

Charter for Peaceful Coexistence in Fezzan

Participants to Fezzan Reconciliation Forum,

Emphasizing the central and exemplary role of Fezzan in building peace and reconciliation in Libya,

Convinced by the longstanding traditions of dialogue and peaceful coexistence in Fezzan, which have been practiced for centuries,

Confident in the deep historical links that have united the social fabric and the various tribal components of the Fezzan,

Recalling that all communities of Fezzan have been equally victimized by years of conflict and marginalization, and suffered from their consequences until now,

Mindful of the risks raised by foreign interferences and the need to protect our borders and our sovereignty,

Recalling all constituencies of the South of their own responsibility in furthering reconciliation and preventing conflict,

Noting with regret the continued economic marginalization of Fezzan and its unfair representation in State institutions, as well as the deterioration of public services in the region,

Believing in the importance of conflict resolution and development of comprehensive truth-seeking and reparations mechanisms in order to establish responsibilities and to put an end to impunity,

Deeply concerned by the negative image of Fezzan circulated by most media and some community leaders, which contributes to a spirit of negativity and exclusion of the other,

Deeply disturbed by the decline of cultural values in Fezzan, including the weakness of a real spirit of citizenship, dedication to public good, tolerance and unity, and regretting the diminishing of cultural institutions which are key to a lasting peace,

Noting with deep concern the spread of social and tribal protection of criminals in Fezzan, which contributes to a climate of impunity and revenge, and stressing the need for all perpetrators to be equitably brought to justice,

Regretting the weakness of State institutions in Fezzan, and the negative repercussions of local and regional politics,

Reaffirming the importance of women in peace processes, praising their pivotal role in stabilizing our communities and bearing in mind that they are too often the first victims of our conflicts,

Deeply alarmed by the continued spread of weapons and the proliferation of unaccountable armed groups,

Convinced by the need to promote sustainable development and economic opportunities in order to protect our youth and prevent their recruitment by armed groups or radical movements,

Alarmed by the politicization of tribes and stressing their key role and responsibility in stabilizing Fezzan by staying away from power competitions and cycles of revenge,

Commending the many local reconciliation agreements that were signed by various tribes in Fezzan which have contributed to stabilizing the South, but also calling on the people of Fezzan to conclude the incomplete agreements and fully monitor and implement these agreements,

We, the undersigned, united in our common efforts to build a peaceful and reconciled Fezzan, and to spread a spirit of dialogue, forgiveness, citizenship, justice and equality:

Affirm the following fundamentals:

- Unity and the sovereignty of Libya,
- Prohibit the shedding of Libyan blood anywhere and recall that justice should be rendered for all crimes committed,
- Reject foreign interferences in Libyan affairs,
- Reject hate speech and incitation to war, violence, and discrimination,
- Call upon all armed groups not to enter or support any tribal or local component in Fezzan, and reiterate that the protection of borders are the sole responsibility of the state,
- Consider that dialogue is the only way of solving conflicts, and request that notables, wisemen, women, civil society activists, and prominent public figures intervene to solve them before they arise,
- Affirm that municipalities, state institutions and public services such as education, health, transportation, and other public facilities should stay away from tribal, ethnic or political affiliations, and should be provided equally to all,
- Stress that tribes should remain away from any political position or parties,
- Proclaim that freedom of expression should be respected for all citizens equally, as long as it does not incite hate or violence,
- Proclaim that freedom of movement within Fezzan is a fundamental right to all,
- Reaffirm the equal rights to citizenship as the only legal basis of identity,
- Deplore collective stigmatization based on tribal or ethnic origins, and declare accordingly that all crimes should be treated on a strictly individual basis only,

- Recall that free, fair and open elections are the only source of democratic legitimacy and of choosing representatives, and that their results should always be respected,
- Reaffirm the key role of women and youth in peacebuilding and the need to involve them in any reconciliation agreement and dialogue to ensure a lasting peace,
- Strongly condemn the attribution of political or civil position on the basis of tribal affiliations,
- Proclaim the importance of the principle of transparency in all public institutions, and of free access to information,
- Call on everyone to take the necessary measures for the safe return of displaced people and migrants inside Libya and abroad,

Responsibilities of State:

- Amend the transitional justice law so that it reaches equally to all victims, and form fact-finding commissions in a transparent and effective manner,
- Implement Law 59 on Local Governance and better support municipalities, including by creating Committees for Documentation, Arbitration and Reconciliation in each Southern municipality,
- Operationalize the National Reparations Fund adopted by the Presidential Council Decree 546 of 16 October 2017, and take all necessary measures for the reconstruction of affected cities in a way that does not conflict with other measures that provide compensation to victims of past violations similar to those previously included in compensations.
- Activate the judicial authorities guaranteeing the full and equitable application of the rule of law,
- Activate military and security institutions so that all components can join them, and dismantle all armed groups, whether ethnic, tribal, or regional, while ensuring that the members of these institutions are carefully vetted so that no perpetrators are allowed to hold public office.
- Combat illegal migration and refrain from taking any decision regarding the settlement of migrants in Libya.
- Ensure engagement of all tribal and ethnic components in the local and executive departments in Fezzan.

Mechanisms

Encourage civil society, universities, municipalities and social components to raise awareness about the importance of reconciliation, peaceful dialogue, and transitional justice,

Recommend that civil society and tribes contribute to fact-finding efforts by documenting human rights violations in view of a future State-led mechanism,

Recall that focus on financial compensation is not the only way of solving crisis, and that reparations also include non-monetary measures such as apologies, healing, and psycho-social support,

Call upon all parties in the Fezzan to contribute to the successful implementation of existing local reconciliation agreements, to continue their efforts in supporting other on-going dialogue initiatives, and to learn lessons from previous reconciliation experiences in that regards,

Encourage neutral third-parties to act as mediators between actors in conflict in order to bring a peaceful solution,

Emphasize the responsibility of imams, preachers and media to spread a spirit of reconciliation, forgiveness, and tolerance throughout the Fezzan,

Further invite social components of Fezzan to participate in cultural and sports events that can reinforce mutual understanding, national unity, social relations and solidarity.

General annexes

This Charter and its philosophy is to be widely implemented and spread in order to become a general framework for reconciliation in the South, to gain momentum and build support for it.

This Charter is to be further presented to all components of the Fezzan, including armed groups, medias, civil society organizations, and universities, so that all Libyans know about it and abide to it, and so that Fezzan becomes a model of reconciliation in Libya and beyond.

The Forum for Reconciliation in the South is to be officially registered as a civil society organization in Sebha, with branches in all cities of Fezzan.

Inner regulations, bylaws, and rules of memberships are to be drafted at a later stage between all founding members of the Forum,

Reconciliation committees are to be formed with the founding members of the forum, both men and women, in order to intervene in resolving disputes.

Regular follow-up meetings are to be held in all Fezzan and in Libya to present the outcomes of this meeting and to encourage other constituencies to join this popular movement for peace and reconciliation.