



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE
الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

5+5 Western Mediterranean Forum – Ministerial Meeting

22 October 2020

Statement - Hon. Pedro Roque, PAM President Emeritus

Check against delivery

Excellencies,

I wish to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta and Tunisia for their kind invitation, and it is a pleasure for me to participate in this meeting of the 5+5 Dialogue and to represent the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), which, as you know is responsible for the parliamentary dimension of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Forum.

Today we reflect on the multiple security challenges our region faces. This year, due to COVID limitations, also the consultations among the national parliaments of the West Mediterranean Forum have been conducted virtually. I can tell you that all our members fully share the concerns and hopes expressed by your excellencies in your interventions. On the main points, I would like to share with you the following:

- **A political solution in Libya** is the only one possible. PAM welcomes the recent momentum in military de-escalation and national dialogue, to achieve a Libyan-led and owned reconciliation. At the request of the UN, we have been working with our colleagues in Tobruk and Tripoli at establishing a parliamentary track among Libyan MPs, from each area of the country, to support the reconciliation process. Additionally, PAM recently adopted a resolution that calls for full **compliance with the UN arms embargo**, as a key step to halting the military confrontation in Libya.
- PAM is very concerned about the surge of **ISIL and Al Qaida operations in the Sahel**. By exploiting local low-intensity conflicts and security vacuums, and fueled by an abundance of illegal weapons, terrorist forces have made the Sahel a fertile ground for their new caliphate project. PAM continues to work with key security partners, including the UN and NATO, on the issue of counterterrorism in the Sahel region. However, to prevent regional destabilization, there is the absolute need for a **strategy that combines both security and development**. The UN had informed us that most of the promised development funding earmarked for the Sahel, has never materialized, and the small percentage received is spent on security to control armed groups, thus leaving development neglected. Our Assembly has repeatedly advocated with the international community and

the World Bank, **the need of a Marshall Plan** to support development in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa

- Effective and concrete decisions are needed as a **long-term solution to mass migration**, including the fight against criminal human trafficking. The parliamentarians have promoted the **Global Compact on Migration** by contributing to its drafting process, and we are committed to its implementation. Never the less, the lack of agreement on a common policy among EU states remains for us a major concern.
- The situation in Syria has serious repercussions on the security in Western Mediterranean. PAM is very attentive to the **issue of release and relocation of detained Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their families**. Their prosecution and deradicalization is a priority. Similarly, we are concerned by the increasing tensions in Eastern Mediterranean on the exploitation of natural resources
- Last, but not least, PAM fully supports the call of the 5+5 Ministers for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and Palestine. PAM, of which both Israel and Palestine are full members, has repeatedly confirmed that a **Two-State solution is the only way for both Israelis and Palestinians to achieve a lasting peace** in accordance with relevant international resolutions.
- Economy in our region has suffered enormously by COVID. We work with the World Bank, European financial institutions, and WTO to promote the most effective and speedy socio-economic recovery, to include also the most vulnerable segments of our societies. **Economic recovery, including Tourism, is indeed a pillar of security** in our countries. We have already a number of activities scheduled in this regard, including on Climate Change, Education and facilitating financing of SMEs.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Co-Chairs again for the opportunity to present the Parliamentary perspective to this discussion and to re-affirm PAM's commitment to this very important sub-regional forum, and we look forward to work with the colleagues from Spain and Tunisia to ensure synergies between our programs in 2021 and 2022.

Thank you.