



[The U.N. Special Adviser on Libya Offers to Mediate Between Rival Political Factions in an Effort to Push for Delayed Elections](#)

United Nations Special Adviser on Libya Stephanie Williams has outlined the importance of mediation between rival political factions in the attempts to push for delayed elections in the country. She has urged for a joint committee to work towards establishing a constitutional framework for this to take place amid concerns regarding a potential escalation of tensions after the Tobruk-based Libyan parliament recently swore in a new prime minister while the incumbent in Tripoli refused to cede power until new elections are held. Libya's incumbent Prime Minister Dbeibah has maintained his intention to hand over power to an elected government, and has put forth a plan to hold a simultaneous parliamentary vote and referendum on constitutional amendments in June. Previously, elections in Libya had been scheduled for December of last year, however disagreements about the eligibility of several controversial candidates and the ground rules ultimately delayed the vote indefinitely. Now, there is a worry among international observers and analysts that the installment of a rival administration could heighten instability and spark an outbreak of violence.

According to the components of Williams' plan, once lawmakers appoint a joint committee, it would meet in mid-March for two weeks under United Nations supervision to try and work towards creating the constitutional framework for desired elections. She has asked the Libyan parliament and the High Council of State (HCS) to nominate six delegates each to form the committee. The HCS has been supportive of the mediation process, but reactions in the House have not been as receptive. Earlier this week, Williams met with the House of Representatives Speaker Aguila Saleh to discuss the committee in detail. Saleh's media office confirmed that he rejected any "intervention" in the matter, saying that the House of Representatives' move to appoint a new government was "legal."

In the face of the Tobruk-based parliament's efforts to install a new administration, Libyan Interim Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah has vowed to remain in his position until new elections are held. Dbeibah is based in Tripoli with the Government of National Unity, and was appointed prime minister through a United Nations-supported process last year in February of 2021. The rival prime minister that has been sworn in by the Libyan parliament is Fathi Bashagha, an ex-interior minister. While dozens of lawmakers have rejected U.N. Special Adviser Williams' attempt at mediation, High Council of State head Khalid al-Mishri welcomed it – criticizing those who have labeled it as "interference." Ultimately, Williams' proposal is aimed at overcoming the impasse by creating a platform for dialogue between members of the parliament and the Tripoli-based High Council of State – something that is required in order to ensure consensus on plans for the desired elections. She has also emphasized that doing so reflects the genuine aspirations of the Libyan people who seek to exercise their right to vote and take part in the process of representative democracy. Additionally, Williams has noted the importance of cooperation between the country's institutions for the sake of lasting stability.

Without governmental consensus in Libya, there is no clear mechanism forward to successful elections. Regrettably, factions and warlords like renegade commander Khalifa Haftar have played a destructive role and further complicated Libya's path to democracy. Cooperative steps need to be taken to make certain that no struggle for control of the country's government will sink Libya back into conflict.