Statement by the Spokesperson on the situation in the Tajoura detention centre

The release of the detainees remaining in the Tajoura detention centre, hit by a deadly attack on 2 July, is a positive step by the Libyan authorities. All refugees and migrants have to be released from detention and provided with all the necessary assistance. In this context, we have supported the creation of the Gathering and Departure Facility (GDF) in Tripoli and other safe places in order to improve the protection of those in need and to provide humane alternatives to the current detention system.

We will continue to work with International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) in the context of the African Union-European Union-United Nations Task Force to support and protect refugees and migrants in Libya. We call on all parties to accelerate humanitarian evacuation and resettlement from Libya to third countries. In particular, we are supporting UNHCR’s work to resettle the most vulnerable refugees with durable solutions outside Libya, with around 4,000 individuals having been evacuated so far. We are also working closely with the IOM and the African Union and its Member States to continue the Assisted Voluntary Returns, thereby adding to the more than 45,000 migrants returned to their countries of origin so far.

The European Union is strongly committed to fighting traffickers and smugglers and to strengthening the capacity of the Libyan Coast Guard to save lives at sea. Equally, we recall the need to put in place mechanisms that guarantee the safety and dignity of those rescued by the Libyan Coast Guard, notably by ending arbitrary detention and allowing the UN agencies to carry out screening and registration and to provide direct emergency assistance and protection. Through our continuous financial support and our joined political advocacy towards the Libyan authorities, the UNHCR and IOM are now able to better monitor the situation in the disembarkation points and have regular access to most of the official detention centres.

Libya’s current system of detaining migrants has to end and migration needs to be managed
in full compliance with international standards, including when it comes to human rights. The European Union stands ready to help the Libyan authorities to develop solutions to create safe and dignified alternatives to detention in full compliance with the international humanitarian standards and in respect of human rights.

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