

CAIMUN 2018

CANADA INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



Libya 2015

Backgrounder

Topic A: Security and Armed Conflict



CANADA INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2018

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Dear Delegates,

Hello, my name is Jeffrey Shen, and I will be serving as your director for Libya 2015. I am currently in the eleventh grade, and attend Pinetree Secondary School. I have been involved in MUN since the ninth grade; in fact, CAIMUN was one of my first ever conferences! Since then, I have been very involved, both as a delegate as well as a staff member. For me, MUN has to be one of the most fulfilling experiences of my high school career; it's given me so many opportunities to improve my public-speaking skills, my communication skills, and my ability to work well with others. Outside of MUN, you can find me slaving away at my art studio scrambling to finish my portfolio, or if not there, then probably somewhere in Gastown trying to find the best coffee shop to study or the best vegan-food (even though I am not a vegan).

The two topics that I have chosen are extremely pertinent to Libya in 2015. Remember, that the war essentially tore apart the country, leaving even the largest cities in ruins. With no legitimate political structure, laws are not enforced, people are not protected, and millions are left without basic life-necessities. It is crucial that both topics are treated with equal importance, as security is essential in order to protect the basic dignity and physical well-being of citizens, and state-building is the only long-term solution to ending the plight and suffering of Libya. I hope that you have as much fun researching and writing position-papers as I have, writing these two backgrounders. My ultimate goal as your director is to make a safe and positive environment, in which all delegates, regardless of experience, are comfortable to share their own opinions and speak on behalf of their country. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my fellow dais member. I look forward to meeting all of you!

Best of luck,

Jeffrey Shen
Director of Libya 2015

Committee Description

The National Transitional Council (NTC) was established in March of 2011, in the wake of the Arab Spring, and the beginning of the rebellion against the oppressive and authoritarian Gaddafi regime in Libya. The council's aim is to represent the interest of all Libyan people and to provide political and military leadership of the entire nation. The ultimate goal of the council is to guide Libya into a liberated era, one in which the nation can hold free democratic elections and create a new constitution that represents the wishes of all people.

There is currently a chairman, a vice-chairman, and representatives of the different regions of the nation. In August of 2011, a 14-page 'Draft Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Stage' was created as a plan for the multi-party democracy. However, it is still unclear if this council of members is established enough, in a nation filled with chaos and conflict, to take on this position.

Introduction

In March of 2011, following threats made by Colonel Gaddafi to storm the city of Benghazi, Western nations decided to intervene in the conflict in Libya. With the alleged assistance of a NATO coalition, the National Transitional Council killed Gaddafi on October 21, 2011. In the days following his death, Gaddafi's body was publicly displayed with that of his son. These gruesome deaths and their aftermath subsequently contributed to the seemingly never-ending onslaught between the warring factions of the divided nation.

Ever since Arab Spring protests in 2011, Libya has been plagued with constant turmoil, internal conflict, and war. After the uprising and overthrowing of the nation's harsh and cruel dictator Gaddafi, armed forces have engaged in torture, abduction, forcefully displacing people from their homes, and other criminal acts. Armed groups have joined extremist Islamic groups continuing to commit acts of terror.

Despite a political atmosphere that includes UN-led peace talks and widespread media coverage, Libya's current political state continues to be one of chaos and distress. Two rival governments competing for international legitimacy, land, and resources; this violent factionalism has led to human rights abuses, deaths and the forced migration of hundreds of thousands of innocent people, with more than 400,000 Libyans considered to be 'internally displaced people'.

Fast forward to 2015 and Libya is still at war with itself. It is split between an unstable government in the East aligned with the military, while the West, including Tripoli and coastal cities, are dominated by Islamists and militia. In the midst of all this, human rights are being violated, women, children, and innocent civilians are killed, while many are left without running water, a stable food-source, or electricity.

Timeline

December 24th 1951

Backed by the UN, Libya declares itself a sovereign nation from Italy.

1959

Oil is discovered, creating a huge economic boom for the next decade. Urbanization and social development unfold in the coming decades.

1973

Upon taking power, Gaddafi reorganizes the Libyan governmental system and abolishes democracy in Libya. The creation of these anti-democratic conditions largely influenced the grievances of Arab Spring protesters.

February 15th 2011

Anti-Gaddafi groups protesting in Benghazi. Libyan military attack crowds, injuring and killing several civilians.

February 26th 2011

The UNSC approves sanctions against the Gaddafi regime due to human-rights violations.

March 5th 2011

Groups of rebels come together and form the Transitional National Council (NTC). They declare themselves to be the sole international representatives of Libya

Rest of March 2011

Gaddafi-forces advance to Benghazi, re-claiming several rebel-held cities. The UNSC votes to militarily intervene in Libya. The US and European forces launch air strikes to weaken Libyan air defense and attack Gaddafi-held grounds.

July 15th 2011

The US officially recognizes the NTC as the legitimate governing body of Libya.

August 22th 2011

Rebel forces seized control of the city of Tripoli and surrounding area.

September 16th 2011

The UN General Assembly recognizes the NTC as the official governing body. sanctions imposed on Libya while Gaddafi was in power are lifted.

October 20th 2011

Gaddafi is killed by rebel forces.

October 27th 2011

The UNSC votes to end military operations in Libya.

January 28th 2012

The NTC approves a new election-system, stipulating that Libyans with ties to Gaddafi or the old regime, or academics who were proponents of Gaddafi's ideology, will be banned from running for office.

July 7th 2012

Libyans vote in an election for a 200-seat parliament to appoint an official prime minister and draft a new constitution.

Historical Analysis

After the fall of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Libya seemed to be the latest country affected by Arab Spring. In February of 2011, protests were held in Benghazi but were shut down by Gaddafi's armed forces. However, as protesting intensified, demonstrators began to take control of Benghazi and their revolutionary ideologies spread to the Western city of Tripoli. On the instructions of Gaddafi, the military opened fire on protesters and the government restricted many forms of communication, including the internet. While conflict still continued to build, Gaddafi's authority weakened as military units began siding with the opposition, and often refused to shoot down protestors. In response, peaceful protesters soon turned into armed rebels.

The growing violence of the government against its people drew the attention of world leaders who were concerned about the situation. Foreign leaders began to condemn Gaddafi's regime. International pressure for Gaddafi to step-down increased and the UNSC quickly approved sanctions placed on the Gaddafi regime, imposed travel bans on his family, and froze all of their foreign assets. At the same time, local anti-Gaddafi rebel groups united to form the Transitional National Council (NTC), which claims to represent the interests of the Libyan people.

As Gaddafi appeared to increase his power, the international community considered military responses, most likely considering the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya. While nations such as France and the UK expressed their support for airstrikes, others were hesitant. In March of 2011, Gaddafi launched an attack on the rebel-held city of Ajdābiyā. Soon after, the UNSC unanimously voted to impose a no-fly zone to protect Libyan citizens. Soon after, a coalition of American and European forces targeted Libya and struck buildings used by Gaddafi. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) officially eventually took control of operations later that month.

After months of stalemate between the rebel forces and Gaddafi's army, power shifted towards the rebels. In August of 2011, rebel forces established control over the city of Tripoli as well as the largest oil refinery in the nation. The NTC gained international legitimacy when the UN General Assembly voted to recognize it as a legitimate representative of the Libyan people. By October of the same year, Gaddafi was executed on the streets of Sirte, Libya by rebel fighters. Since the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime, the NTC has struggled as a national government to exert its authority and rule over the entire country. Local rebel militias have formed autonomous groups, and the nation has since been plagued by uprisings and internal fighting between opposing forces.

Current Situation

Political Challenges

Currently, Libya is split between two governments who boycott each other. This means that there are two parliaments, two central-banks, and an army with two chiefs of staffs split along ethnic lines. Libya Dawn is comprised of Arab soldiers controlling the majority of the territory, while General Haftar Dignity, has more weaponry. Supported and heavily backed by Egypt, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the leader of the Dignity movement, strongly supports the war on terror and Islamic

jihadists. Libya Dawn focused on the fight against former Gaddafi officials. The East promises to liberate Tripoli from Islamists, whom they denounce as terrorists.

The current situation in the capital, Tripoli, is volatile. Fuel supplies and access to electricity are declining as a result of the constant fighting. Crime is rising, with gangs forming in rundown neighborhoods in the city. Areas with no decisive unit of governance are growing, with violence not dealt or prosecuted or supervised by any governmental body or agency. Each month, approximately 10,000 migrants set sail for Europe. Even though Western nations were quick to lead a coalition to stop the Gaddafi regime, their presence in the aftermath has been lacking. There are currently no functioning embassies or foreign airlines in Tripoli, and Egypt and Tunisia have closed off land borders.

Armed Conflict

After the overthrowing of the Gaddafi regime, both sides were struck with opposition and terrorism from each other. As internal and external pressure to unify the opposing sides, people unwilling to compromise turned their guns to each other. This led to the bombing of airports, main oil terminals, seaports, and other violent acts of terror against each other.

Moreover, conflict over the nation's main oil terminals where most of the oil reserves reside threatens the country's main export and primary asset. In the Sahara, both sides have enlisted ethnic minorities as their proxies, with Libya Dawn drafting the Tuareg, and Dignity recruiting the Toubou fighting in the country's largest oilfields. Oil production is continuously declining and becoming much more volatile. Oil has depreciated by half in the last year.

Armed conflict continues in every region of the country. In Benghazi, militia groups backed by the international community have battled against Islamic extremist groups including ISIS and civilians remain caught in the crossfire. In Tripoli, the self-declared government has continued to clash with opposing groups and militia. In the South, indigenous tribal groups continue fighting amongst themselves. Fighting groups have devastated civilian areas, seized innocent people, tortured, burned, and killed civilians. While tribal groups are fighting due to lack of a legitimate governing body and centuries of long-standing ethnic tension, other groups are fighting simply as an attempt to seize power.

According to the UN, there are currently 400,000 internally displaced people in Libya, who are forced by armed militias to leave their homes. In Misrata, militias have continued to prevent 40,000 residents from Tawergha, Tomina, and Karareem from returning to their homes, which is considered a crime against humanity. They are living in temporary camps and only have access to the most basic living conditions, and often face harassment and various forms of punishment from militia groups.

Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

Currently, there are hundreds of thousands of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers fleeing the constant threat of danger due to heavy warfare. Most cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Over 150,000 Libyan refugees have already arrived in Italy, however, over 3,000 have already perished during the treacherous journey. Due to lack of funding and resources, rescue and search

operations are scarce. Refugees without legitimate legal documentation are often detained and faced with inhumane living conditions and treatments. People who have been injured during their journey are often left without access to healthcare.

Smuggling is another issue that needs to be resolved. Currently, refugees are paying ‘smuggling businesses’, and are embarking on extremely dangerous journeys, often across the Mediterranean. Not only is there no regulations to this, but it is also a very risky journey that many people are forced to take. In the first half of 2016, nearly 4000 people have lost their lives crossing the sea. Often, boats are overcrowded and not suitable for such long-distance trips, costing the lives of thousands of people.

ISIS and Human-Rights Abuses

The extremist Islamic State has gained control over large portions of land in Central Libya, and are frequently carrying out acts of terror such as executions, beheadings, amputations, and torture. The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and the U.N. Support Mission in Libya has stated about ISIS that “committing gross abuses including public summary executions of individuals based on their religion or political allegiance”. The UN has illustrated the situation of the nation as being in a state of anarchy. All factions of the fighting forces within Libya have violated international law by committing war crimes such as abductions, torture, and mass killings.

The UN has documented ISIS executions in central Libya along the Mediterranean coast. Victims include those accused of ‘treason’ and individuals engaged in same-sex relationships. Many Libyan militia groups, such as the ISIS Tripolitanian Province in the west or the ISIS Cyrenaica Province in the east, have already pledged their allegiance to ISIS, and have been responsible for violent attacks on oil fields, cities, and residential areas. Arbitrary imprisonment without a legal trial, executions, and use of torture have all been reported by the UN.

UN/International Involvement

A UN-supervised discussion has been created in efforts to reach an agreement for national unity and to stop the constant warfare that the nation has faced for more than four years. In December of 2015, an agreement in Skheirat, Morocco, appointing a prime minister to the National Unity Government, and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has recognized this as the legitimate government of Libya. The agreement resolved disputes between the House of Representatives (HoR) in the east and the General National Congress (GNC) in the west.

Currently, the UNHCR has immediately responded to the emergency by mobilizing staff in 20 different locations to provide assistance and life-saving protection for individuals. Moreover, monetary assistance, in the form of providing shelter for refugees, especially during winter periods, is also implemented. On top of this, programs with the purpose of reuniting families, providing identification services, and aiding with employment have all been initiated. According to the UNHCR, there are currently 1.3 million people in need of assistance in Libya. Of those, hundreds of thousands of individuals are left without basic healthcare, clean drinking water, food, shelter, education, and safe living conditions. Currently, the Council on Refugees is working to improve living conditions in the region, while aiding to relocate asylum seekers to safer areas if need be. This is achieved through supporting local services in host-communities,

such as by building hospitals and schools.

Furthermore, the UNHCR also seeks long-term solutions for people who have migrated away from Libya, through family reunifications, as well as evacuation procedures for those in need. In urban areas, there have been Community Development Centers and hotlines to identify, register, and help those in order to protect them. Furthermore, the UN has been an advocate to end the detention of refugees and asylum seekers, encouraging states to seek alternatives such as identification and registration.

Potential Solutions

In the midst of all of the warfare and constant political and military conflict between warring factions in Libya, finding a simple solution is a near impossible feat to come to. It has become very clear that the conflict has drained and jeopardized resources killed hundreds of thousands, and led to the suffering of millions. Extreme compromise and negotiations between the parties appears to be the best way to end the conflict.

However, in order for this to happen, opposing sides must be willing to let go of certain aspects of their political ideologies and be open to negotiation and compromise. It seems as though the best ‘middle-man’ in this situation to lead peace-talks are Western states that are very involved in trying to solve the conflict, such as Germany. However, it is crucial that the west remains neutral throughout this process and is not perceived as being biased towards a certain party; the opposite of the status-quo. Western states should make it clear that they do not recognize any sovereign authority if they refuse to negotiate in order to come to national-unity. The West’s apathetic attitude towards the conflict cannot continue, as they should be working with the individual actors, such as militia groups and indigenous tribes within the nations.

Another approach to solving the problem, however, is to do the exact opposite – having the West support a single group to over-power the rest of the warring factions. While this is a controversial and heavily debated approach, some believe that arming, supporting, and recognizing a single entity can be a faster way to solve the issue, such as if the international community backed up either the GNC or the HoR in 2014. However, those opposing this approach argue that the situation in Libya has not reached that state and that foreign-supplied arms falling into the hands of the militia is simply far too dangerous. Looking to past attempts where this has happened in [example], the outcome has not been as expected.

In order to prevent the ongoing conflict and security issues within the nation, some see UN-led peacekeepers as an effective solution to curb the amount of violence that is happening right now. With no legitimate authority, efficient local and regional police-forces or a proper judicial system, many believe that it would be effective to have an organized body going in and preventing more damage. However, others believe that it is an infringement on the national sovereignty of Libya to have unsolicited peacekeepers, who aren’t familiar with their land, the people, their culture, or their political climate.

Bloc Positions

The House of Representatives

The West has recognized the House of Representatives, which is perceived as legitimate, as they had been officially voted into office, and consist of many historically-cooperative figures, who used to be a part of the National Transitional Council (NTC). The House of Representatives is much more willing to communicate and receive support from the Western states, as want to form a government similar to that of the National Transitional council –one that is diplomatic and secular. However, there are still quite a few internal disputes within the group; many leaders are still in disagreement, and many important members were found to undermine the peace process, through creating conflict and disagreements within the council, are were extremely against working alongside other organizations such as the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and other political parties in the region, such as the GNC.

The General National Congress

The General National Congress is a long-time rival of the Eastern-based House of Representatives. They are based in the nation's capital of Tripoli, in the west. Following a national election in 2014, in which the GNC experienced a humiliating defeat, they affiliated themselves with terrorist organizations such as Ansar al-Sharia. Furthermore, they are also dominated by Islamic organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood and their allies. It is important to note that both political parties want power, political influence, and control of the Libyan national government. They are extremely hostile towards each other, due to historical resentment and differences in political ideologies (Muslim vs. secular forms of government, for instance). Currently, they have both walked out of peace-talks, due to the face that both parties are extremely unwilling to share power.

Discussion Questions

1. What were the main causes of the current crisis, and what measures can nations take to avoid making the same mistakes in the future?
2. Which actors in this conflict are the most vulnerable to danger and violence, and what mechanisms can be implemented to protect them from harm?
3. Is it wise to send external troops and military into Libya to attempt to stop the warfare?
4. What are steps that can be taken to pave the way towards compromise and unity within the nation?

Further Resources

- <http://www.unhcr.org/>
- <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13754897>
- <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/>
- <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/libya/>
- <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13755445>
- <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/01/politics/isis-united-nations-libya-expansion/index.html>
- https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/07/libya-intervention-daalder_n_6809756.html
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libya-in-year-update-july-2015/libya-in-year->

[update-july-2015](#)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huizL_VfJBI (Video explaining the current conflict in Libya)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih1iicUd3ls> (Video explaining the asylum-crisis in Libya)

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