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The Permanent Mission of the State of Libya to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Special Procedures Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva and has the honour to refer to its correspondence dated 12th June 2026 under reference AL LBY 1/2026 and to enclose, here attached, the official answer of the Government of Libya in Arabic along with its courtesy translation.

The Permanent Mission of the State of Libya avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Special Procedures Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its high consideration.



Geneva, 6th August 2026

Special Procedures Branch,
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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Encl. Mentionned

Response of the Government of the State of Libya
to the joint letter from a number of mandate holders regarding the
situation of migrants and refugees in Libya

The Government of Libya reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the UN Charter and to the provisions of national legislation and applicable international agreements concerning human rights, workers' rights, and combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling. It also reiterates its determination to continue constructive cooperation with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms—including Special Procedures and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights—within a framework of substantive and transparent dialogue, while respecting state sovereignty and the mandates of its national institutions.

Having reviewed the report issued on June 12, 2026, regarding allegations of human rights violations against migrants and refugees, the Government of Libya submits this national response.

Libya faces exceptional circumstances as a major transit country for irregular migration, given its vast land and maritime borders and the persistent activity of transnational criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and the exploitation of migrants' humanitarian situations. This has placed mounting pressure on law enforcement and justice institutions, health and social services, infrastructure, and public resources—a situation that necessitates an international cooperation and the sharing of responsibilities among countries of origin, transit, and destination.

The Government of Libya holds the view that the report did not provide a balanced reflection of the measures taken by national authorities regarding the protection of migrants, the combating of human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and the investigation of reported incidents. Furthermore, it failed to adequately outline the methodology used for data collection, verification, and the attribution of responsibility; this limited the ability to verify certain allegations and affected the balance required when assessing the State's compliance with its international obligations.

The Government reaffirms its absolute rejection of any act constituting torture, unlawful detention, human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation, or any violation of human dignity. All specific and verifiable allegations are subject to inquiry and investigation in accordance with national legislation and the rule of law, without discrimination based on nationality or legal status, and without

immunity for any person proven to be involved, regardless of their official capacity or the entity to which they belong.

At the same time, the Government of Libya asserts that available judicial and administrative information does not substantiate the existence of a government policy or a systematic institutional pattern regarding the violations cited in the report. Furthermore, neither completed investigations nor judicial rulings have established the liability of state institutions—whether as primary perpetrators or accomplices—for the alleged crimes of human trafficking. Investigations into a number of cases have revealed that a significant portion of the violations suffered by migrants is linked to the activities of organized criminal networks involved in smuggling, trafficking, extortion, unlawful detention, forced labor, etc. Members of these networks have been referred to the judiciary, and convictions have been handed down against some of them.

Regarding border protection and search-and-rescue operations, the government clarifies that the competent military authorities do not manage migrant detention or accommodation centers; rather, their role is limited to protecting land and maritime borders, conducting search-and-rescue operations, providing initial humanitarian care, and subsequently handing over rescued individuals to the legally competent authorities. These operations resulted in the rescue of approximately 28,599 migrants in 2025 and about 8,200 migrants in 2026 (up to the time of drafting this response). Furthermore, institutional mechanisms have been established to promote a culture of human rights and international humanitarian law, and codes of conduct have been adopted to prevent violations.

Regarding shelters and holding facilities, the government affirms that official centers under state authority are clearly defined and operate within the framework of national legislation; there are no secret detention centers or facilities operating outside the legal framework under the control of government agencies. These official centers are subject to internal and external oversight, involving inspection and monitoring bodies, human rights offices, the Public Prosecution, and national entities concerned with freedoms and human rights. Should any violation or infraction be detected, the necessary legal and disciplinary measures are taken.

The government explains that emergency relief and medical services are provided to migrants immediately upon their rescue at maritime disembarkation points or border areas—including food, first aid, and basic necessities—with care continuing during their stay at official centers. Relevant international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), are also permitted to contribute to the provision of healthcare as well as medical and

psychological support, in accordance with established legal and administrative frameworks.

Regarding women, children, and vulnerable groups, the competent authorities take special measures that address their humanitarian needs—including liaising with their respective embassies and diplomatic missions, documenting handover procedures, and arranging appropriate alternative care. Furthermore, the government collaborates with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to implement programs for safe, voluntary return, as well as humanitarian evacuation or transfer to a third country, provided the necessary legal and humanitarian conditions are met and the principle of non-refoulement is upheld.

Regarding individuals found in desert areas near the border, the government affirms that temporary assembly and reception sites are used to provide first aid as well as urgent healthcare and food assistance pending their handover to the competent authorities; these sites do not serve as permanent detention centers. Competent authorities have initiated the provision of care and the investigation of incidents involving individuals who claimed that they were expelled from Tunisian territory into Libya via desert areas far from official crossing points.

Regarding forced labour, the Government of Libya affirms that Labor Relations Law No. 12 of 2010 prohibits coercion, forced labour, and forms of injustice and exploitation; furthermore, Libya is a party to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 29 concerning Forced Labour and Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour. Labor inspection bodies conduct periodic and unannounced visits to workplaces to verify compliance with the law and occupational health and safety regulations, and to monitor for indicators of exploitation or forced labour. According to available information, inspection bodies have not recorded any proven or documented cases of forced labour within the facilities subject to their oversight, while any complaints or reports are referred to the competent authorities for investigation and the taking of necessary legal measures.

The Government continues to strengthen the capacities of labour inspectors, judicial police officers, and law enforcement personnel regarding the identification of indicators of forced labour and human trafficking, as well as mechanisms for reporting, referral, and evidence gathering. It is also intensifying inspections in labour-intensive sectors—particularly construction—and in areas near the borders.

At the judicial level, the Government of Libya affirms that the Public Prosecution exercises its mandate with complete independence, grounded in the principles of

the rule of law, accountability, and the prevention of impunity. The State has adopted an institutional approach based on developing national capacities and enhancing international cooperation. Specialization in investigations and the legal distinction between the crime of human trafficking and the crime of migrant smuggling, ensuring the proper legal characterization of facts, the early identification of victims, and the provision of legal protection for them.

In this context, a national initiative was launched on July 30, 2024, to coordinate national and international efforts toward comprehensively addressing the crimes of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. This initiative led to the commencement of work on a standalone bill to combat human trafficking—drawing upon the provisions of the Palermo Protocol and relevant international standards—as well as the development of a national protocol for identifying trafficking victims and a national referral mechanism to standardize procedures and direct victims to appropriate services.

Judicial authorities treat suspected victims of trafficking as victims in need of protection—rather than as subjects for criminalization due to their immigration status—and refer them to the appropriate entities for health and social care tailored to the specific circumstances of each case. Furthermore, the fact that government centers dedicated exclusively to trafficking victims are not yet fully established does not imply an absence of protection; existing care and shelter facilities are utilized on an interim basis pending the completion of the referral system and specialized services.

The Public Prosecution has initiated investigations into specific incidents involving migrants. In July 2023, an investigation was opened following the discovery of migrants in a desert area south of Al-Assa who were suffering from exhaustion and physical injuries; their statements were recorded, bodies were referred for forensic examination, the injured received medical treatment, and coordination was established with competent authorities and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to transfer them to safe locations. Authorities also continued to document subsequent incidents involving the discovery of other individuals and bodies in border areas.

Following the shooting incident at the temporary shelter in Al-Assah on August 4, 2025, the Public Prosecution launched an urgent investigation; officials visited the scene, seized the weapon used, questioned the accused and witnesses, and referred the bodies for forensic examination. The proceedings resulted in the accused being remanded in custody and referred to the Criminal Court on charges of premeditated murder and the unlicensed possession of a weapon and

ammunition. The case remains before the courts, underscoring the application of the principle of non-impunity, regardless of the individual's official status.

Inquiries and investigative measures were also initiated regarding the report concerning [REDACTED]. These measures included contacting the women's shelter in Abu Salim and liaise with Interpol; verification efforts continued based on available information, yet no evidence was found to indicate her detention or enforced disappearance by any official entity.

The government acknowledges that managing the migration file faces significant practical challenges, including the fact that large numbers of migrants lack identification documents, the difficulty of establishing their identities and nationalities, and delays by certain embassies and diplomatic missions in recognizing their citizens or issuing necessary travel documents—compounded by the continued activity of smuggling and human trafficking networks and the vastness of the borders. These factors sometimes lead to prolonged administrative procedures, despite efforts to address them.

Accordingly, the Government of Libya reaffirms its commitment to completing the legislative framework for combating human trafficking, adopting a national protocol for victim identification and a unified referral mechanism, strengthening oversight of shelters, intensifying workplace inspections, building the capacities of law enforcement agencies and the Public Prosecution, prosecuting criminal networks, expanding voluntary return programs, and enhancing coordination with neighbouring countries, countries of origin, and international organizations.

Measures taken to identify victims of human trafficking and provide them with assistance and protection

The Government of Libya is working to develop a unified national system for identifying victims of human trafficking and referring them to specialized services. A national initiative has been launched to coordinate national and international efforts to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling; this has led to the initiation of a draft law specifically addressing human trafficking, as well as the development of a national protocol for victim identification and a national referral mechanism.

Pending the final adoption of these tools, investigation and law enforcement authorities rely on practical indicators derived from applicable legislation, comparative experience, and objective facts—particularly when the situation involves coercion, exploitation, extortion, deprivation of liberty, violence, sexual exploitation, or forced labor.

Competent authorities treat individuals showing signs of being trafficking victims as victims in need of protection, rather than as individuals subject to criminalization due to their immigration status. Depending on the individual's circumstances, assistance—including medical, social, psychological, and relief support—is provided, referrals to existing care and shelter facilities are made, and coordination with international organizations and diplomatic missions is undertaken. Furthermore, the needs of women, children, and the most vulnerable groups are taken into account when providing services and implementing measures.

Providing care and legal assistance to child victims of human trafficking in the context of irregular migration

The Government of Libya affirms that the protection of children and vulnerable groups is a priority in the humanitarian response. Upon receiving children, women, or vulnerable individuals rescued at sea or at the borders, basic aid and care are provided, and contact is established with embassies, diplomatic missions, and relevant organizations to arrange alternative protection and facilitate safe return procedures, in accordance with the best interests of the child.

The Al-Assa site is not designated for long-term detention; rather, it serves as a location for temporary reception and the provision of urgent care pending the transfer of individuals to the competent authorities. Similarly, the Ghout al-Shaal site is not a shelter for women and children, nor does it accommodate these groups due to the lack of appropriate infrastructure.

The government is working to incorporate child-specific indicators into the national protocol for identifying trafficking victims and the national referral mechanism. Measures currently under development include taking into account the child's age and psychosocial condition; separating vulnerable cases from adults when necessary and directing them to safer locations; coordinating access to medical, psychological, and social care; verifying family ties; and prioritizing the best interests of the child in decisions regarding return or referral.

The Government acknowledges that certain specialized services—including the legal guardianship system and shelter facilities dedicated exclusively to child victims of trafficking—still require further development as well as technical and institutional support, and it is working to enhance them in cooperation with national and international partners.

Cooperation with the United Nations and humanitarian agencies to identify the needs of migrants in reception centers

The Government of Libya affirms that international organizations and humanitarian and medical agencies—foremost among them the International Organization for Migration (IOM)—participate at various maritime disembarkation points and in the provision of first aid and humanitarian assistance to migrants. Furthermore, relevant international entities are granted access to official centers to assist in providing healthcare, medical and psychological support, and identifying humanitarian needs, in accordance with established legal and administrative frameworks.

Official centers are subject to internal oversight by bodies responsible for inspection, monitoring, and human rights, as well as external oversight by the Public Prosecution and national human rights institutions. The government expresses its readiness to receive official visits from representatives of Human Rights Council mechanisms and relevant international organizations to transparently observe operations and conditions within these official centers, and to cooperate in addressing shortcomings and improving services.

Provision of Legal Assistance to Irregular Migrants

The Government of Libya affirms that the right to counsel and access to legal assistance and that such right is established under national legislation and the procedures governing investigation and trial. Lawyers may communicate with and represent their clients before investigative and judicial authorities in accordance with applicable legal procedures.

As for individuals showing indications of being victims of human trafficking, the Public Prosecution treats them as victims in need of protection rather than as violators of immigration laws; they are informed of the procedures concerning them and, where appropriate, referred to the competent authorities for care and protection.

The government recognizes the importance of strengthening specialized legal aid services within the trafficking victim referral system and is working to incorporate them into the national protocol and referral mechanism currently under development. This effort includes enhancing cooperation with the Bar Association, national institutions, and international organizations to facilitate access to legal advice and representation, particularly for vulnerable groups, children, and women.

Guarantees of remedy, compensation, and non-recurrence

Libyan legislation guarantees the right of aggrieved parties to file reports and complaints, initiate criminal proceedings, and claim civil rights and compensation before the competent judicial authorities. The Public Prosecution investigates

incidents involving allegations of violations, taking measures to gather evidence, hear witnesses, and refer injured parties for forensic and medical examinations, subsequently referring the accused to the judiciary once sufficient evidence is available.

The issue of compensation is determined based on the findings of investigations, judicial rulings, and applicable rules of civil and criminal liability. The fact that a person is a migrant or lacks valid documentation does not preclude them from seeking judicial recourse or enjoying legal protection.

Guarantees of non-repetition include strengthening oversight of centers; implementing codes of police conduct; training law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, and labour inspectors; investigating abuses; and finalizing the anti-trafficking law, the victim identification protocol, and the referral mechanism—alongside intensifying the fight against smuggling and trafficking networks and enhancing international cooperation.

Measures taken to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of violations

The Government of Libya affirms that the Public Prosecution is independent in conducting investigations, initiating criminal proceedings, and supervising preliminary inquiries. Specific and verifiable allegations are investigated regardless of the official capacity or legal status of the suspect.

Regarding the incident in which migrants were found in the desert area south of Al-Assah in July 2023, the Public Prosecution immediately launched an investigation, took statements from survivors and witnesses, and referred the bodies for forensic examination and the injured to medical facilities.

Arrangements were made to transport individuals to safe locations. Furthermore, the subsequent discovery of migrants and bodies in border areas was monitored and documented in official reports.

Regarding the shooting incident at the temporary shelter in Al-Assah on August 4, 2025, the Public Prosecution visited the crime scene, seized the weapon, conducted inspections and forensic examinations, and questioned the accused and witnesses. Subsequently, the Prosecution ordered the detention of the accused and referred the case to the Criminal Court on charges of premeditated murder and the unlicensed possession of a weapon and ammunition; the case remains pending before the court.

The Public Prosecution also initiated an investigation into the report concerning [REDACTED] taking steps to conduct inquiries and liaise with a women's shelter and Interpol; based on available information, no evidence

was found indicating her detention or enforced disappearance by any official authority.

International cooperation encompasses training, the exchange of expertise and information, and judicial collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the Council of Europe, the European Union, and Expertise France, in addition to cooperation with Interpol and judicial and security authorities in other countries.

Measures Taken to Uphold the Principle of Non-Refoulement

The Government of Libya reaffirms its commitment to upholding the principle of non-refoulement and to ensuring that no person is returned to a place where there are substantial grounds for believing they would face torture, cruel treatment, trafficking, re-trafficking, or other forms of serious harm.

Competent authorities, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), are implementing safe voluntary return programs for those wishing to return to their home countries, alongside humanitarian evacuation pathways and resettlement to third countries where applicable. Each case is addressed individually, taking into account the person's specific circumstances, identity, health and humanitarian status, and potential exposure to risk.

The individual assessment process faces practical challenges, including the fact that many migrants lack identity documents, the difficulty of verifying nationalities and personal details, and delays by some embassies in identifying their nationals and issuing travel documents. Nevertheless, the government seeks to strengthen screening and victim identification procedures and to integrate assessments of trafficking and re-trafficking risks into the national protocol and referral mechanism, while paying special attention to children, women, and the most vulnerable groups.

Measures taken to protect victims of human trafficking, hold perpetrators accountable, and ensure redress

Libyan national legislation prohibits forced labour, compulsory labour, and exploitation; Labor Relations Law No. 12 of 2010 explicitly bans coercion, compulsory labour, and forms of injustice and exploitation. Furthermore, Libya is a party to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 29 concerning Forced Labour and Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour.

Labor inspection agencies conduct periodic and unannounced visits to workplaces to verify compliance with the law and health and safety regulations, and to detect indicators of exploitation and forced labor. Within the establishments subject to their oversight, inspection agencies have not recorded any proven or documented cases of forced labour, while emphasizing that any reports or complaints are referred to the competent authorities for investigation.

The government continues to train labour inspectors, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and law enforcement personnel on identifying indicators of trafficking, forced labour, and sexual exploitation, as well as on reporting and referral mechanisms. It is also intensifying inspections in the construction sector and border areas, and pursuing criminal networks that employ unlawful detention, extortion, forced labour, and sexual exploitation for financial gain.

Allegations of enforced disappearance are subject to investigation and inquiry whenever they are specific and verifiable. The Government affirms that there is no evidence of an official policy or institutional pattern of enforced disappearance, trafficking, or sexual enslavement. Victims retain their legal right to file reports, receive protection and care, and claim compensation, while the national referral mechanism continues to be developed to ensure victims' access to legal, health, psychological, and social services.

The Government of the State of Libya reaffirms its commitment to protecting human rights and upholding the human dignity of all persons within its territory, without discrimination, and to investigating violations and holding perpetrators accountable once the facts are established in accordance with the law.

The Government asserts that available judicial and administrative data do not support the claim of an official policy or a systematic institutional pattern of violations against migrants; rather, national measures reflect ongoing efforts in search and rescue, humanitarian care, center oversight, labor inspections, criminal investigations, the prosecution of smuggling and trafficking networks, and the development of legislation and victim protection mechanisms.

At the same time, the Government acknowledges that the protection system for migrants and victims of trafficking continues to face practical and institutional challenges requiring further development—particularly regarding the early identification of victims, specialized legal assistance, child protection, specialized shelter, individual assessments of return risks, and referral and compensation mechanisms.

The Government of Libya expresses its readiness to continue substantive and transparent cooperation with the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High

Commissioner, and relevant international organizations; to exchange verifiable information, and to benefit from technical support and capacity-building.

The Government also calls upon the international community to adopt an approach based on partnership and the sharing of responsibilities and burdens among countries of origin, transit, and destination; to enhance cooperation with neighbouring countries and diplomatic missions; and to provide the technical, financial, and institutional support that enables Libya to develop its national systems, to better protect migrants, combat transnational criminal networks, and fulfil its legal and humanitarian obligations.