

Foreign Secretary statement following the London Conference on Libya

29 March 2011

Foreign Secretary William Hague outlines the two key developments from the conference.

"This has been an important day for the future of Libya. We have seen two key developments:

First, Foreign Ministers and leaders from over 40 countries and organisations including the UN, the Arab League, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the European Union and NATO, met for the London Conference on Libya.

I will list our key conclusions in a moment, but we have certainly widened and deepened the coalition, with a new pledge of support to NATO operations from Sweden, a growing number of countries committed to implementing the UN Resolutions on Libya, and agreement to a new Contact Group on Libya.

And second, Libya's Interim Transitional National Council have launched, here in London, their vision for a future Libya that is free, democratic and unified today. We have said throughout that we want the Libyan people to be in the lead in determining their future – and today was a significant milestone in that process.

It comes at a time when the forces of the Qadhafi regime continue to shell Libyan civilians in Misurata, Zintan and Rejban in an indiscriminate and brutal manner, underlining why our efforts to protect Libyan citizens must and will continue.

I have here a copy of a letter we have received today from a member of the local council in Misurata, thanking Britain and the allies for their action to relieve the people of Misurata through targeted strikes and the enforcement of the No Fly Zone and for coming to the aid of the Libyan people, as he puts it, in their "most needy of hours".

He says, in his own words, that the local council can "testify for the effectiveness and the accuracy of those strikes and confirm that there has been not a single case of civilian injury let alone death in and around Misurata" as a result of coalition activity. He goes on to "salute the men and women in uniform who have put their lives on the line to save the lives of Libyans", saying that "we are forever grateful".

My colleague Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamed Bin Jassim of Qatar is one of our key allies in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1973. His country is showing great leadership and commitment both in the skies above Libya and at political gatherings like these, and indeed we welcome the fact that Qatar has agreed to host the first meeting of the new Contact Group on Libya which we agreed to form today. Before I turn over to him, and as Chairman of today's Conference, I will now set out our conclusions today in more detail.

Implementing UNSCRs 1970 and 1973

Participants today have reaffirmed the importance of full and swift implementation of UNSCRs 1970 and 1973 (2011). Participants reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya. They have reaffirmed their commitment to enforce the restrictions and sanctions on the regime and to act to prevent the supply and operations of mercenaries. We are working together to ensure that all states implement these Resolutions, of which Qadhafi still stands in breach. We agreed to consider pursuing, in the UN and regional organisations, additional sanctions on individuals and entities associated with the regime. Participants here today are implementing these measures as a clear message to Qadhafi that he cannot attack civilians with impunity.

UNSCR 1973 (2011) authorises all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form. A no-fly zone is in place over Libya and is preventing Qadhafi from attacking civilians from the air. We have a broad based coalition to implement the military actions mandated by UNSCR 1973 (2011). So far, the action we have taken has been successful in protecting countless civilians from Qadhafi's forces and in effectively wiping out Qadhafi's air capability. Participants paid tribute to the bravery and professionalism of military personnel from all contributors in the coalition.

Current and potential contributors to military operations, including NATO Allies, also met to underline their commitment to the necessity of military action to implement fully the provisions of UNSCRs 1970 and 1973 (2011). They reaffirmed their unified support for this course of action through making effective and sustained contributions to military operations until the international community's goals are secured. Participants, including regional states, welcomed NATO's contribution in agreeing to take on command and control of all military operations to enforce the arms embargo, the no-fly zone, and other actions needed, as authorised in UNSCR 1973 (2011), to protect civilians.

Participants here today have reaffirmed their support through military, logistical, financial or humanitarian contributions and pledges in



support of the people of Libya. UNSCR 1973 (2011) laid out very clear conditions that must be met, including the establishment of an immediate ceasefire, a halt to all attacks on civilians and full humanitarian access to those in need. Participants agreed to continue their efforts until all conditions are fulfilled. The Libyan regime will be judged by its actions and not its words.

Preparing for Libya's future

We agreed that it is not for any of the participants here today to choose the government of Libya: only the Libyan people can do that. Participants agreed that Qadhafi and his regime have completely lost legitimacy and will be held accountable for their actions. The Libyan people must be free to determine their own future. Participants recognised the need for all Libyans, including the Interim Transitional National Council, tribal leaders and others, to come together to begin an inclusive political process, consistent with the relevant UNSCRs, through which they can choose their own future. We call on the international community to support this process, working closely with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative Abdel-Elah Mohamed Al-Khatib. Regional actors, particularly Libya's fellow African countries and Arab neighbours, have an important role to play.

Participants today are concerned for the wellbeing of up to 80,000 internally displaced persons. We have agreed priorities for a humanitarian response. We have also agreed on the need to develop and coordinate the international approach to ensure the availability of sufficient resources to meet the humanitarian needs of the Libyan people. We noted the offer of Qatar to facilitate the sale of Libyan oil where consistent with international law, in particular the provisions of UNSCRs 1970 and 1973 and other relevant UN resolutions, and to support the people of Libya in using the proceeds to help meet their humanitarian needs. Learning the lessons from the past, we agreed on the need for priorities for long-term support. Activities to stabilise the situation will need to start early and be part of an integrated and comprehensive international response.

Taking forward support from the international community for the people of Libya

To take this work forward, participants of the conference agreed to establish the Libya Contact Group. This Contact Group will meet to: provide leadership and overall political direction to the international effort in close coordination with the UN, AU, Arab League, OIC, and EU to support Libya; provide a forum for coordinating the international response on Libya; and provide a focal point in the international community for contact with the Libyan parties. Qatar has agreed to convene the first meeting of the Group as soon as possible. Thereafter, the chairmanship will rotate between the countries of the region and beyond it. The North Atlantic Council, meeting alongside its coalition partners, will provide the executive political direction to NATO operations. Participants welcomed the UN Secretary-General's offer to lead the coordination of humanitarian assistance and planning for longer-term stabilisation support. Turkey, other key regional players and international agencies offered to support this work and take it forward with the Contact Group.

So we have achieved a great deal in a very short time to save lives in Libya and to create the space for the Libyan people to begin to determine their future.

Much work remains to be done, and the nations gathered in London today have demonstrated that we have the will, determination and commitment to continue to act for as long as the threat to the people of Libya remains."