Forum: Security Council

Issue: Addressing the Situation in Libya

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Introduction

The First Libyan Civil War occurred in 2011 in the North African nation of Libya. It was an armed conflict between pro-Colonel Muammar troops and anti-Gaddafi forces aiming to overthrow his government. The anti-Gaddafi forces were Libyan organizations that opposed and forcefully overthrew Muammar Gaddafi's political ideas. These opposition forces included well-organized and well-armed militias, combatants in the Libyan Civil War, Libyan diplomats who abandoned the Gaddafi regime, and Libyan military units that switched sides to aid the protesters.

The Libyan Revolution, commonly referred to as the February 17 Revolution, caused it to erupt. On August 8, 2009, a protest in Zawiya erupted, motivating another protest in Benghazi, which both resulted in brawls with security forces who opened fire on the crowd. After the demonstrations turned violent and caused nationwide chaos, Gaddafi's adversaries appointed the National Transitional Council as a provisional government. On February 26, the UN Security Council adopted the first resolution that placed travel restrictions and froze Gaddafi and his inner circle's assets. The resolution also submitted the case to the International Criminal Court for investigation. In early March, Gaddafi's forces retook several coastal cities before making it to Benghazi. An additional UN resolution authorized a no-fly zone over Libya and to use of any measures to stop assaults on civilians, such as but not limited to supporting key Libyan institutions and monitoring and reporting on human rights. This authorization led to a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing campaign targeting Libyan military equipment and infrastructure. Rebels have repeatedly rejected government offers of truce and the African Union's attempts to mediate the crisis.

On 16 September 2011, the National Transitional Council was finally recognized as the legal representative of Libya, replacing the Gaddafi government. On 20 October 2011, Muammar Gaddafi was captured and killed in Sirte. Upon his death, The National Transitional Council declared the liberation of Libya, and the conflict ended on 23 October 2011.

After negotiations between opposing political parties with bases in Tripoli, Tobruk, and other locations that agreed to merge as the Government of National Accord, the Libyan Political Agreement was signed in December 2015 after discussions in Skhirat. Fayez Sarraj, the leader of the GNA, arrived in Tripoli on March 30, 2016, and

started working there despite the opposing GNC. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL) Libyan provinces, the Shura Council of Mujahideen in Derna, drove ISIL out of Derna in July 2015 and later was defeated in Derna by the Tobruk government in 2018; the Islamist Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries, led by Ansar al-Sharia, which had support from the GNC and was defeated in Benghazi in 2017; and other armed groups and A joint offensive by the GNA and GNC were launched in May 2016 to retake Sirte from ISIL. ISIL lost all significant areas it had previously held in Libya due to this offensive.

Later in 2016, forces loyal to Khalifa al-Ghawil attempted a coup d'état against the Presidential Council of GNA. A "permanent ceasefire deal in all areas of Libya" was agreed upon on October 23, 2020, by the 5+5 Joint Libyan Military Commission, consisting of the LNA and the GNA. The deal went into effect right once and demanded that all foreign forces leave Libya within three months, during which time a combined police force would patrol the areas in contention. A temporary unity government was established on March 10, 2021, and is expected to last until Libya's December 10 presidential election. But since the election has been postponed numerous times, the unity government has lost its legitimacy, causing tensions of threatening to reignite the war.

Definition of Key Terms

Arab Spring

The Arab spring were a series of protests and uprisings sometimes violent, across the Arab world against corrupt governments. The Arab spring began in Tunsia in the 2010's.

Libyan National Army (LNA)

The Libyan National army is a milita group run by Khalifa Haftar and is backed by Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.The group backs the House of Representatives.

General National Congress

The House of Representatives is a LNA backed administration based in the city of Tobruck and is a rival administration to the Government of National Accord.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a military based alliance between several European and North American countries.

Government of National Accord

The Goverment of National Accord (GNA) is an interim government backed by the United Nations and is one of the rival administrations fighting for control of Libya

Goverment of National Unity

The combined provisional government of the GNA and the Tobruck government. This administration has been condemned by the United Nations

Militia Groups

A military group not associated with the government of the nation who advocate for their beliefs through violence.

Background

The conflict in Libya intially began during the Arab spring with an peaceful protest on Febuary 15, 2011 following the arrest of a human rights lawyer. The protesters called for the release of poltical prisoners in Libya but were instead met with violence from Muammar Gaddafi's government .The demonstrations which began in the city of Benghazi spread to the capital and authoties began using extreme force on the protesters, earning them international condemnation. This significantly estabilized the regime with the mass resignations of several government officials and significant dissent in the military. Eventually, the demonstraters were able to take several cities with the aid of dissenting military units and attempted to capture the capital. After the death of Gaddafi, there was a large power vacuum in Lybia and the conflict which continues today is largely fought between two parties the UN recognized government and the eastern government of Warlord Khalifa Haftar and to a lesser extent individual militia groups.

Eastern Government

After the power vacuum left by the assisnation of Gaddafi, Khalifa Haftar, a former Libyan General who had fled the country, returned and began consolidating power in the east of the nation. With the aid of Eygpt and Saudi Arabia he founded the Libyan National Army with an estimate of over 20,000 fighters. The Eastern portion of the country is controlled by the House of Representatives which is backed by Haftar and his troops. Haftar aims to capture Tripoli and to dismantle the GNA mainly by fighting the milita groups and tribes that are allied with them.

Government of National Accord

The Government of National Accord was established after the 2014 parliamentary elections the results of which were heavily contested. The administration,, which is based in the capitol of Libya, Tripoli, is backed by the United Nations, Italy, Qatar and Turkey and it is heavily reliant on the remaining military forces loyal to the Libyan government as well as separate milita groups. These ties to milita groups that the GNA is so reliant on prove troublesome as many of them have ties to political Islam. Similariy to the Eastern government the GNA is controverisial as they have largerly been unsuccessful in their attempts to unify Libya as they lack support from the people and have been unable to fufill the responsibilities they had promised. In March of 2021 the GNA and the Second Al-Thani Cabinet united forming the Government of

National Unity. The House of representatives rejected the administration and the unification of the two was condemned by the United Nations.

Current Situation in Libya

As of October 2020 the two factions have signed to a ceasefire agreement however the situation in Libya remains indecisive. Elections which were orginally set for December of 2021 were postponed several times and key institutions in Libya are struggling with creating sound election laws. The two faction have repeatedly failed in creating a framework for the elections that both parties agree on and overarching ideological differences. In a Security Council brief the UN special envoy pointed towards those same key institutions as potentially obstructing progress. The potential candidates for president are also a cause of concern for much of the international community and the UN. Khalifia Hafter who is a current United States citizen and is suspected to have ties to the US government and CIA and is most notable for his role as a military leader for the Eastern Government. Militia groups continue to be a major issue in Libya and could be detrimental in the long run in keeping the peace.

Human Rights in Libya

The conflict in Libya has not only decimated the political and economic structure of Libya but has also affected the people of Libya. As a result of the war many Libyans became internally displaced and or refugges. Close to 200,000 libyas were displaced for nearly a decade and the division between the Eastern government and the UN backed government prevented many of them from returning in fear of retilaition fro armed milita groups. Ethnic minorities and indigenous communites were especially susceptible to this as they faced discrimination and received little to no support from the unstable governments. Displaced persons often face difficulties with necessities such as education and healthcare and have difficulty finding jobs. Many Libyans were also victim to sexual assult and gender-based discrimnation particularly women and the LGBTQ+ community. Many displaced libyans are often forced into sexual intercourse for necessities like food by individuals in power such as soldiers or gaurds in shelters.

Major Parties Involved

United Nations

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) established in 2011 played an significant role in the war in Libya working with authorites to transtion Libya from conflict into peace by mediating key discussions and reinforce the efforts of the transitional governments. The United Nations backed the Government of National Accord for the the duration of the conflict and mediating numerous discussions between the warring factions in order to bring peace to Libya. Most notably the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum which was a panel of 75 Libyans who layed the groundwork for deomocratic election in Libya. The United Nations Security Council had also called for the removal of foreign military support and mercenaires inorder to further support ceasefire efforts

Turkey

Throughout the conflict the Republic of Turkey has mainly supported the Government of National Accord and provided support through arms and in 2020 even sent troops to fight for the GNA. Their support for the internationally recognized government has caused international tensions. Many nations found their intervention considering the delicate and diffcult state in Libya to futher escalate the worsening conflict. The United Nations imposed sanctions and stirctly prohibted the sale of weapons to Libya. However Turkey has continued to sell arms and weaponry to Libya in direct violation of United Nations sanctions.

Third Party Groups

Most concerning in Libya is the prevelance of third party actors in both sides of the conflict. The Libyan National Army have filled the gaps in their army with mercenaries from neighboring countries such as Chad and Sudan.These mercenaries often come from dangerous miltia groups and only further escalate the conflict in Libya. Moreover the normalization of militia groups in the conflit is extremely prevalent in Libya and is one of the United Nations objectives in their mission the stablize the nation. Despite embargos and sanctions placed on Libya multiple third party groups including various nations have financed various arms deals and mercenaries in Libya

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
February 17th, 2011	Motivated by neighboring countries protests such as Egypt, Tunisia, etc.. Violent protest breaks out in Benghazi, eventually spreading to other cities; escalating clashes between security forces and anti-Gaddafi rebels.
February 24th, 2011	Goverment forces battle for control over Misrata, an oil rich town.
February 25th, 2011	The United States closes its embassy in Tripoli and imposes unilateral sanctions against Libya, freezing $30 billion in government assets.
February 27th, 2011	Benghazi residents creates the National Transitional Council (NTC).
March 17th, 2011	UN Security Council approves no-fly zone over Libya, authorzing all neccessary measures to protect civilians.
September 20th, 2011	African Union joins 60 countries that has recognised the NTC as the new Libyan authority.
August 8th, 2012	Transitional government transfers their power to General National Congress (GNC), being elected in July.
September 11th, 2012	Four Americans including an United States ambassador gets killed when Islamist militants storms the consulate in Benghazi.
February 7th, 2014	Protests erupt in response to the GNC refusal to disband after mandate expires.
April 13th, 2014	After supreme court rules his appointment illegal, Prime Minister Maiteg resigns from office.
July 14th, 2014	UN staff pulls out and foreigners evacuated the country as security situation deteriorates due to boycotts and protest.

January 19th, 2015	Libyan army and Tripoli-based militia alliance declare partial ceasefire after UN-sponsored talks in Geneva.
July 18th, 2015	The Tripoli court sentences Gaddafi's sons Saif al-Islam and eight other former officials to death for crimes committed during the 2011
January 19th, 2016	UN announces new, Tunisia-based interim government, but neither Tobruk nor Tripoli parliaments agree to recognise its authority. Islamic State group attacks Ras Lanuf oil terminal, threatens to move on to Brega and Tobruk.
April, 2016	UN staff return to Libya after absence of nearly 2 years.
July 15th, 2017	Islamic State group ejected from Benghazi after three years of fighting.
April 4th, 2019	The Haftar Libyan National Army advances on Tripoli, causing clashes with the Government of National Accord (GNA) force.
June 5th, 2020	UN-backed government drives Haftar forces out of Tarhouna, their last stronghold in the west of the country near Tripoli.
March 15th, 2021	Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh is elected as the prime minister of the UN-backed Government of National Accord in Tripoli.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Since the asasisnation of Guddafi and the subsequent power vacuum left behind by him, many nations and the United Nations have made numerous attempts in quelling the violence in the region and stabilizing the government. The growing unrest in the region made it the ideal climate for milita groups specifically those with ties to religious extremisim and it prompted the United Nations to broker the Libyan Political agreement. The aggrement allowed for the implmentation of the Government of National Accord. Although this helped to quell some of the unrest it also escalated the conflict between them and the Eastern government. Throughout the conflict the United Nations has also faciltated several peace talks between the warrring factions. These yielded some results mainly the LIkyan Political agreement however these peace talks have somtimes proved unsuccesful. As of October 23,2020 the warring factions of the Government of National Accord and the Libyan National Army have signed a permanent ceasefire and as of 2021 the Security council has supported measures to withdraw military support from armed milita groups and other nations. Althought the permenant ceasefire has helped quell the conflict in the region the tensions between the two are still fraught and dosent fully account and propose solutions to stablize the region. The elections for Prime minister have been postponed several times and now infinitely and has significantly hindered the progress of stablizing Libya. They also have made little progress on protecting human rights in the region and protecting Libyas rich oil reserves.

Possible Solutions

Member states such as Spain, the Netherlands, and Denmark could maximize the impact of their support for Libya as part of an EU-wide approach. For example, an assessment of Libya’s security sector that maps

all Security Sector Reform (SSR) initiatives in the country. This enhances the technical assistance that Europe offers to Libya and highlights the areas where working bilaterally, in partnerships, or through multilateral organizations would be most beneficial.

While the Joint Ministerial Committee JMC continues to handle interim security arrangements, Europe should start creating a Joint Security Commission (JSC) under UNSMIL as a second phase of the JMC that focuses on SSR. To comply with SSR's political objectives, the JSC would have distinct priorities from the JMC and be run by civilians. The usage of JMC branding could also help with UN recognition and bypass some of the administrative difficulties of developing an altogether new mechanism, improving its legitimacy among Libyans and Libya's international allies.

The US should exert additional pressure on the intervening nations by combining private diplomacy with public censure. It should also back a UN Security Council resolution calling for a cease-fire while collaborating with Libyan authorities and international organizations like the World Bank to solve the economic issues that are the root of the violence on the ground. Libya can only stop its fall into chaos by clearing the field of foreign meddlers, such as the UAE, Turkey, and Russia, and by creating the conditions necessary for economic recovery.

A new constitution would be a crucial step in stabilizing Libya. One has already been developed by a 60-member body chosen in 2014, and two-thirds of voters must accept it in a national referendum. A referendum statute must be passed by the House of Representatives (HOR), the Tobruk-based legislative body of Libya. However, certain HOR members have been impeding the process because they already opposed the draft constitution. They continue to call for the referendum law vote to be delayed in the hopes that it will eventually be repealed. A new constitution will bring the vast majority of Libyans together and provide one source of political legitimacy, replacing and

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