or local officials take decisive mechanisms to prevent them, and whose repercussions on the world will be negative and bear many consequences that he overlooks.

❖ **Recommendations:**

1. The need to activate the Arab role to reach a solution and settlement in Libya, specifically the role of the League of Arab States, so that it can be a platform for deliberation and unification of Arab views on the crisis, and then the adoption of executive mechanisms leading to a comprehensive solution in Libya.
2. The need to implement the decisions of international meetings on Libya, including the most recent decisions of the Berlin Conference, with regard to reaching a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire agreement in Libya, with the application of an arms embargo on Libya and tightening land, air, and sea control in order to ensure this, thus providing opportunities for a political solution to progress.
3. The need to activate the role of the Security Council and the role of the international envoy to Libya in order to unify and lead international efforts to reach a solution in Libya. So that they have a clear and decisive role in preventing any external intervention in Libya, specifically interventions of a military and armed nature, through decisions, mechanisms, and severe punitive measures.
4. The need to direct regional and international efforts towards building governance institutions in Libya, including civil and political institutions, in a fair and satisfactory manner for all Libyan parties, as well as building unified security and military institutions, and leading to ending the state of chaos and insecurity in the country.
5. The need for the Libyan parties to immediately cease all hostilities, strive hard for the success of the political solution, achieve national reconciliation, and show good intentions and sufficient flexibility to achieve a consensus that achieves national partnership, stops the depletion of the state's capabilities, and opens future prospects for advancement and progress.
6. The need for the Libyan parties to cooperate to confront the threat of extremism and terrorism, spread the spirit of moderation and a culture of

moderation in society, and prevent the provision of fertile soil for extremist groups to exploit to expand, spread their ideas and practice their terrorism.

7. Libyan officials must take responsibility for preserving the unity of the country and preventing its division along political, geographical and tribal lines, to avoid the great dangers that could result from tearing the unity of the country apart.