

Forum: The Security Council

Issue: The situation in Libya

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Introduction

The situation in Libya stemmed from the Arab Spring, a period of revolutionary protests and riots in the Middle East and Northern Africa between December 2010 and early 2011. Participants of these riots strived to reform their respective governments, including the attainment of a democracy, obtaining basic human rights, and enacting economic reform. This led to the overturning of many governments, fueling the morale of protesters while warning resisting governments to control these demonstrations.

One of the nations that witnessed significant political and economic reform includes Libya. Although the dictatorship regime of Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown as a result of the protests, the fall of his tenure did not signify the peace and national security that the Libyan protestors had strived for. Instead, this marked the beginning of a long, cruel civil war that further resulted in the ongoing humanitarian crisis and issue with modern-slave trade that currently exists in Libya. Having been one of the most prosperous nations of the African continent, Libya now exists as a nation in severe chaos and political upheaval.

Definition of Key Terms

The Arab Spring

As aforementioned, the Arab Spring was a series of revolts that protested against the oppressive regimes of the Middle East and Northern Africa. These protests began in Tunisia, and slowly spread to neighboring countries including Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, and Libya, the country of focus for the topic at hand. Whether or not national governments were overthrown did not change the outcome of the Arab Spring: citizens of Libya did not see a newfound peace and hope that they had initially fought for. This report will later elaborate on the main issues concerning the situation in Libya.

Libyan Civil War

The Libyan Civil War refers to an ongoing conflict between rival factions that wish to gain control of the country's territory and resources. This conflict started between the government of the House of Representatives and the General National Congress, and will be further elaborated upon in the proceeding section.

History

Although many had expected the death of dictator Muammar Gaddafi to yield significant political improvements amidst the Second Libyan Civil War, Libya currently exists as a nation plagued by a civil war and numerous rivaling factions. One of the key events in the beginning years of the situation in Libya was the split between militant factions that once cooperated under Gaddafi's regime; after his death, these factions turned against and betrayed one another in order to gain more power and influence in the region. This pinpointed the beginning of the end: the beginning of many political and economic disputes, the end of peace and political stability in Libya.

The main political issue that has resulted from the Second Libyan Civil War includes the division of political parties, with one government operating solely in the East, and one governing the people in the west. In the east, Libya is run by the House of Representatives (HoR), also known as the Council of Deputies. The HoR has control over the Libyan National Army, which is commanded by General Khalifa Haftar. In the west resides the General National Congress, supported by different militias including the Libya Dawn Coalition. This political divide, resulting from differing beliefs and national policies, has led to a stalemate that continues to prevent the resolution of the situation in Libya.

Key Issues

The Libyan Humanitarian Crisis

The civil war in Libya has caused nationwide damage, both in terms of infrastructure and in terms of human displacement and casualties. It is estimated that approximately 1.62 million people have been displaced in the past year, with some sources even claiming that more than a third of Libyans have fled the country, seeking asylum in neighboring nations like Tunisia and Algeria. This has led to an immense overflow of refugees attempting to escape the Libyan Civil War, leading to one of the most devastating humanitarian crises in the world today: refugees are

mistreated and abused stripped from basic human rights, including human trafficking and exploitation.

The Libyan Slave Trade

The situation in Libya cannot be discussed without mentioning the rise of a modern slave trade in Tripoli, Libya. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that countless migrants traveling from Africa to Europe (and using Libya as a crossover destination) have been sold as slaves after being detained by militia groups. These slaves are then often ransomed to their family, with women often used as sex slaves and children suffering from abuse and child rape. It has even been reported that a human trafficker admitted to Al-Jazeera that “hundreds of migrants [were] bought and sold across the country every week” (Al-Jazeera article linked in the bibliography section of this paper).

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Libya

Evidently, Libya and its ruling entities are highly involved in the current course of the conflict. The House of Representatives, the government in the east, currently represents the more powerful and internationally recognized ruling body of Libya. It is backed up by the Libyan National Army, the United Arab Emirates, and Gaddafi Loyalists. The General National Congress on the other hand, represents the ruling body of the west. The GNC received much backlash after having passed legislation that allowed for several counts of human rights violations. The political stalemate between the two main ruling bodies of Libya has worsened the situation at hand.

United States of America

Due to the rise of extremism in Libya, the United States of America has played an active role in military intervention and conducting airstrikes in the region in an attempt to target the Islamic State (ISIS). These actions of intervention have been deemed largely successful, with the most recent, major one including President Trump’s airstrike in 2017, killing approximately 17 ISIS militants. The United States has further vowed to carry out any action necessary to resolve the Libyan conflict.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Date	Description of Event
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February 2011 The Arab Spring protests spread to Libya, leading to violent outbreak and chaos between Gaddafi's forces and his opposition.

October 2011 Gaddafi is killed by rebel fighters, signifying the "liberation" of Libya from his dictatorship regime.

February 2014 The General National Congress refuses to step down from power even after receiving massive controversy regarding its legislation, leading to riots and resulting in the ongoing Second Libyan Civil War.

December 2017 The United Nations receives claims regarding the slave trade in Libya, and intervenes by evacuating African migrants in the region.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The United Nations has played a pivotal role in attempting to resolve the issue at hand. Sub-committees including the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) have been specifically formed in order to restore the freedom, security, and peace that Libya once witnessed in the country's early ages. The UNSMIL stands as the international community's most active attempt at resolving the issue, having aided in the process of rebuilding the State of Law, and promoting political dialogue between groups. As the UNSMIL continues to carry out its mandates, it is imperative for the international community to both observe the organization's positive effects, as well as take note of the UNSMIL's flaws in order to better develop a framework in addressing the situation in Libya.

Possible Solutions

This paper will now suggest two possible solutions that delegates may consider in addressing (1) Libya's political upheaval, and (2) reviving the Libyan economy in order to further promote the country's development.

Firstly, delegates may consider ways in which the **political stalemate between the two ruling bodies of Libya may be unified** (which can be extended to call for the unification of all factions). In the past, foreign intervention has resulted in instability as most foreign nations have supported a faction/ruling body due to their own political interests rather than for the greater good of the Libyan people. For example, many countries have admitted to supporting militia groups in order to guarantee oil deals in developing their own economy. Foreign military

intervention should be encouraged *only* after the nation's ruling bodies have been unified, in order to ensure that it is not fueled by national interests and motives.

To address the economic upheaval in Libya, **the government should seek alternatives to the oil industry**. Seeing as the Civil War largely revolved around conflicts over oil and resources, the nation should attempt to branch out to alternative exports in developing their economy (tourism, agriculture, fishery, etc.).

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