

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to stand before you today on behalf of the Libyan Crimes Watch, Lawyers for Justice in Libya, and partner organizations working in and on Libya. We address you within the context of profound frustration regarding the lack of tangible progress in ongoing investigations in Libya since the beginning of the work of the International Criminal Court in 2011.

In the Prosecutor's briefing to the Security Council in November 2023, he announced the intention to conclude investigations by 2025 without clarification on the criteria and conditions necessary for such conclusion. Additionally, there was no consultation with civil society organizations, victims, or affected communities prior to this briefing.

This announcement came as a surprise to civil society and victims in Libya, especially after 12 years since the Libyan case was referred to the Court, with no achievement of the goal of holding perpetrators accountable and delivering justice to victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Libya.

We also want to highlight the ineffective communication between the Prosecutor's Office and victims, as well as civil society organizations in Libya which document crimes and gather evidence, while facing repression and reprisals for their work.

As mentioned by the Prosecutor, Libyan authorities have not cooperated with the Court, including by delaying the issuing of visas to the Prosecutor's team to conduct essential investigations within Libya, leading to obstructions to the on-ground investigations and the inability to access a significant portion of evidence and witnesses.

The Libyan judiciary is neither capable nor willing to conduct independent investigations and prosecute those responsible for serious international crimes committed systematically against both migrants and Libyan nationals.

Furthermore, judges and lawyers in Libya are subjected to threats and arbitrary arrests by state-affiliated armed groups due to their work, as noted in the final report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Libya.

Ending investigations without making any tangible progress in holding perpetrators accountable perpetuates a cycle of impunity and encourages criminals to continue their acts, shattering the last hope for justice held by the victims.

Therefore, we urge the Prosecutor to reconsider the decision to conclude investigations by the end of 2025 and to exert maximum effort in expediting the issuance of arrest warrants against those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Libya.

We also call on member states and Libyan authorities to ensure a safe environment for civil society organizations and human rights defenders. They are a crucial link between the Court, victims, and witnesses and must be protected from repression and reprisals.

Finally, we appeal to States Parties to provide all necessary support to the Court, including sufficient financial assistance, to progress investigations in Libya. We also urge them to cooperate with the Court to enforce its arrest warrants.

In conclusion, the last remaining hope for victims is the International Criminal Court, the sole mechanism available to them for holding perpetrators accountable and achieving justice. Thank you.