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Oceans and the law of the sea

Note verbale dated 27 May 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the State of Libya to the United Nations has the honour to transmit herewith the official declaration of the State of Libya regarding the outer limits of the continental shelf in the Mediterranean Sea, along with a detailed map-based guide outlining Libya's official position on the matter (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the State of Libya has the further honour to kindly request the circulation of the present note verbale and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 75.



Annex to the note verbale dated 27 May 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic and English]

With reference to the Letter dated 29 March 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya addressed to the UN Secretary-General ([A/60/68](#)), the letter dated 26 December 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Libya addressed to the UN Secretary-General ([A/74/634](#)), the letter dated 9 December 2022 from the Permanent Representatives of Libya and Türkiye addressed to the UN Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council ([A/77/646-S/2022/936](#)), Note verbale dated 25 January 2023 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the UN Secretary-General ([A/77/716](#)), Note verbale dated 13 February 2023 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the UN Secretary-General ([A/77/742](#)) and the Note verbale dated 5 December 2023 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the UN Secretary-General ([A/78/672](#)), I would like to bring to your attention the following:

First, Libya and Türkiye signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the delimitation of the maritime jurisdiction areas in the Mediterranean Sea on 27 November 2019. This Memorandum of Understanding has been duly registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter as of 11 December 2019, and constitutes an equitable solution reached based on international law. Neither Greece, nor Egypt is entitled to sovereign rights in the maritime areas delimited between Libya and Türkiye in accordance with international law.

Second, Libya considers the 2020 Agreement on the delimitation of exclusive economic zones between Greece and Egypt as null and void, which is inconsistent with international law, including the UN Convention on Law of the Sea, especially the principle of equity.

Greece's and Egypt's attempts to define and issue license areas for hydrocarbon exploration activities respectively in 2014 and 2021, and most recently in April 2024, Greece's approval of hydrocarbon exploration to the south of Crete violate Libya's sovereign rights in the Mediterranean Sea. Specifically, Greece has been continuing its unilateral survey and drilling activities in those so-called offshore license areas since 26 November 2022 with complete disregard of Libya's sovereign rights and in grave violation of established rules and practices of international law, including the UN Convention on Law of the Sea, regarding the delimitation of the continental shelf between states with opposite coasts.

Third, some of the areas of the Maritime Spatial Plan (MSP) of Greece, as declared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece and the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece, dated 16 April 2025, violate Libya's maritime jurisdiction areas in the Mediterranean Sea.

Specifically, some areas in the southern portion of the Greek MSP map violate Libyan continental shelf in the Mediterranean Sea, where Libya has ipso facto and ab initio sovereign rights and jurisdiction in accordance with the international law.

I wish to emphasize that the Greek MSP will not have any legal effect for Libya.

Fourth, Greece declared an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the Ionian Sea on 17 April 2025, through the Greek Government Gazette No: 59 of the same day, which encroaches on the continental shelf of the State of Libya, where Libya has ipso facto

and ab initio sovereign rights and jurisdiction in accordance with the international law. The southern border of the unilaterally declared Greek EEZ is not equidistant from the main coasts of Libya and Greece. Thus, the southern portion of the declared Greek EEZ in the Ionian Sea is illegal to the extent that it disregards Libya's sovereign rights in the relevant maritime area and violates the Libyan continental shelf in the Mediterranean Sea.

As known, the relevant international law encourages the States to make every effort to enter into provisional arrangements of a practical nature and not to jeopardize or hamper the reaching of the final agreement concerning delimitation of continental shelf and EEZ. Therefore, the unilateral declaration of the Greek EEZ in the Ionian Sea, in violation of the Libyan continental shelf, contravenes the well-established principles of the international maritime law.

Libya totally rejects the unlawful and maximalist maritime boundary claims of Greece and Egypt, as well as their offshore license areas in the Mediterranean Sea, based on these claims.

Libya reserves all its legal rights over the maritime areas, including the seabed, subsoil and superjacent waters to which they are connected, stemming from the international law.

In the light of above, I have the honour to convey the official position of Libya regarding the outer limits of its continental shelf in the Mediterranean Sea (see the map* and the list of coordinates in the enclosure).

The maritime boundary between Libya and Egypt is illustrated in accordance with the Note verbale dated 13 February 2023 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the UN Secretary-General (A/77/742), which registered the eastern limits of Libya's maritime jurisdiction areas with the United Nations.

From Libya's point of view, the maritime boundary between Libya and Greece shall reflect the median line between the coasts of two mainlands in geographical terms. In this regard, as supported by numerous examples of jurisprudence and state practice, there can be no automaticity in claiming that islands generate full maritime jurisdiction areas. Islands can be ignored or given limited effect in maritime boundary delimitation if their location distorts equitable delimitation or if there are other special relevant circumstances. Such maritime boundary shall also respect both the national legislation⁽¹⁾ of Libya and the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya on Delimitation of the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean Sea.

Hence, according to the list of maritime boundary coordinates, the northern limits of Libyan continental shelf from east to west starts with points B and A, which are eastern and western points of the maritime boundary agreed between Libya and Türkiye in accordance with the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding. Then point A extends to the median line between the mainland coasts of Libya and Greece, which runs from points 1 to 12. Starting from point 12, the maritime boundary follows the median line between the Italian mainland, including the isle of Sicily, and the Libyan

* Circulated in the languages of submission only.

¹ General People's Committee Decision No. 260 of A.J. 1377 (A.D. 2009) concerning the declaration of the exclusive economic zone of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, General People's Committee Decisions No. 37 and No. 105 of A.J. 1373 (A.D. 2005) concerning the declaration and delineation of a Libyan fisheries protection zone in the Mediterranean Sea, and General People's Committee Decision No. 104 OF A.J. 1373 (A.D. 2005) concerning straight baselines for measuring the territorial waters and maritime zones of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (see Law of the Sea Bulletins Nos. 58, 59 and 72).

mainland with the straight baseline across the mouth of the Gulf of Sirte, which is a historic bay under Libyan sovereignty in accordance with international law, until point 17. Point 17 extends to south to point 18, where the limits of the continental shelf between Libya and Malta starts in accordance with the Judgment handed down by the International Court of Justice in 1985 (Continental Shelf (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya/Malta)), which runs until point 28. Thence, the maritime boundary extends north to point 29 and follows the median line between the isle of Sicily and Libyan mainland until point 30. The maritime boundary between points 30 and 32 up until the land border between Libya and Tunisia illustrates the limits of continental shelf between Libya and Tunisia, as was established by the International Court of Justice in a Judgment handed down in 1982 (Continental Shelf (Tunisia/Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)).

Having *ab initio* and *ipso facto* sovereign rights over its continental shelf in the Mediterranean Sea, Libya believes that maritime borders between two sovereign states should be finalized through dialogue and negotiations in accordance with the international law and the principle of equitability. Peaceful means as stipulated in Article 33 of the UN Charter, including the International Court of Justice (ICJ), should be applied on the basis of mutual agreement. In this regard, the Government of Libya is ready to engage in negotiations with all neighbouring coastal states based on mutual respect for legitimate rights and interests of all parties for the delimitation of maritime boundaries in accordance with international law.

In the same spirit, Libya also calls on Egypt and Greece to suspend all their hydrocarbon licenses and exploration activities in those areas until all disputes of maritime boundaries are settled through negotiations between concerned Parties and by valid Agreements in accordance with international law.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34, 75 (a) and 103, and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as in the next edition of the Law of the Sea Bulletin.

Enclosure

List of coordinates of the Libyan continental shelf

<i>Latitude (north)</i>			<i>Longitude (east)</i>			<i>Point</i>
34°	09'	07.90"	26°	39'	06.30"	B
34	16	13.72	26	19	11.64	A
34	48	45.60	26	20	52.20	1
34	30	23.40	25	50	33.00	2
34	31	44.40	24	13	22.20	3
34	32	49.80	23	35	51.60	4
34	38	0.60	22	57	58.20	5
34	40	29.40	22	22	10.80	6
34	42	11.40	21	56	42.00	7
34	50	27.60	21	00	0.000	8
34	52	39.60	20	45	28.20	9
34	53	10.80	20	30	13.80	10
34	57	58.20	19	44	30.00	11
35	27	53.40	18	27	57.00	12
35	07	40.80	17	44	33.00	13
34	55	7.200	17	90	27.60	14
34	42	37.80	16	22	46.20	15
34	37	47.40	15	51	30.60	16
34	36	44.40	15	10	0.000	17
34	29	53.00	15	10	0.000	18
34	31	20.00	14	49	7.000	19
34	32	18.00	14	37	24.00	20
34	33	7.000	14	31	29.00	21
34	34	7.000	14	23	54.00	22
34	35	20.00	14	15	37.00	23
34	37	2.000	14	50	14.00	24
34	37	11.00	14	40	15.00	25
34	39	16.00	13	56	9.000	26
34	40	10.00	13	52	31.00	27
34	40	46.00	13	50	0.000	28
34	52	16.80	13	49	48.60	29
34	58	1.200	13	24	33.00	30
34	10	30.00	12	09	12.00	31
33	55	00	12	00	00	32

