**Florida High Schools Model United Nations**

**FHSMUN GULF COAST 7**

**UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

**THE SITUATION IN LIBYA**

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"The prospect of Libya in freefall should give all pause, especially the vulnerable neighbours."[1]

"…ensuring the democratic rights of the Libyan people, the need for a consensual government based on the principle of separation of powers, oversight and balance between them, as well as the need to empower state institutions like the Government of National Accord so that they can address the serious challenges ahead, respect for the Libyan judiciary and its independence."[2]

**Introduction**

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring of 2011 and subsequent regime changes in Egypt and Tunisia, the overthrow of Muammar Qaddafi's[3] 42-year long reign unleashed violence and reprisals that continue to rend Libya's fragile social fabric and threaten to destabilize the broader region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). While the Fund for Peace currently ranks Libya as the 28th most fragile country, simultaneously the Fund ranks Libya as experiencing the most severe deterioration of its situation over the last 10 years (2009-2019).[4] Renewed violence and continued power struggles exacerbate existing regional and/or ethnic/tribal rivalries within Libya, while also attracting the attention of both neighboring and global powers. The violence and instability of the past 8 years, exemplified by General Khalifa Hiftar's renewed assault on Tripoli, starkly illustrate the profound need for a just and enduring political solution.

**Scale of the Problem**

The estimates for the numbers of Libyans killed, wounded, and displaced, including those who have fled the country, do not garner the same attention and focus as the horrific totals emanating from Syria, but Libya's population is approximately 35% that of Syria's

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[1] International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Libyan Political Agreement: Time for a Reset", Middle East and North Africa Report No. 170, November 4, 2016, p. ii.

[2] *Libyan Political Agreement*, "Introduction", December 17, 2015, p. 1.

[3] Editorial note: There are a variety of commonly employed spellings for Muammar Qaddafi, including Gaddafi, Gadhafi and Qadhafi; to ensure consistency, the spelling Qaddafi will be used throughout this document.

[4] Fund for Peace, "Fragile States Index 2019", April 10, 2019, pp. 7 & 11. The entire report may be found at: https://fundforpeace.org/2019/04/10/fragile-states-index-2019/

(approximately 6.6 million to 18.5 million[5]). Put into perspective, the violence and suffering experienced by the Libyan people deserves to be evaluated more closely in line with that of other more high-profile contemporary conflicts. Furthermore, the continuing conflicts in Libya present serious threats to surrounding countries, including Algeria; Chad; Egypt; Mali; Niger; and Sudan.[6] Libyan migrants and refugees are also often greeted with hostility and even violence when seeking to enter Italy[7] and other southern European countries. Disruptions to Libyan oil production further threaten the solvency and stability of a country that already faces enormous challenges, including ending this series of armed conflicts, safely welcoming voluntary repatriating Libyan exiles and refugees, and years, likely decades, of rebuilding.

## Historical Background

Libya's history reflects its intersecting locations in North Africa, the southern Mediterranean, and the Arab world. Beginning in the mid-16th century, the Ottoman Empire ruled Tripolitania in the west and the surrounding lands of Cyrenaica in the east and Fezzan in the south for approximately 360 years. Just before World War I, as part of the broader European confrontations throughout North Africa, Italy wrested contemporary Libya out of Ottoman control and would control Libya until 1947, when Allied occupation would begin and lead to the establishment of the independent Kingdom of Libya in 1951. In the wake of the enormous political convulsions wracking much of the Arab world in the wake of Israel's defeat of Egypt and Syria and other Arab states in the 1967 war, and Egyptian President Gamal Abd al-Nasser's subsequent resignation, enterprising and dissatisfied military officers led by then Captain Muammar al-Qaddafi would seize power in Tripoli in September 1969 and establish the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

## Enter "this mad dog of the Middle East"[8]

Qaddafi's *coup* would be followed by more profound, even radical changes in Libya's political, economic, and legal systems. Frederic Wehrey describes the "recipe" for reorganization as involving "a mix of socialism and pan-Arabism with the nationalization of foreign banks and oil companies and the closure of foreign military bases (negotiations for the departure of the Americans had already been under way during King Idris's rule.)"[9] To maintain control, Qaddafi provided significant economic benefits and incentives, particularly in the 1970s when oil prices were high; Qaddafi also used violence and terror, at home and abroad, to preserve his power. "Opponents of the regime were hanged in public squares and sports arenas. Dissidents who fled

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[5] Worldofmeters.com, April 30, 2019. Worldofmeters.com relies on United Nations estimates of current populations.

[6] As will be analyzed below, while Libya does not immediately border Mali, many Malians had sought refuge in Libya and then returned to Mali in the wake of Qaddafi's overthrow in October 2011; these returning Malians fought the central government in Bamako and called for the establishment of a new, independent Republic of Azawad.

[7] Declan Walsh & Jason Horowitz, "Italy, Going It Alone, Stalls the Flow of Migrants. But at What Cost?", *New York Times*, September 17, 2017.

[8] Then US President Ronald Reagan referred to Qaddafi as "this mad dog of the Middle East" in his April 9, 1986 press conference, 4 days after a Libyan-sponsored bombing of a Berlin nightclub that killed 2 American service personnel and 6 days before a joint United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) bombing of Libya.

[9] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores: Inside the Battle for the New Libya*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 2018, p. 12.

the country were pursued – some kidnapped or assassinated."[10] Consistency was not the hobgoblin that bedeviled Qaddafi's Libya, either, over the course of his 42-year reign; Qaddafi embraced socialism, pan-Arabism, and eventually pan-Africanism, depending on his seemingly mercurial personality and ostensibly strategic calculations regarding where his greatest advantage lay at any moment.

Qaddafi's Libya often played an outsize role on the international stage, befitting the extravagant personality and lifestyle of its enduring leader. Frederic Wehrey asserts that "radicalism at home was matched by radicalism abroad."[11] Qaddafi's embrace of resistance movements around the world as well as his fervent support for Palestinian statehood and his denunciations of Western imperialism ensured that his government would firmly oppose Western allies such as France, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States. Libyan support for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Polisario Front in Western Sahara, for the genocidal Mengistu regime in Ethiopia, as well as assistance to Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in his war against Tanzania in the late 1970s, and subsequent temporary refuge in Libya after his overthrow in 1979, as well as Libya's war against Chad (1978-1987) all cemented Libya's global standing as a pariah and rogue state. Libya's support for, and complicity in, acts of international terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s would lead to increased isolation and hardship.

Libyan planning and involvement in terrorist bombing incidents in the 1980s intensified Qaddafi's conflict with Western countries. In April 1986, the late-night bombing of *La Belle* disco in Berlin killed 2 American military personnel and a Turkish woman and injured nearly 200 more people; 10 days later, US and British aircraft bombed Tripoli and Benghazi, killing nearly 40 people and wounding almost 100 more. In December 1988, Pan Am flight 103 was blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 people onboard, including nearly 200 Americans. The next year, 1989, Libyan operatives, using a suitcase bomb similar to the Pan Am flight 103 bomb, would destroy French flight UTA 772 over Niger, killing 170 people, most of whom were French nationals. These bombings and Qaddafi's persistent refusals to turn over suspects for questioning and/or trials led the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Libya in 1992.[12]

These UN-imposed sanctions, as well as additional UN and US-imposed sanctions in 1993 and 1996, respectively, battered Libya's economy and ultimately produced further Libyan policy reversals and personal reinventions by Qaddafi himself. Qaddafi reversed his previous emphasis on reducing and/or eliminating kinship/tribal allegiances and according to Wehrey, "despite his pretensions of doing away with tribalism, Qaddafi leaned on tribes even more to maintain control."[13] Libyan political and security institutions were hollowed out to prevent attempts to overthrow Qaddafi; the establishment of Revolutionary Committees in the 1980s and the establishment and favoring of the palace guard, "elite brigades commanded by his [Qaddafi's] sons and staffed by favored tribes, whose main purpose was to out down revolts"[13], came at the expense of the Libyan military. In 1999, Qaddafi unveiled his goal of a "United States of Africa" as the previous Organization of African Unity (OAU) evolved into the

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[10] Hisham Matar, *The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land in Return*, Random House, New York, 2017, p. 6.
[11] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 13.
[12] United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 748, S/RES/748, March 31, 1992.
[13] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 14
[13] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 17.

contemporary African Union (AU).[14] As a result of the debilitating sanctions and internal conflicts led by Libyan jihadists returning from Afghanistan, Qaddafi sought to reposition himself and his government as allies of the Western powers in the fight against Islamist terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda. Libya agreed to turn over more suspects from the Pan Am flight 103 bombing and to pay compensation to the victims' families. In December 2003, after the US and UK-led Coalition of the Willing invaded Iraq and deposed Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath Party, ostensibly because of Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), Qaddafi announced that Libya would dismantle its own WMD programs; this announcement would be swiftly followed by the lifting of UN and US-imposed sanctions and the restoration of USLibyan diplomatic relations in 2006. Then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice praised Libya as "an important model" of cooperation against terrorism as well as to increase pressure on the governments of Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

From 2006-2011, Libya sought to reintegrate itself into the global economy with moderate success. Buoyed by high oil prices and its enormous oil reserves, Libyan gross domestic product (GDP) grew rapidly between 2003, with the lifting of the sanctions, and 2007, slumped briefly in 2008, and then grew moderately in 2009 and 2010, before GDP plummeted with the outbreak of the current civil war in 2011 (see chart below).[15] Foreign investment in Libya resumed after the sanctions were lifted but is now yet another element in serious jeopardy as the civil war grinds on.



SOURCE: TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | WORLD BANK
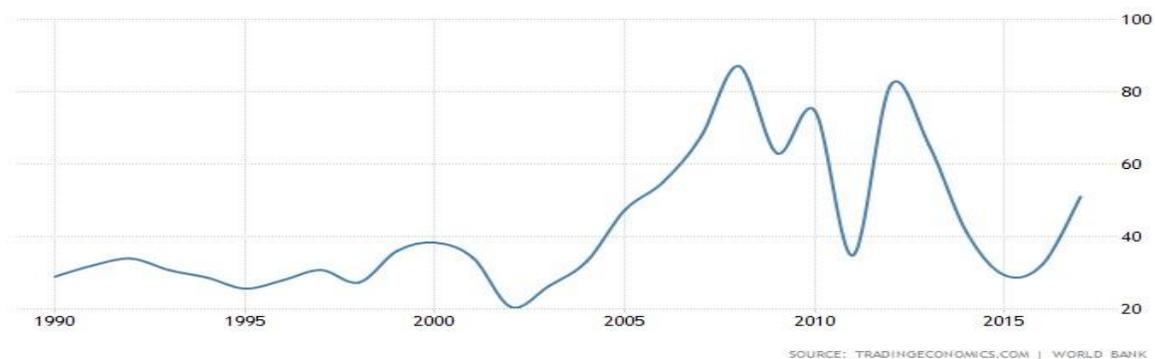
**"Those who do not love me do not deserve to live"[17]**

The halcyon days of the Arab Spring of early 2011 often seem like a fundamentally different era from the return to autocracy in Egypt and the brutal fighting and bitter bloodletting in Libya in the spring of 2019. The brutality of the Qaddafi regime had been heartbreakingly established over the previous 25+ years but the events of June 28-29, 1996 in the notorious Abu Salim prison outside Tripoli surpassed prior instances of the Qaddafi regime's inhumanity. After an attempted prison break, Qaddafi's intelligence chief, and brother-in-law, Abdullah al-Sanusi tricked the rebelling prisoners into believing that there would be a negotiated settlement; instead, Libyan security forces executed the prisoners' negotiators and then forced all remaining prisoners out into the courtyard where they were bombarded with grenades and automatic rifle fire for over 2 hours. "A prison cook tallied the deaths at twelve hundred using a grim arithmetic:

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[14] *News24*, "Qaddafi's African dream still just that", March 4, 2001.

[15] *Trading Economics*, "Libya GDP", 2019. Found at: https://tradingeconomics.com/libya/gdp

[17] Muammar Qaddafi's address to the Libyan people, September 1, 2011.

the number of meals he served before the twenty-ninth and the number her served after."[16] The Qaddafi regime successfully suppressed information at the international level until 2004, when Qaddafi admitted to the massacre; within Libya, stories about the carnage at Abu Salim had reached many families and their protests and demands for justice in February 2011 in Benghazi[17] would culminate in the overthrow of Qaddafi and over 8 years, and counting, of civil war.

Benghazi, Libya's second-largest city and "the engine of change in Libya for nearly a century"[20], "was always unenthusiastic about the Qaddafi regime, and it paid the price."[18] On February 17, 2011, the families of some of the victims of the Abu Salim massacre gathered on the steps of the courthouse in Benghazi and demanded the truth about what had happened to their family members as well as justice and accountability for those who had perpetrated this massacre and/or engaged in the decades of torture and abuse for which Abu Salim was deservedly notorious; these protests were also spurred by the Libyan regime's arrest of local lawyer Fathi Terbil 2 days earlier. After Libyan security forces killed dozens of people as increased protests and a funeral procession intersected outside the headquarters of the feared and loathed Fadil Brigade, soldiers and officers began deserting the Libyan armed forces and/or joining with the protesters. Within a week of Fathi Terbil's arrest, Libyan security forces had clearly lost their control over Benghazi and the February 17 Revolution had begun. The idealism and optimism with which the revolution started would sadly soon number among its victims.

Within days, Libya was engulfed in violence as the regime's myriad opponents, including Islamist groups that the Qaddafi regime had sought to ban and/or eliminate, confronted Libya's security forces. The fractious, and ultimately fractured, nature of the opposition forces would create alliances of convenience and lasting rifts, these last fueling the contemporary civil war that still plagues Libya. After initial successes that took both the Qaddafi regime and the global community by surprise, the rebellion in Benghazi and eastern Libya would stall and begin to falter. International actors, some of whom wished to exact retribution against the Qaddafi regime for previous acts of terrorism as well as Qaddafi's quixotic and often vexing foreign policies, including France and the United Kingdom, watched the unfolding events carefully and would soon call upon their shared NATO ally, the United States, to join in bombing raids on the Libyan security forces.

A classic military adage states that generals are always fighting the last war; perhaps diplomats are always renegotiating the last crisis. Then US Ambassador Susan Rice and then Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights Samantha Power were haunted by the international community's failure to prevent the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and were determined, along with other influential policymakers in the US, France, and the UK, to more effectively prevent prospective genocide in Libya. Rice later asserted that "in the way that the stars were not aligned in Rwanda, they were aligned in Libya."[19] In late February 2011, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1970 (S/RES/1970), imposing sanctions on the Libyan regime as well as an arms embargo and referring prosecution for human rights violations to the International Criminal Court (ICC).[20]

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[16] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 27.

[17] Raja Abdulrahim, "1996 prison massacre a spark in Libyan revolution", March 19, 2011.

[20] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 25.

[18] Hisham Matar, *The Return*, 2017, p. 104.

[19] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 40.

[20] United Nations Security Council resolution 1970 (S/RES/1970), February 26, 2011.

Unfortunately, neither the Qaddafi regime nor the armed opposition heeded the Security Council's demands; soon thereafter, the British and French governments began calling for a "nofly zone" to prevent Libya's armed forces from bombing the rebels and the civilian population. On March 12, 2011, the League of Arab States, or Arab League, formally called for armed intervention under the mandate of a new UN Security Council resolution.[21] Ardent debates within the White House, coupled with fears of an imminent massacre in Benghazi, ultimately led to then US President Barack Obama to direct Ambassador to strengthen an existing FrancoBritish draft resolution that would authorize the use of force under a Security Council mandate.

With the adoption of Security Council resolution 1973 (S/RES/1973) on March 17, 2011, France, the UK, and the US swiftly began a series of airstrikes aimed at preventing Qaddafi's forces from capturing Benghazi as well as to destroy Libya's air defenses. President Obama maintained serious misgivings about intervening in Libya and was determined to then delegate leadership for further military and humanitarian actions to NATO allies. "The intervention would be collective, not unilateral, and Washington could exempt itself from any ownership of what came next."[22] Political scientist Alan J. Kuperman argues that "in retrospect, Obama's intervention in Libya was an abject failure, judged even by its own standards."[23] President Obama would ultimately bolster Kuperman's analysis when he concluded in April 2016 that the "worst mistake" of his presidency was "…failing to plan for the day after what I think was the right thing to do in intervening in Libya."[24] Presidential mea culpas notwithstanding, the tragedy of contemporary Libya is a predictably maddening combination of domestic and international failings.

Throughout 2011, the February 17 Revolution and/or Libyan civil war raged throughout the country, with especially heavy fighting in Misurata and Sirte, the latter being Qaddafi's birthplace and the greatest source of support for his regime. In the early stages of the conflict, Qaddafi's forces quickly recaptured nearly every city that had been taken by rebel forces and were on the verge of recapturing Benghazi. After appeals from Libyan expatriates in Switzerland and around the world to prevent a prospective bloodbath in Benghazi, NATO forces intervened in the conflict and prevented Qaddafi's forces from subduing Benghazi. Unfortunately, according to Kuperman and other analysts, this reversal of military fortunes may have lengthened the initial civil war and ultimately led to more civilian casualties; Kuperman asserts that "the intervention extended Libya's civil war from less than six weeks to more than eight months."[25] The counterfactual claim would be that given Qaddafi's historically abysmal human rights record and threatening rhetoric leading up to NATO's intervention, the prospects of extreme violence were portentous.

As fighting continued throughout the country during the middle of 2011, the fractured nature of the opposition emerged into clearer relief. Different militias captured particular cities or areas of the country and the rivalries between specific commanders further heightened tensions, particularly in light of the support of the United States, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab

[21] Colin Freeman, Nick Meo & Patrick Hennessy, "Libya: Arab League calls for United Nations no-fly zone", *The Telegraph*, March 12, 2011.

[22] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 43.

[23] Alan J. Kuperman, "Obama's Libya Debacle", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2015.

[24] *The Guardian*, "Barack Obama says Libya was 'worst mistake' of his presidency", April 11, 2016.

[25] Alan J. Kuperman, "Obama's Libya Debacle", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2015.

[29] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 53.

Emirates (UAE). General Hiftar, a former Libyan commander in the Chadian war and then an exile in the United for 20 years, and Abd al-Fattah Younis, the Minister of the Interior who joined the opposition in Benghazi in February 2011, began publicly denouncing each other by April 2011. By the summer of 2011, the emergence of Islamist militias backed by Qatar began confronting former Libyan military and political officials, including Younis, who were supported by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Wehrey asserts that Qatar supported the Islamists "because it saw them as the most capable fighters", and not because of their Islamist ideology, whereas the UAE provided assistance to Younis and his allies because of their mistrust and fear of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist militias.[29] The vicious fighting throughout 2011 sadly served as a portent of the brutality to come. When Qaddafi was finally captured, tortured, and executed by Misratan-based rebels, the likelihood of a peaceful resolution to the tensions dividing various rebel factions was gravely imperiled. Frederic Wehrey notes that "under international law, the killing was a war crime, an embarrassment for Libya's transitional leadership, and an omen of things to come."[26]

## Après Qaddafi, le dèluge[27]

Within Libya, reprisals for support of and/or collaboration with the Qaddafi regime played out alongside internecine conflicts based more upon local and kinship/tribal allegiances than unified national interests. International Studies professor Yahia Zoubir noted in 2012 that "the unrest surrounding Qaddafi's last months is now reverberating throughout North Africa and the Sahel – a phenomenon that might be called Qaddafi's spawn."[28] Seven years later, the instability, violence and unrest in Libya continues to adversely impact countries throughout North Africa and the Sahel.

The initial optimism in the wake of Qaddafi's overthrow quickly turned to consternation, disappointment, and bitter recriminations as different militias and commanders sought to capture and/or cement control over their preferred territories, including the rich oil fields in eastern Libya, and/or the country. For the Obama Administration and largely for Americans overall, the killing of 4 Americans, including the Ambassador Christopher Stevens, in Benghazi during the evening of September 11, 2012 destroyed much of the optimism that had previously derived from the Arab Spring and the overthrow of Qaddafi. In the midst of a reelection campaign, and still harboring lingering doubts about the wisdom of the initial intervention in 2011, President Obama and the State Department would quickly and dramatically reduce their focus on Libya. Unfortunately, as Frederic Wehrey notes, "the American retrenchment was happening precisely when the Libyan revolution started turning on itself."[29] After American involvement in the conflict diminished, the major Western powers still engaged with the conflict would primarily be France and Italy, both of whom have long and complicated relations with Libya.

As oft occurs after the overthrow and/or death of a tyrannical leader, cries to purge the country and its culture of any remnants of the tyrant are frequently advanced, as with denazification in Germany after the end of World War II, destalinization in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, and de-Baathification in Iraq after the removal of Saddam Hussein and his sons from

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[26] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 64.
[27] A reference to the quote meaning "After me, the flood" attributed to King Louis XV of France after the Battle of Rossbach in 1757.
[28] Yahia H. Zoubir, "What the Dictator's Demise Unleashed in the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, July 24, 2012.
[29] Frederic Wehrey, *The Burning Shores*, 2018, p. 147.

power in 2003. In May 2013, the General National Congress (GNC) passed the Political Isolation Law (PIL) that prohibited anyone previously formally tied to the Qaddafi regime from holding government office for 10 years. While potentially broadly popular with the Libyan people as a whole, many former Qaddafi-era military and political leaders reacted with anger towards the adoption of the Political Isolation Law.

"The country further splintered in 2014, when a contested election saw Islamist-backed politicians and allied militias seize power in the western capital of Tripoli and force the newly elected House of Representatives to flee to the east, where it allied with eastern anti-Islamist forces."[30] Rival political institutions supported by hostile militias have largely impeded significant political and economic progress in Libya. Tragically, the December 2015 Libyan Political Agreement and its subsequent halting implementation exemplify the destructive nature of this inherently unstable arrangement.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) argues that "the December 2015 Libyan Political Agreement, signed in Skhirat, Morocco, has reconfigured more than contributed to resolving political strife."[31] The 2015 Libyan Political Agreement designated the House of Representatives as the sole "legislative authority in the country during the transitional period", with the goal of creating a Government of National Accord from the rival House of Representatives, based in Tobruk, and the General National Congress, based in Tripoli, the latter of which was recognized in the Introduction to the Political Agreement as having "managed the transitional process for more than two years" and having organized the "free and fair election" that selected the members of the House of Representatives.[32] Given Libya's precarious political situation and the enduring influence of multiple foreign powers with various militias, it is unsurprising that the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement has been only partially implemented. At the time, "the accord received strong backing from the P3 + 5 (the UN Security Council's three permanent members most active on Libya – the US, UK and France – plus Germany, Italy, Spain, the EU and UN) and, at least officially, Libya's neighbours."[33] Russia, Egypt, China, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been considerably less sanguine about the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement and how it was crafted. As Security Council delegates deliberate, they may wish to consider potential areas of policy convergence as prospective cornerstones for new resolutions. The Libyan political process must also be evaluated in terms of how freely, fairly and promptly elections are held; satisfying all 3 of these conditions (free, fair, and prompt) will require significant political will, as an emphasis on any of these dimensions, especially promptness, may adversely impact the others.[34] Ultimately, though, the decisions about the timetable for elections must come from the Libyan people.

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[30] Elissa Miller & Kevin Truitte, "Filling the Vacuum in Libya", *Foreign Affairs*, July 18, 2017.

[31] International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Libyan Political Agreement: Time for a Reset", Middle East and North Africa Report No. 170, November 4, 2016, p. i.

[32] *Libyan Political Agreement*, December 17, 2015, pp. 1-3.

[33] International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Libyan Political Agreement: Time for a Reset", Middle East and North Africa Report No. 170, November 4, 2016, p. 20.

[34] Emadeddin Zahri Muntasser, "The Case Against Elections in Libya", *Foreign Affairs*, August 15, 2017.

**Role of the Da'esh[35]**

Tragically, contemporary discussions of many Middle East conflicts frequently include references to a splinter group from Al-Qaeda called the Islamic State (IS). Western media reports frequently refer to ISIS, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, but the Islamic State (IS) is a more fluid and geographically amorphous entity than Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State's emergence in Libya has predictably further complicated an already violent and unstable situation. First surfacing in Libya in the spring of 2014, "by the fall of 2015, the Islamic State's leadership declared Libya its best opportunity for expansion, oil-rich and ideally located between Africa and Europe."[36] The emergence in Libya of the Islamic State not only complicated the political security dynamics within Libya but it also created consternation and confusion amongst outside powers, as the Islamic State (IS) likely intended. The brutality and violence unleashed by the Islamic State (IS) in Sirt and Derna as well as domestic and international concerns about the impact of the Islamic State (IS) led the United States and a number of other outside powers to arm various militias, including other Islamist groups, to fight IS in 2015 and 2016.[37] Unfortunately, any celebratory news about the destruction of the Islamic State (IS) in Libya in the fall of 2016 was premature; by early 2019, reports pointed to further Islamic State (IS) activity in Libya.[38]

**"Only the unlucky coin is left in the purse"[39]**

Libya's prospects for successful reconstruction and a peaceful and sustainable future currently depend oil and natural gas exports, conversely "competition for control of oil and gas export installations and revenues has emerged as a main driver of the conflict that has divided Libya since 2014."[40] Libya's dependence on oil and gas exports and sales is almost impossible to overstate. Oil and gas sales generated approximately 65% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 96% of government revenues prior to the beginning of the civil war in 2011.[41] In the early stages of the war, oil production plummeted from 1.65 million barrels per day to almost 0; oil production resumed in 2012, reaching 80% or more of pre-2011 daily totals, but fell drastically again in 2014 and currently amount to half or less than pre-2011 levels.

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[35] Da'esh is widely considered the Arabic equivalent of initials for the Islamic State (IS).

[36] Frederic Wehrey, "The Burning Shores", 2018, pp. 229-230.

[37] Rod Nordland & Nour Youssef, "Libya: United Against ISIS, Fragmented After", *New York Times*, September 3, 2016.

[38] Christopher Livesay, "Libya's political instability makes room for ISIS to regroup", *PBS Newshour*, March 2, 2019.

[39] Libyan proverb.

[40] ICG, "After the Showdown in Libya's Oil Crescent", Middle East and North Africa Report No. 189, August 9, 2018, p. 1.

[41] Ibid.

**Libyan Oil Production (KBD)**
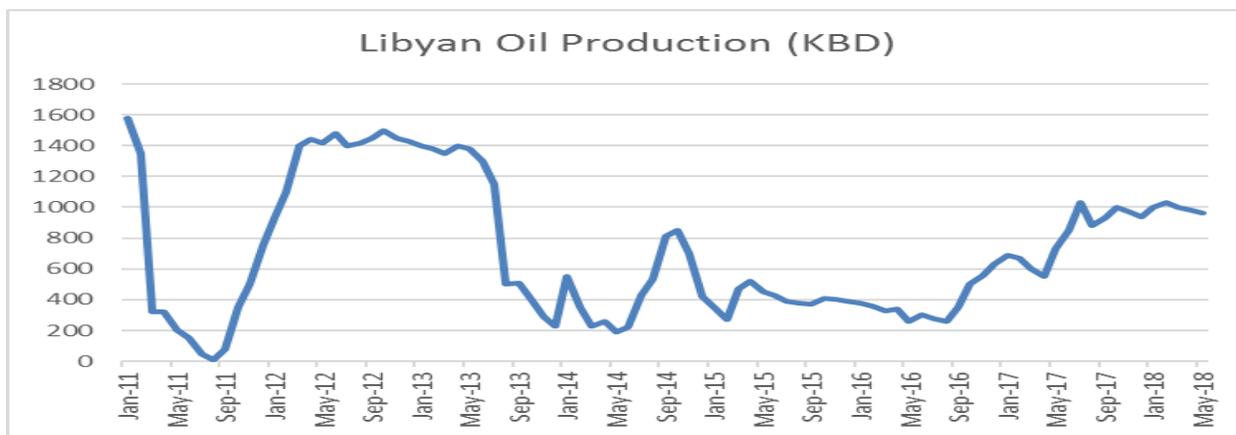
Source: *Seeking Alpha*, "Oil Markets Ignoring Libyan Production Outages for Now", June 18, 2018.

A successful government of national unity will need control over hydrocarbon revenues, but the centralizing of these revenues and their subsequent distribution may anger eastern Libyan communities that fear the siphoning of oil and gas revenues by Tripoli.

**UN System Actions**

The United Nations System has been actively involved in the Libyan civil war and political processes for the past 8 years. The Security Council established the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in September 2011, through resolution 2099 (S/RES/2099), with its current mandate expiring on September 15, 2019.[42] Current UN System actions in Libya include: reform of the judicial system, including providing human rights training to judges and the security forces; electoral assistance; national reconciliation, administered jointly by UNSMIL and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and financed by the Peacebuilding Fund; humanitarian assistance to migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), through the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNOHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and the World Food Programme (WFP) ; assistance with arms and ammunition storage and/or disposal through the United Nations Mine Action Service; and technical assistance to combat international terrorism through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In an all too common refrain within the UN System, "insufficient funding" for many activities impede the full implementation of many UN initiatives and partnerships; in 2018, only 24% of the required $313 million USD for the Libya Humanitarian Response Plan was contributed.[43] Ensuring timely and full contributions for UN System actions, as well as supporting the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative (SRSG) Ghassan Salame, will be critical to achieving lasting peace and sustainable development in Libya.

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[42] Security Council delegates may wish to monitor further developments and updates for potential extensions of this mandate.

[43] United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), "Report of the Secretary-General", S/2019/19, January 7, 2019, p. 11.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, Libyan reconciliation, political reform, and sustainable and inclusive development will be the products of Libyan efforts, but the UN System will be needed to assist not only the transitional and eventual Libyan political authorities but also millions of Libyan civilians struggling to establish and maintain a better life for themselves, their families, and their country. Libya's neighbors and the wider international community may also play constructive roles in ending the current violence and instability in both Libya and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

**Guiding Questions**

1. What are the most effective immediate steps that Libyans can undertake to end the current fighting and instability? What are the most effective and immediate steps that the Security Council and the larger international community may undertake to end this violence and instability?
2. How might Libyan refugees, exiles, and the diaspora community most effectively be encouraged and/or persuaded to contribute to Libya's future human and political development, and/or to return to Libya? What steps must be taken by Libyan political actors and security forces to permit this involvement and/or return? What steps must be taken by the Security Council, Libya's neighbors, and the broader international community to achieve these aims?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages to holding and/or delaying elections in Libya? What steps can Libyans take to ensure that future elections are fair and free of intimidation and fraud? What steps can the international community, including the UN System, the African Union (AU), and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), undertake to ensure that these elections are fair, free, representative and meaningful?

**Selected Resolutions and Reports:**

**United Nations Secretary-General:**

António Guterres, "Report of the Secretary-General: Implementation of resolution 2420 (2018)", S/2019/380, May 10, 2019.

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LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

- ✪ National capital
- ◉ District capital
- ○ Town
- ✈ Major airport
- International boundary
- Expressway
- Main road
- Secondary road

13