

Libya: Civilian deaths from NATO airstrikes must be properly investigated | Amnesty International USA

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/news-item/libya-civilian-deaths-from-nato-airstrikes-must-be-properly-investigated>

- March 19, 2012

Libya: Civilian deaths from NATO airstrikes must be properly investigated

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- (Washington DC) -- NATO has so far failed to investigate the killing of scores of civilians in Libya in airstrikes carried out by its forces, Amnesty International said today in a new briefing paper released a year after the first strike sorties took place.

Libya: The forgotten victims of NATO Strikes says that scores of Libyan civilians who were not involved in the fighting were killed and many more injured, most in their homes, as a result of NATO airstrikes. Amnesty International said that NATO has not conducted necessary investigations or even tried to establish contact with survivors and relatives of those killed. The organization said that adequate investigations must be carried out and full reparation must be provided to victims and their families.

- "It is deeply disappointing that more than four months since the end of the military campaign, victims and relatives of those killed by NATO airstrikes remain in the dark about what happened and who was responsible," said Donatella Rovera, senior crisis response adviser at Amnesty International. "NATO officials repeatedly stressed their commitment to protecting civilians. They cannot now brush aside the deaths of scores of civilians with some vague statement of regret without properly investigating these deadly incidents."

NATO appears to have made significant efforts to minimize the risk of causing civilian casualties, including by using precision guided munitions, and in some cases by issuing prior warnings to inhabitants of the areas targeted. But this does not absolve NATO from adequately investigating the strikes which killed and injured scores of civilians and from providing reparation to the victims and their families. Investigations must look into whether civilian casualties resulted from violations of international law and if so those responsible must be brought to justice.

- The organization has documented 55 cases of named civilians, including 16 children and 14 women, killed in airstrikes in Tripoli, Zlitan, Majer, Sirte and Brega. Many of the deaths occurred as a result of airstrikes on private homes where Amnesty International and others have found no evidence to indicate that the homes had been used for military purposes at the time they were attacked.

In the evening of August 8, 2011, two houses belonging to the Gafez and al-Ja'arud families were struck in Majer, west of Misratah. According to members of the family who survived the attack, 34 civilians, including eight children and eight women, were killed and several were injured in three separate strikes. The family said they had not been aware of the presence of any persons or of any activities near their homes which could explain the attacks.

- In its latest response to Amnesty International, on March 13, NATO stated that it "deeply regrets any harm that may have been caused by those air strikes," but "has had no mandate to conduct any activities in Libya following OUP's (Operation Unified Protector) termination on October 31, 2011" and that the "primary responsibility" for investigating rests with the Libyan authorities.

"NATO's response is tantamount to refusing to take responsibility for its actions. It leaves victims and their families feeling that they have been forgotten and that they have no recourse to justice," said Rovera.

- Moreover, NATO did not take any steps to conduct investigations into reports of death and injury of civilians resulting from its strikes in areas which had come under the control of the new Libyan authorities (the National Transitional Council, NTC) prior to October 31, 2011, and which were thus safely accessible. All the survivors and relatives of those killed in NATO strikes interviewed by Amnesty International said that they had never been contacted, either by NATO or by the Libyan NTC.
- NATO must ensure that prompt, independent, impartial and thorough investigations are conducted into any allegations of serious violations of international law by participants in Operation Unified Protector and that the findings be publicly disclosed. Wherever there is sufficient admissible evidence, suspects should be prosecuted.

Amnesty International is a Nobel Peace Prize-winning grassroots activist organization with more than 3 million supporters, activists and volunteers in more than 150 countries campaigning for human rights worldwide. The organization investigates and exposes abuses, educates and mobilizes the public, and works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied.

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Daily Times - Leading News Resource of Pakistan - The forgotten victims of Libya's war

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C03%5C21%5Cstory_21-3-2012_pg4_7

- Wednesday, March 21, 2012
- The forgotten victims of Libya's war

The mound of debris in the capital Tripoli has become part of the landscape, and only birds nest there now

- Libyan schoolgirls stroll the streets of the close-knit neighbourhood of Arada without a second glance at the pile of rubble that was once a house for four families before NATO explosives blew it apart.

The mound of debris in the capital Tripoli has become part of the landscape, and only birds nest there now. But Mohammed al-Garari, who lost his home and five relatives on June 19 last year, still chokes up at the sight of crushed cradles, collapsed walls and shards of china, the few recognisable remains of his old life.

- "NATO made a mistake, a fatal mistake," said the 32-year-old as he scrambled across the rubble to what used to be the second storey where the walls were blasted open, delivering a death blow to his brother Faraj.

Mohammed found the corpse in the patio below. The home of his sister was levelled completely, killing Karima along with her husband Abdullah and their two small children.

"There was no light, it was full of smoke and at first I didn't know that the blast that woke me had hit in the heart of our house," Garari told AFP.

- That fatal air strike was the only mistake NATO openly admitted to during its seven-month long air campaign in Libya during the bloody rebellion against now dead dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

The regime at the time bussed journalists to the scene in the middle of the night to witness the horror.

- "This is not propaganda," said government spokesman Mussa Ibrahim in what came across as an admission that other casualty sites had been staged, according to an AFP journalist present at the time.

But that night less than a year ago, the mistake by the Western alliance was highlighted by the singed bodies of two men, one woman and two children, all members of the same family.

"Even NATO admitted it was a mistake, but when people make mistakes they must make amends and NATO has not made amends with us — they have not come to apologise or do right by us," Garari said.

"They destroyed my home, my family and never looked back."

- Amnesty International on Monday urged NATO to investigate the killing of dozens of civilians during its air campaign in Libya last year and to provide reparations to the people affected.

"Adequate investigations must be carried out and full reparation provided to victims and their families," said the rights group in a statement released one year after the first air strikes were launched in Libya by the alliance.

Amnesty's call drew a rebuttal from NATO, whose spokeswoman Oana Lungescu insisted in a statement that the coalition conducted a campaign in line with its UN mandate and international norms.

- The rights watchdog said it has documented 55 cases of named civilians, including 16 children and 14 women, killed in air strikes in Tripoli and the towns of Zliten, Majer, Sirte and Brega.

Garari said the air strike has also damaged his family's reputation as those who did not know them personally assumed the building was targeted because they were hiding weapons or were loyalists of the Gaddafi regime.

"Our neighbours know what we stand for and it is through their generosity that we have survived," he said, noting that Arada was of the strongholds of the opposition and subjected to endless security raids during the conflict.

- Despite the heavy losses he incurred, Garari acknowledges that NATO's intervention played a critical role in turning the tide in favour of the popular uprising against the long-time strongman.

"Many, many more lives would have been lost without them, so we thank NATO for helping their revolution. But they should still make right for their mistakes," he said.

The NATO campaign in Libya left a deep rift within the UN Security Council.

Russia, China, South Africa and India all say NATO's tactics breached UN resolutions. The United States, Britain, France and Germany insist their actions were legal and life-saving.

Garari said countries such as China and Russia should not use NATO's mistakes in Libya as a pretext for inaction in Syria, which has seen more than a year of regime crackdown against dissent that has resulted in an estimated 9,100 deaths.

"Syrians are our brothers and they need the help because (President Bashar al-Assad is murdering his people just like Gaddafi," he said. afp

[NATO failed to investigate Libya civilian deaths: Amnesty - Reuters](http://news.yahoo.com/nato-failed-investigate-libya-civilian-deaths-amnesty-060633690.html;_ylt=AuqVhf4cEaqFEMKiWayX1IZvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNyNXM4ZTNrBG1pdANKdW1ib3Ryb24gV29ybGRTRgRwa2cDOTg;-;_ylg=X3oDMTFrM25vcFyBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAMEchHQDc2VjdGlvbnMEDGVzdAM-;_ylv=3)

http://news.yahoo.com/nato-failed-investigate-libya-civilian-deaths-amnesty-060633690.html;_ylt=AuqVhf4cEaqFEMKiWayX1IZvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNyNXM4ZTNrBG1pdANKdW1ib3Ryb24gV29ybGRTRgRwa2cDOTg;-;_ylg=X3oDMTFrM25vcFyBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAMEchHQDc2VjdGlvbnMEDGVzdAM-;_ylv=3

- NATO failed to investigate Libya civilian deaths: Amnesty

-  **REUTERS** *By Michael Holden | Reuters*

- LONDON (Reuters) - NATO has failed to properly investigate or provide compensation for civilian deaths caused by its air strikes during the seven-month operation in Libya that helped bring about the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi, Amnesty International said on Monday.

Echoing similar criticisms aired this month by Russia, Amnesty said scores of Libyans, who were not involved in the conflict, had been killed or injured in NATO bombings but there had been no proper investigations into their deaths.

"NATO officials repeatedly stressed their commitment to protecting civilians," Donatella Rovera, Senior Crisis Adviser at

Amnesty, said in a statement.

"They cannot now brush aside the deaths of scores of civilians with some vague statement of regret without properly investigating these deadly incidents."

- Inquiries should determine whether any civilian casualties resulted from a breach of international law, and if so, those responsible should be brought to justice, Amnesty said.

The NATO military mission, authorized by the United Nations Security Council, began on March 31 last year with the aim of protecting civilians under attack or threat of attack.

NATO forces carried out some 26,000 sorties including some 9,600 strike missions and destroyed about 5,900 targets before operations ended on October 31.

- PRECAUTIONS

Investigators for the U.N. Human Rights Council concluded earlier this month that NATO had caused civilian deaths but had taken extensive precautions to ensure civilians were not killed.

Amnesty agreed NATO had made significant efforts to minimize the risk of civilian casualties, through precision bombing and warning where strikes would occur.

However, the rights group said that did not absolve NATO from carrying out investigations into any deaths, or making reparations to victims or families of those killed.

Survivors and victims' relatives interviewed by Amnesty said they had never even been contacted by NATO.

- Amnesty said NATO itself had documented 55 cases of civilians, including 16 children and 14 women, being killed in air strikes in Tripoli, Zlitan, Majer, Sirte and Brega, often in private homes with no clear evidence of any military purpose.

Another 34 people, including eight children, were killed in three separate attacks on two houses in Majer with no explanation for why they were targeted, Amnesty said.

NATO's most recent response to Amnesty stated it "deeply regretted any harm" its air strikes had caused but said it no longer had a mandate to carry out any activities in Libya.

Two weeks ago, Russia criticized the U.N. investigators for failing to adequately probe civilian deaths caused by NATO during last year's uprising, saying children and journalists had been killed.

"In our view, during that (NATO) campaign many violations of the standard of international law and human rights were committed, including the most important right, the right to life," said Maria Khodynskaya-Golenishcheva, a diplomat at the Russian mission to the U.N. in Geneva.

Russia had criticized NATO action which it said should have been limited to protecting civilians and not helping the overthrow of Gaddafi.

[NATO'S Craven Coverup of Its Libyan Bombing » Counterpunch: Tells the Facts, Names the Names](http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/03/15/natos-craven-coverup-of-it-libyan-bombing/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=natos-craven-coverup-of-it-libyan-bombing)

http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/03/15/natos-craven-coverup-of-it-libyan-bombing/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=natos-craven-coverup-of-it-libyan-bombing

- March 15, 2012
- Investigations Around Libya

NATO'S Craven Coverup of Its Libyan Bombing

by VIJAY PRASHAD

- Ten days into the uprising in Benghazi, Libya, the United Nations' Human Rights Council established the International

Commission of Inquiry on Libya. The purpose of the Commission was to “investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in Libya.” The broad agenda was to establish the facts of the violations and crimes and to take such actions as to hold the identified perpetrators accountable. On June 15, the Commission presented its first report to the Council. This report was provisional, since the conflict was still ongoing and access to the country was minimal. The June report was no more conclusive than the work of the human rights non-governmental organizations (such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch). In some instances, the work of investigators for these NGOs (such as Donatella Rovera of Amnesty) was of higher quality than that of the Commission.

Due to the uncompleted war and then the unsettled security state in the country in its aftermath, the Commission did not return to the field till October 2011, and did not begin any real investigation before December 2011. On March 2, 2012, the Commission finally produced a two hundred-page document that was presented to the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Little fanfare greeted this report’s publication, and the HRC’s deliberation on it was equally restrained.

- Nonetheless, the report is fairly revelatory, making two important points: first, that all sides on the ground committed war crimes with no mention at all of a potential genocide conducted by the Qaddafi forces; second, that there remains a distinct lack of clarity regarding potential NATO war crimes. Not enough can be made of these two points. They strongly infer that the rush to a NATO “humanitarian intervention” might have been made on exaggerated evidence, and that NATO’s own military intervention might have been less than “humanitarian” in its effects.

It is precisely because of a lack of accountability by NATO that there is hesitancy in the United Nations Security Council for a strong resolution on Syria. “Because of the Libyan experience,” the Indian Ambassador to the UN Hardeep Singh Puri told me in February, “other members of the Security Council, such as China and Russia, will not hesitate in exercising a veto if a resolution – and this is a big if – contains actions under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which permits the use of force and punitive and coercive measures.”

- *Crimes Against Humanity.*

The Libyan uprising began on February 15, 2011. By February 22, the UN Human Rights Chief Navi Pillay claimed that two hundred and fifty people had been killed in Libya, “although the actual numbers are difficult to verify.” Nonetheless, Pillay pointed to “widespread and systematic attacks against the civilian population” which “may amount to crimes against humanity.” Pillay channeled the Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN from Libya, Ibrahim Dabbashi, who had defected to the rebellion and claimed, “Qaddafi had started the genocide against the Libyan people.” Very soon world leaders used the two concepts interchangeably, “genocide” and “crimes against humanity.” These concepts created a mood that Qaddafi’s forces were either already indiscriminately killing vast numbers of people, or that they were poised for a massacre of Rwanda proportions.

Courageous work by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch last year, then much later the 2012 report from the UN belies this judgment, (as does my forthcoming book [Arab Spring, Libyan Winter](#), AK Press), which goes through the day-by-day record and show two things: that both sides used excessive violence and that the rebels seemed to have the upper hand for much of the conflict, with Qaddafi’s forces able to recapture cities, but unable to hold them.

The UN report is much more focused on the question of crimes committed on the ground. This is the kind of forensic evidence in the report:

- (1) In the military base and detention camp of Al Qalaa. “Witnesses, together with the local prosecutor, uncovered the bodies of 43 men and boys, blindfolded and with their hands tied behind their backs.” Qaddafi forces had shot them.



Going over many of these kinds of incidents, and of indiscriminate firing of heavy artillery into cities, the UN Report notes that these amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity.

- (2) “Over a dozen Qadhafi soldiers were reportedly shot in the back of the head by *thumar* [rebel fighters] around 22-23 February 2011 in a village between Al Bayda and Darnah. This is corroborated by mobile phone footage.” After an exhaustive listing of the many such incidents, and of the use of heavy artillery against cities notably Sirte, the UN report suggests the preponderance of evidence of the war crime of murder or crimes against humanity.
- There is *no* mention of genocide in the Report, and none of any organized civilian massacre. This is significant because UN Resolution 1973, which authorized the NATO war, was premised on the “the widespread and systematic attacks currently taking place in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya against the civilian population” which “may amount to crimes

- against humanity.” There was no mention in Resolution 1973 of the disproportionate violence of the *thuwar* against the pro-Qaddafi population (already reported by *al-jazeera* by February 19), a fact that might have given pause to the UN as it allowed NATO to enter the conflict on the rebels’ behalf. NATO’s partisan bombardment allowed the rebels to seize the country faster than they might have had in a more protracted war, but it also allowed them carte blanche to continue with their own crimes against humanity.
- With NATO backing, it was clear that no one was going to either properly investigate the rebel behavior, and no-one was going to allow for a criminal prosecution of those crimes against humanity. Violence of this kind by one’s allies is never to be investigated as the Allies found out after World War 2 when there was no assessment of the criminal firebombing of, for example, Dresden. No wonder that the UN Report notes that the Commissioners are “deeply concerned that no independent investigation or prosecution appear to have been instigated into killings committed by *thuwar*.” None is likely. There are now over eight thousand pro-Qaddafi fighters in Libyan prisons. They have no charges framed against them. Many have been tortured, and several have died (including Halah al-Misrati, the Qaddafi era newscaster).
 - The section of the UN report on the town of Tawergha is most startling. The thirty thousand residents of the town were removed by the Misratan *thuwar*. The general sentiment among the Misratan *thuwar* was that the Tawerghans were given preferential treatment by the Qaddafi regime, a claim disputed by the Tawerghans. The road between Misrata and Tawergha was lined with slogans such as “the brigade for purging slaves, black skin,” indicating the racist cleansing of the town. The section on Tawergha takes up twenty pages of the report. It is chilling reading. Tawerghans told the Commission “that during ‘interrogations’ they were beaten, had hot wax poured in their ears and were told to confess to committing rape in Misrata. The Commission was told that one man had diesel poured on to his back which was then set alight; the same man was held in shackles for 12 days.” This goes on and on. The death count is unclear. The refugees are badly treated as they go to Benghazi and Tripoli.
 - To the Commission, the attacks against Tawerghans during the war “constitute a war crime” and those that have taken place since “violate international human rights law” and a “crime against humanity.” Because of the “current difficulties faced by the Libyan Government,” the Commission concludes, it is unlikely that the government will be able to bring justice for the Tawerghans and to undermine the “culture of impunity that characterizes the attacks.”
 - *NATO’s Crimes.*

For the past several months, the Russians have asked for a proper investigation through the UN Security Council of the NATO bombardment of Libya. “There is great reluctance to undertake it,” the Indian Ambassador to the UN told me. When the NATO states in the Security Council wanted to clamor for war in February-March 2011, they held discussions about Libya in an open session. After Resolution 1973 and since the war ended, the NATO states have only allowed discussion about Libya in a closed session. When Navi Pillay came to talk about the UN Report, her remarks were not for the public.

- Indeed, when it became clear to NATO that the UN Commission wished to investigate NATO’s role in the Libyan war, Brussels balked. On February 15, 2012, NATO’s Legal Adviser Peter Olson wrote a strong letter to the Chair of the Commission. NATO accepted that the Qaddafi regime “committed serious violations of international law,” which led to the Security Council Resolution 1973. What was not acceptable was any mention of NATO’s “violations” during the conflict,

“We would be concerned, however, if ‘NATO incidents’ were included in the Commission’s report as on a par with those which the Commission may ultimately conclude did violate law or constitute crimes. We note in this regard that the Commission’s mandate is to discuss ‘the facts and circumstance of....violations [of law] and....crimes perpetrated.’ We would accordingly request that, in the event the Commission elects to include a discussion of NATO actions in Libya, its report clearly state that NATO did not deliberately target civilians and did not commit war crimes in Libya.”

- To its credit, the Commission *did* discuss the NATO “incidents.” However, there were some factual problems. The Commission claimed that NATO flew 17,939 armed sorties in Libya. NATO says that it flew “24,200 sorties, including over 9,000 strike sorties.” What the gap between the two numbers might tell us is not explored in the report or in the press discussion subsequently. The Commission points out that NATO did strike several civilian areas (such as Majer, Bani Walid, Sirte, Surman, Souq al-Juma) as well as areas that NATO claims were “command and control nodes.” The Commission found no “evidence of such activity” in these “nodes.” NATO contested both the civilian deaths and the Commission’s doubts about these “nodes.” Because NATO would not fully cooperate with the Commission, the investigation was “unable to determine, for lack of sufficient information, whether these strikes were based on incorrect or outdated intelligence and, therefore, whether they were consistent with NATO’s objective to take all necessary precautions to avoid civilian casualties entirely.”
- Three days after the report was released in the Human Rights Council, NATO’s chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen denied its anodyne conclusions regarding NATO. And then, for added effect, Rasmussen said that he was pleased with the report’s finding that NATO “had conducted a highly precise campaign with a demonstrable determination to avoid civilian casualties.” There is no such clear finding. The report is far more circumspect, worrying about the lack of information to make any clear statement about NATO’s bombing runs. NATO had conducted its own inquiry, but did not turn over its report or raw data to the UN Commission.
- On March 12, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon went to the UN Security Council and stated that he was “deeply concerned” about human rights abuses in Libya, including the more than eight thousand prisoners held in jails with no judicial process (including Saif al-Islam Qaddafi, who should have been transferred to the Hague by NATO’s logic). Few dispute this part of the report. The tension in the Security Council is over the section on NATO. On March 9, Maria Khodyskaya-Golenishcheva of the Russian Mission to the UN in Geneva noted that the UN report omitted to explore the civilian deaths caused by NATO. “In our view,” she said, “during the NATO campaign many violations of the standard of international law and human rights were committed, including the most important right, the right to life.” On March 12, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused NATO of “massive bombings” in Libya. It was in response to Lavrov’s comment that Ban’s spokesperson Martin Nesirky pointed out that Ban accepts “the report’s overall finding that NATO did not deliberately target civilians in Libya.”

NATO is loath to permit a full investigation. It believes that it has the upper hand, with Libya showing how the UN will now use NATO as its military arm (or else how the NATO states will be able to use the UN for its exercise of power). In

the Security Council, NATO's Rasmussen notes, "Brazil, China, India and Russia consciously stepped aside to allow the UN Security Council to act" and they "did not put their military might at the disposal of the coalition that emerged." NATO has no challenger. This is why the Russians and the Chinese are unwilling to allow any UN resolution that hints at military intervention. They fear the Pandora's box opened by Resolution 1973.

- **Vijay Prashad's** new book, [Arab Spring, Libyan Winter](#) (AK Press) will be out in late March. On March 25, he will be speaking at the plenary panel of the United National Anti-War Coalition National Conference in Stamford, CT, alongside Bill McKibben, Richard Wolff and Nada Khader on "Global Economic Meltdown, Warming and War."

[Russia blasts NATO over Libya - and Libya over Syria — RT](#)

<http://rt.com/news/russia-nato-libya-syria-107>

- Russia blasts NATO over Libya - and Libya over Syria
- Published: 08 March, 2012
- Russia says that NATO should apologize for causing civilian casualties during their air raids in Libya in 2011 and pay compensation. Moscow has also accused Libya's new government of training Syrian rebels and instigating terrorism.

Russia's UN ambassador Vitaly Churkin issued his sharp criticism while speaking at Wednesday's meeting of the UN Security Council. It is notable that this is the first time the UNSC has met to discuss the role of NATO air strikes during last year's military intervention in Libya which toppled Colonel Gaddafi.

"We expect NATO to acknowledge that its air raids caused civilian casualties, to apologize and say that it is prepared to pay the appropriate compensation," Churkin asserted.

The US ambassador Susan Rice responded by defending NATO's actions in Libya, saying that no international laws were broken and the alliance had cooperated fully with subsequent investigations. She cited the international commission of inquiry on Libya, which concluded that NATO *"conducted a highly precise campaign with a demonstrable determination to avoid civilian casualties."*

But China's deputy ambassador, Wang Min, pointed out that the commission also recognized that NATO airstrikes had caused civilian casualties in Libya. According to the report released by the United Nations on Friday, NATO has not sufficiently investigated the air raids that killed at least 60 civilians and injured 55.

- *"Amongst the 20 NATO airstrikes investigated, the Commission documented five airstrikes where a total of 60 civilians were killed and 55 injured,"* says the document published on the UN Human Rights Council's website. *"The Commission also investigated two NATO airstrikes which damaged civilian infrastructure and where no military target could be identified."*
- Last year, Russia and China abstained from supporting a UN resolution that sanctioned a no-fly zone over Libya. Later, the two permanent members of the Security Council accused NATO of overstepping its UN mandate to protect civilians in Libya.

These debates came as tribal leaders in eastern Libya declared partial autonomy. The country's National Transitional Council described it [as a dangerous move](#) that could break up the nation.

• **Libyan training camps for Syrian rebels**

At the same meeting, Russia's UN envoy expressed Moscow's concern about the uncontrolled proliferation of Libyan arms in the region. However, it was not just the weapons that were being exported, he said.

"We have received information that in Libya, with support from the authorities, there is a special training center for the Syrian revolutionaries and that people are sent to Syria to attack the legal government," Vitaly Churkin said. *"This is completely unacceptable according to all legal bases."*

The Russian ambassador pointed out that such activities undermine stability in the Middle East.

"We think that Al-Qaeda is in Syria and therefore there the question arises: Is transporting the revolution not turning into the transporting of terrorism?" he asked.

His claim provoked a sharp response from the Libyan Prime Minister Abdel Rahim al-Kib, who was at the meeting. He said that a matter *"which concerns the blood of Libyans should not be a matter of political propaganda by any country against other countries."*

In an apparent reference to Syria, al-Kib said he hoped that *"the reason for raising this matter will not be to impede or prevent the international community from intervening in the situation of other states, where their peoples are being massacred and killed at the hands of their rulers."*

While the Libyan official did not directly address the issue raised by Churkin, according to the Washington Post, earlier on Wednesday at the International Peace Institute he did say that his country was financially supporting the Syrian opposition.

['All targets struck in Libya were military' | News24](#)

<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/All-targets-struck-in-Libya-were-military-20120305>

• **'All targets struck in Libya were military'**

2012-03-06 10:12

- Brussels - All targets that Nato hit during the bombing of Libya were legitimate military sites, the alliance said Monday, despite the findings of a UN expert panel that said 60 civilians were killed and 55 wounded in the airstrikes it investigated.

Nato Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen welcomed the finding by the UN-appointed Commission of Inquiry on Libya that the alliance had "conducted a highly precise campaign with a demonstrable determination to avoid civilian casualties".

Friday's report in Geneva said Nato did not deliberately target civilians but that in five cases where the alliance claimed to have struck command-and-control centres or staging areas, the experts could identify no military targets. The panel said it couldn't reach a conclusion on those issues, citing lack of evidence and urged further investigation.

Nato warplanes flew 18 000 sorties during the 7-month campaign, which ended in October.

Fogh Rasmussen said Nato had looked into all allegations of harm to civilians, including assessments of all Nato records of target selection and other data gathered after the strike.

- "This review process has confirmed that the targets we struck were legitimate military targets ... and that great care was taken in each case to minimize risk to civilians," he told reporters. "No target was approved or attacked if we had any evidence or reason to believe that civilians were at risk. Hundreds of possible targets were passed up or aborted at the last minute to avoid any risk to civilians."

In November, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the prosecutor of the international war crimes tribunal, said his office would examine allegations of crimes committed by all sides in last year's fighting, including Nato.

The prosecutor's statement does not necessarily mean a formal investigation will be opened. Following the release of the UN Commission's findings, Moreno-Ocampo may decide there is no need for further investigation or ask judges for authorisation to open a formal probe.

Some human rights advocates and attorneys for the victims have criticised Nato for not acknowledging the bombing caused civilian casualties despite the precautions taken, and for refusing to consider compensation.

- SAPA

[Both sides in Libya 'committed war crimes'](http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/both-sides-in-libya-committed-war-crimes-20120303-1u9g2.html)

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/both-sides-in-libya-committed-war-crimes-20120303-1u9g2.html>

• **Both sides in Libya 'committed war crimes'**

[March 3, 2012](#)

• **AP**

A UN expert panel says in a draft report that forces loyal to late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and opposition fighters both committed war crimes during the conflict in the country last year.

The UN-appointed International Commission of Inquiry on Libya concluded that "international crimes, specifically crimes against humanity and war crimes, were committed by Gaddafi forces".

"Acts of murder, enforced disappearance and torture were perpetrated within the context of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population," it said.

Advertisement: Story continues below

Anti-Gaddafi forces also committed serious violations "including war crimes and breaches of international human rights law", according to the report.

- Human rights abuses by former rebels are continuing, particularly against those perceived to have sided with Gaddafi, it said.

The panel led by Canadian judge Philippe Kirsch was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council on February 25, 2011, to investigate allegations of serious crimes in Libya during and after the conflict.

It also examined claims that NATO's air campaign had resulted in civilians being killed, and the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Gaddafi and his son Mutassim.

The panel said it was unable to reach a conclusion on either of those issues citing lack of evidence.

The report said that Gaddafi and his son, who were captured separately on October 20 by fighters from the port city of Misrata, died in unclear circumstances.

"Though wounded, both were alive on capture and subsequently died in *thiwar* (revolutionary) custody," read an unedited version of the report submitted to the UN Council on Human Rights.

- "The commission has been unable to confirm the death of Muammar Gaddafi as an unlawful killing and considers that further investigation is required," it said, making the same recommendation in the case of Mutassim.

The experts urged further investigation, noting that the new government would need outside support to conduct credible probes.

Libyan authorities declined to provide the commission with access to Gaddafi's autopsy report despite "numerous requests", it said, noting that its pathologist could not conclude the cause of death from images of the corpse.

In Mutassim's case, the commission was unable to obtain any "account of the circumstances of his death" but reviewed footage "showing him alive" after his capture.

"Both were killed in unclear circumstances after capture but it is apparent that both were initially captured alive," the report said, recommending further investigation in both cases to determine the cause of death.

The UN report concluded that the subsequent display of the Gaddafi corpses in a meat locker in Misrata "constituted a breach of international customary law".

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[UN report faults NATO over civilian deaths in Libya - The Globe and Mail](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/un-report-faults-nato-over-civilian-deaths-in-libya/article2357511/?utm_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm_source=World&utm_content=2357511)

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• UN report faults NATO over civilian deaths in Libya

NEIL MacFARQUHAR

BEIRUT— The New York Times News Service

Published Friday, Mar. 02, 2012

- NATO has not sufficiently investigated the air raids it conducted on Libya that killed at least 60 civilians and wounded 55 more during the conflict there, according to a UN report released Friday.

Nor has Libya's interim government done enough to halt the violence perpetrated by revolutionary militias seeking to exact revenge on loyalists, real or perceived, to the government of Moammar Gadhafi, the report concluded.

- Published without publicity on the website of the UN Human Rights Council, based in Geneva, the report details the results of an investigation by a three-member commission of distinguished jurists. It paints a generally gloomy picture of the level of respect for human rights and international law in Libya, while acknowledging that the problem is a legacy of the years of violent repression under Mr. Gadhafi.
- NATO air raids that killed civilians in Libya have been criticized by rights groups, and the alliance's refusal to acknowledge or investigate some of the deaths has been the subject of earlier news reports. The new report represents the first time that NATO's actions in Libya have been criticized under the auspices of the United Nations, where the bombing campaign in the name of protecting civilians from Colonel Gadhafi's forces was authorized by the Security Council.

The report concluded that Col. Gadhafi's forces had perpetuated war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, torture and attacks on civilians using excessive force and rape.

But the armed anti-Gadhafi militia forces in Libya also "committed serious violations," including war crimes and breaches of international rights law that continue today, the 220-page report said.

- Through January, militia members continued with the mass arrests of former soldiers, police officers, suspected mercenaries and others perceived to be Gadhafi loyalists, the report said. Certain revenge attacks have continued

unabated, particularly the campaign by the militiamen of Misrata to wipe a neighbouring town, Tawergha, off the map; the fighters accuse its residents of collaborating with a government siege.

- Such attacks have been documented before, but the report stressed that despite previous criticism, the militiamen were continuing to hunt down the residents of the neighbouring town no matter where they had fled across Libya. As recently as Feb. 6, militiamen from Misrata attacked a camp in Tripoli where residents of Tawergha had fled, killing an elderly man, a woman and three children, the report said.

The commission remains "deeply concerned" that no independent investigations or prosecutions appear to have been instigated into killings by such militias, the report said.

- "Libyan authorities can break with the Gadhafi legacy by enforcing the law equally, investigating all abuses – irrespective of the perpetrator," the report said.

The commission members tried to ascertain how Col. Gadhafi had died but said the Libyan authorities did not give them access to the autopsy report, so further investigation was needed. Graphic videos of his last day alive Oct. 20 suggest that the revolutionaries who captured him near his tribal hometown, Sirt, beat him and executed him with gunfire.

There was no immediate reaction from the Libyan government to the UN report. Adel Shaltut, the deputy chief of the Libyan mission in Geneva, said his government was studying the report.

- The report gives some sense of the obstacles the Libyan government faces in trying to meet the lengthy list of recommendations that entail rebuilding the criminal justice system from the ground up. Government officials meeting with the commission emphasized the precariousness of the security situation, the weakness of the national police and the inability of the central authorities to enforce the rule of law, the report said.
- The newest parts of the report were the questions raised about NATO attacks that killed and wounded civilians.

The commission of inquiry concluded in its report that NATO had sought to avoid civilian casualties in "a highly precise campaign" involving thousands of attack sorties.

But it also noted that in a few cases it had "confirmed civilian casualties and found targets that showed no evidence" of any military function.

Oana Lungescu, the spokeswoman for NATO, said the organization had reviewed its target selection and data collected during the air strikes.

"This review process has confirmed that the specific targets struck by NATO were legitimate military targets selected consistently with the UN mandate, and that great care was taken in each case to minimize risk to civilians," she said in a statement.

New York Times News Service

[As Calls for Intervention in Syria Grow, Vijay Prashad Urges Reevaluation of NATO Attack on Libya](http://www.democracynow.org/2012/2/21/as_calls_for_intervention_in_syria#.TOVGZzDAO8Y.twitter)

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- February 21, 2012
- As Calls for Intervention in Syria Grow, Vijay Prashad Urges Reevaluation of NATO Attack on Libya
- Libya has just marked the first anniversary of the start of the uprising that toppled Col. Muammar Gaddafi's four-decade rule. But as Libya celebrates a new era free of the Gaddafi regime, there are growing concerns the country's lingering divisions will tear it apart. Libya remains deeply splintered by regions and factions. More than 500 militias exist throughout the country, leading to ongoing human rights abuses that resemble those under the Gaddafi regime. We speak to Trinity College Professor Vijay Prashad. "There is a serious need to evaluate what has happened in Libya as a result not only of the Gaddafi atrocities, of the rise of a rebellion, but also significantly of the nature of the NATO intervention. And that evaluation has not happened," Prashad said. "I'm afraid that is really calling into question the use of human rights as a lubricant for intervention. If we can't go back and evaluate what has happened, I think a lot of people around the world are afraid of going forward into another intervention, where the lessons of Libya have not been learned." [includes rush transcript]
- Guest:

Vijay Prashad, chair in South Asian History and professor of international studies at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. He is the author of 12 books, most recently, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. His forthcoming book to be released in April is called *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*.

- **AMY GOODMAN:** We turn now to Libya, which has just marked the first anniversary of the start of the uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi's four-decade rule. On Friday, thousands of people turned out for celebrations in Tripoli and Benghazi, Misrata and other towns. Another milestone was reached Monday, when Misrata residents elected a new city council in the first election since Gaddafi's fall.

But as Libya celebrates a new era free of the Gaddafi regime, there are growing concerns the country's lingering divisions will tear it apart. Libya remains deeply splintered by regions and factions. More than 500 militias exist throughout the country, leading to ongoing human rights abuses that resemble those under the Gaddafi regime.

In a report last week, Amnesty International said armed militias are committing human rights violations without punishment, with alleged Gaddafi loyalists suffering the worst abuses. The report's co-author, Amnesty's Carsten Jürgensen, said torture is widespread.

- **CARSTEN JÜRGENSEN:** Horrifying images of people who have been tortured and abused, people who have been

tortured very recently when we saw them, in some cases only hours before. In fact, my colleagues saw detainees being beaten in a courtyard of a prison. And people have shown us, you know, obvious traces of torture, being whipped, or people also told us they have been subjected to electric shocks. People have been beaten by all sorts of objects.

- **AMY GOODMAN:** The ongoing abuses in Libya have been far overshadowed by the crisis in Syria, where thousands of people have died in what is likely the Arab Spring's bloodiest conflict to date. With estimates of well over 5,000 deaths, the shocking toll in Syria has sparked ongoing calls for international intervention to stop the bloodshed. Speaking Monday in Cairo, Republican Senator John McCain called for the arming of the Syrian rebels by countries other than the United States.

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN: I am not saying that the United States needs to directly supply arms to the Syrian National Army. I am saying that there are ways to get assistance, ranging from medical assistance to technical assistance, such as GPS and other things that we could provide the Syrian National Army, support of the Syrian National Council, and there are ways to get weapons into Syria. It is time we gave them the wherewithal to fight back and stop the slaughter.

- **AMY GOODMAN:** Efforts at a united international response to the Syrian crisis have faltered over a major division between the U.S., European Union and Arab League, on one side, and Russia and China, on the other. Earlier this month, Russia and China vetoed a Security Council resolution condemning the Assad regime's crackdown. The U.N. General Assembly passed a measure with similar language just last week. Later this week, Syrian opposition leaders plan to hold talks with international officials at a "Friends of Syria" meeting in Tunis. The 22-member Arab League has endorsed the meeting, and the U.S., European Union and Russia are among those invited to attend.

Well, in this month marking the first anniversary of the Libyan uprising, I'm joined by Vijay Prashad, who argues the NATO intervention in Libya offers key lessons for the debate over an international response to Syria. Vijay Prashad is chair in South Asian History and professor of international studies at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, author of twelve books, most recently *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. His forthcoming book, to be released in April, is called *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*. He's joining us from Chicopee, Massachusetts.

Professor Prashad, welcome to *Democracy Now!* Talk about what's happened in Libya in this year.

- **VIJAY PRASHAD:** Well, of course, there has been the uprising a year ago. The uprising, it seems to me, within a month of breaking out in February, had gained immense momentum. And at its highest point, it was at the time when NATO decided to intervene. There was a conversion of an uprising, an internal civil war, into a NATO intervention. By May, there were already concerns from Amnesty International that there were maybe atrocities by NATO, by rebel forces and by Gaddafi's troops, that it was a very dangerous soup of violence in Libya. This, Amnesty said in May of last year. The, basically, struggle ended by September, October.

In October, Amnesty did another very important report suggesting that if human rights is going to be used as a lubricant for intervention, one has to be very careful to continue to investigate the violence. One has to not only document violence, but also see that the perpetrators are prosecuted. And one has to bring a society to some kind of closure. This is what Amnesty began to say in October. Those were very prescient words from Amnesty, because, indeed, what Amnesty had proposed has not happened since October.

- And Libya today, for all the jubilation about the removal of Gaddafi, who without question was an authoritarian dictator, without all—you know, without setting aside that jubilation, there are some serious questions about the future of Libya. In Misurata, yes, you're right, there was an election on Monday to create a new city council. At the same time, Médecins Sans Frontières withdrew its entire team, because they are worried about the custodial deaths and extrajudicial torture that is taking place. In the town of Kufra, in the south of Libya, there is the continuation of the war. Weapons are all across the country.

So there is a serious need to evaluate what has happened in Libya as a result not only of the Gaddafi atrocities, of the rise of a rebellion, but also significantly of the nature of the NATO intervention. And that evaluation has not happened. I'm afraid that is really calling into question the use of human rights as a lubricant for intervention. If we can't go back and evaluate what has happened, I think a lot of people around the world are afraid of going forward into another intervention, where the lessons of Libya have not been learned.

- **AMY GOODMAN:** Late last year, the United Nations Security Council rejected a probe into the deaths of civilians during the NATO bombing of Libya. At the time, the Russian ambassador to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, said a probe is needed to determine the exact toll.
- **AMB. VITALY CHURKIN:** The matter of civilian casualties, we believe, is particularly—from the bombing campaign, is particularly important, because we need to have a serious analysis. Some members of the Council, I can share with you, thought that somehow it was a diversion from Syria, from—coming from us, asking why we're not discussing Syria. I gave a very simple response: because today we are discussing Libya. It is on our agenda. So it's a matter coming out of the situation in Libya. So, this is where it stands now.
- **AMY GOODMAN:** The United States refused to allow a U.N. Security Council probe into Libyan civilian deaths. In response to the proposal, U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice accused Russia of trying to distract from its opposition to a measure condemning the Syrian crackdown.
- **AMB. SUSAN RICE:** This is a distraction and a diversion, and it is a diversion from the fact that this Council's actions, and that of NATO and its partners, save tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Libyan lives. That is something we should be celebrating. It is certainly something that the people of Libya are celebrating. And if the Libyans want to work with NATO to investigate any concerns they have, we're more than willing to do that. I think it's notable that we have not heard that call from the Libyan government. So, let us—let us see this for what it is. This is

duplicative, it's redundant, it's superfluous, and it's a stunt.

- **AMY GOODMAN:** That's the U.S. U.N. ambassador, Susan Rice. Vijay Prasad, your response?
- **VIJAY PRASHAD:** Well, I mean, it's very interesting that Ambassador Rice says, "Let us hear it from the Libyans." The question is—the Libyans right now barely have control over the state. They barely have monopoly over violence in the country itself. The government is not fully formed. To expect them to come out and ask for a NATO probe at the same time as there are 8,500 extrajudicial detainees inside Libyan jails is rather, I think, a distraction in itself.

The real question is, why won't NATO allow an evaluation of the Libyan war? What if we discover that the number of civilian casualties, the bombing in places like Marjah, the bombing in places in the center of Tripoli, had indeed cost the lives of a very large number of civilians? What is the harm of NATO coming under an evaluation? It will demonstrate, for instance, the actual commitment to human rights and to responsibility to protect civilians that the United States purports to support. So, the fact that they are not allowing an evaluation causes concern around the world. It means, perhaps, that the bombing campaigns are not going to protect civilians. They might, in fact, exacerbate the danger to civilians.

- You know, you have to keep in mind that when the U.N. human rights chief, Navi Pillay, wanted to speak about Libya, the U.N. General—the U.N. Security Council said, "You can present your report on Syria, but it must be done—on Libya, but the Libyan report must be done in a closed session." The Syrian report produced by human rights chair, Navi Pillay, could be done in an open session. In other words, it seems as if the West and NATO, in particular, does not want to have a discussion about Libya in public, but it wants to utilize human rights as a way to start wars, not a way to evaluate what has happened in a society.
- Libya is going to suffer from a lack of truth and reconciliation, from a lack of evaluation of the full cycle of human rights investigation to prosecution. You have to remember that when the head of the International Criminal Court, Mr. Moreno Ocampo, decided to frame arrest warrants against Gaddafi, Abdullah Senussi and Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, he framed those warrants immediately. Saif al-Islam Gaddafi was arrested last year and is continuing to be held without being handed over to the ICC. And the ICC—nor has NATO asked for *habeas corpus*, in other words, the delivery of Saif al-Islam for trial in the International Criminal Court. These are serious questions about the truncating of a human rights process towards war making rather than towards peace making. So I don't see this as a distraction; I see this as the fundamental question.
- And it is precisely why the Russians and the Chinese are loathe to give another open-ended resolution to allow NATO to continue war making in Syria. They have said quite clearly that unless the resolution says this is not going to invoke Chapter 7, Article 42, of the U.N. Charter—in other words, the right to make war or to preserve the principles of the United Nations—unless it says specifically that this resolution is not under Chapter 7, we cannot sign on to it. So, I think there are some serious issues at stake. This veto by the Russians and the Chinese is not disgusting or a distraction. It's about the principles involved here and whether this is just about a power grab by the West or a genuine concern for the people of Libya and Syria.

AMY GOODMAN: Vijay Prasad, we'll leave it there. I thank you so much for being with us, professor at Trinity College. His latest book, just coming out, *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*, it's out in April.

[A victory, but at what price?](http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/victory+what+price/6178774/story.html)

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• A victory, but at what price?

After Moammar Gadhafi's death, NATO saw its victory as complete. But as David Pugliese writes in the last of a three-part series, Libya's new leaders are struggling to gain control and al-Qaeda has benefitted from the power vacuum

By David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen February 20, 2012

- - Story
 - Photos (1)



Prime Minister Stephen Harper congratulates Canadian Forces Lt.-Gen. Charles Bouchard after he was awarded the Meritorious Service Cross for serving in the NATO-led Libya mission during a ceremony on Parliament Hill last November.

Photograph by: Dave Chan, Reuters , Ottawa Citizen

- The death of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi on Oct. 20 was greeted with relief in the capital cities of NATO nations.

His demise meant the war was all but over. In Ottawa, officials in the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office went to work planning the largest military victory parade the country had seen in decades.

The Conservative government wanted a major event: a flypast of CF-18 fighter jets and other aircraft, a parade, a choir and a feting of hundreds military personnel in the Senate chambers.

The emphasis was on portraying all those who had taken part in the Libyan mission - from cooks to clerks to pilots and aircrew - as "heroes."

The PR campaign started with a press release issued Nov. 4 by the office of Defence Minister Peter MacKay, calling on Canadians to welcome their "military heroes" back from the war's staging base in Italy.

But even before Gadhafi's death, the government had carefully crafted strategic messages to be used by military officers and politicians in public and with the media when victory came in Libya. The main one was that Canada had taken a leading role in the NATO campaign and had "punched above its weight."

- MacKay was the first to use the phrase, which was soon parroted by generals and defence analysts.

Politicians in other nations also started using the term. Norway and Denmark punched above their weight in the war, U.S. officials said. British Prime Minister David Cameron declared Britain's military had also "punched above its weight."

NATO saw its victory as complete: 260 aircraft had flown more than 26,000 missions. Almost 6,000 targets, including tanks and other armoured vehicles, were destroyed. More than 200 cruise missiles were fired and 20,000 bombs dropped. Canadian CF-18s flew 946 sorties and dropped almost 700 bombs.

Libya's air force was almost entirely destroyed in the opening days of the war. More than 400 government buildings or command centres were attacked.

- With all the self-congratulation about victory in Libya, few in the Canadian government or military pointed out the obvious - that the thirdrate army of an African state, outfitted with aging equipment, had somehow managed to withstand the full force of some of the largest militaries in the world and hang on for more than 200 days.
- As part of their PR campaign, government ministers also focused on Lt.-Gen. Charles Bouchard, whom they dubbed the "hero" of the Libyan war. The general would receive the Meritorious Service Cross, an honour military officers say usually takes quite a while to work its way through the bureaucracy before it's approved. In this case, the award was fast-tracked.

U.S. politicians were also full of praise for Bouchard's performance. "He was tough, he was able, he took no prisoners," U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said in lauding the general's efforts.

But not everyone was enamoured with a 'take no prisoners' approach to warfare.

- There were growing questions about the number of civilian deaths caused by NATO airstrikes and the lack of answers from the alliance. Antiwar groups claimed thousands might have been killed and that the alliance had committed war crimes.

A committee of British MPs tried to determine how many civilians NATO killed, but would acknowledge in a report there was no way of knowing. They accepted, however, that coalition forces did their best to avoid such casualties and commended them for that.

Libyan government officials said such casualties were unfortunate, but in the grander scheme of things, they were inevitable. They pointed out Gadhafi's forces killed thousands of people during the civil war.

Bouchard, who approved each and every airstrike, said NATO's process was extremely rigorous and geared to substantially reduce civilian deaths.

- One investigation by the New York Times newspaper found that NATO bombs killed as many as 70 civilians during the conflict, including 29 women and children. Survivors told the Times that one tactic used by NATO was to restrike targets minutes after the first attack, a practice that killed civilians rushing to aid the wounded.

NATO said it didn't have any figures about such fatalities, but critics countered that the alliance never tried to compile any.

One of the most controversial NATO attacks happened in August in the farming community of Majar. Five women and seven children were killed in the initial attack. Minutes later, NATO aircraft were back dropping bombs, killing four more. When neighbours rushed to help dig people from the rubble, another bomb hit, killing 18 more civilians.

- At the time, Gadhafi's government claimed 85 died, but that was dismissed as propaganda. Libya's new government now acknowledges around 34 civilians were killed.

But NATO still insists it had carefully planned out the airstrike and the dead were Libyan military personnel and mercenaries.

Back in Canada, there was disquiet as well, but for other reasons. Among some in uniform, the Conservative government's decision to honour the Libyan war didn't sit well.

A large number of Canadian military personnel had lost friends or acquaintances in the decade-long conflict in Afghanistan. Much blood and treasure had been spent, with 158 Canadians dead and almost 2,000 injured. More than 30,000 Canadian military personnel had served at some point in Afghanistan.

- But a similar ceremony to honour Canadian troops who fought in that country, complete with a parade on Parliament Hill and a flyover, had been scuttled.

It seemed to some military personnel the Afghan war was an embarrassment to the Conservative government.

Now, all the stops were being pulled out for a war where aircrew flew their missions before returning to a comfortable room and meal at night. No Canadian troops fought in the deserts of Libya. There were no casualties. Pilots at times faced gunfire, but most of Libya's air defences were destroyed in the opening days of the conflict. The war was, as some pilots suggested, a turkey shoot.

But Libya was different in other respects. Unlike Afghanistan, it was a military action that had a clear beginning and end and what the government considered a victory.

- The celebration that had been set for Nov. 24 on Parliament Hill would be televised nationally; some 300 military personnel were brought in from four bases across the country for the event.

The four-minute flight of CF-18s and other aircraft over Parliament Hill cost taxpayers an estimated \$850,000, although the Defence Department has not yet tallied the entire cost of the celebrations.

But the public appeared largely indifferent. The event attracted only a couple of dozen Libyan-Canadians who waved flags as cannons sounded a 21-gun salute.

"History shows us this: that freedom seldom flowers in undisturbed ground," Harper told the assembled military personnel at the time. "Our job in Libya has been done and done well."

That, however, was open to debate.

- While the Canadian government celebrated Gadhafi's overthrow, the countries in the region were feeling the effects.

The Libyan strongman had not only provided aid for many African nations, but employment for their citizens. His demise set into motion a mass exodus of workers back to their original countries.

That, in turn, created a domino effect as those nations struggled to deal with hundreds of thousands of traumatized and impoverished people, according to a recently released UN report for the Security Council.

Crime and drug and human smuggling have spiked in the region and the return of more than one million people to their homelands has worsened an "already challenging, humanitarian, development and security situation," the report noted.

- But Gadhafi's overthrow did breathe new life into one organization - al-Qaeda.

As Gadhafi's forces retreated from NATO's relentless air attacks they abandoned bases and ammunition depots holding thousands of weapons, including surface-to-air missiles. In the chaos that engulfed Libya, the sites were quickly pilfered, either by rebels or black marketers.

African nations were the first to sound the warning. In late March, just weeks into the conflict, Chad's president, Idriss Deby Itno, told journalists that al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM as it is known, had obtained missiles and small arms from abandoned Libyan stockpiles. "This is very serious," he said. "AQIM is becoming a genuine army, the best equipped in the region."

- Canada was slow to recognize the problem. In April, Canadian Forces spokesman Brig.-Gen. Richard Blanchette said the military didn't have any information about missing armaments or missiles.

But a month later, Algerian intelligence was also warning that looted Libyan weapons were in the hands of AQIM.

"The region has turned into a powder keg," Mohamed Bazoum, Niger's foreign minister, would later tell delegates to an anti-terrorism conference. "Things have changed and degraded since the Libya crisis and the region is on a war path. With stolen weapons circulating, al-Qaeda's total impact is growing."

In November, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, one of AQIM's leaders, confirmed to the Mauritanian news agency that the terrorist group had acquired Libyan weapons. "We have been one of the main beneficiaries of the revolutions of the Arab world," he boasted.

- And in Libya, the war was over, but the fighting went on. The country's new leaders were dealing with their own problems as rebel groups, representing various factions, started to fight each other for control of the country. In Tripoli, rival groups fought gun battles over control of the city's sports complex and airport.

"I want to assure the Libyan people that everything is under control," a Libyan senior official, Mustafa Abdel Jalil, said after one four-day battle on the outskirts of the capital.

But the militias, estimated to number between 100 and 300 groups, aren't hearing the message.

- Tripoli residents have seen a different face of the rebellion than the one presented to the western media. Rebels have stopped people at gunpoint and stolen their vehicles. Other militia groups have taken over homes and buildings, evicting families and businesses. The militia from Zintan stole an elephant from Tripoli's zoo, taking the animal back to their city as a war trophy.

The militias refuse to disarm and clashes continue. It's estimated that around 125,000 Libyans have retained their weapons.

A recent report from the International Crisis Group pointed to one of the key problems: Libyans had rejected the National Transitional Council. The group that the Canadian government recognized as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people, long before Gadhafi's regime fell, actually had little real power.

Although the NTC was the face of the uprising for western politicians and the media, those from the western part of the country saw it as dominated by militia groups from the east. For their part, Islamists saw the transitional council as overly secular, too geared to western values and out of touch with ordinary Libyans, according to the report.

- There was also bad blood between a number of towns and cities and the NTC. Militias in Misrata complained they received little support from rebels in Benghazi and that the NTC had made them pay for weapons at the height of the

civil war.

Equally troubling for countries that supported the rebels was the ongoing widespread detention of individuals and the use of torture in the new Libya.

An estimated 8,500 men, women and children are still being held in detention centres run by various militias. Navi Pillay, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, reported that the detainees were being tortured and that both male and female prisoners were being raped.

In January, Médecins sans Frontières pulled its medical staff from detention facilities in Misrata after they determined more than 100 people had been tortured. The group's doctors were being asked to keep prisoners alive so they could be tortured again.

- Around the same time, Amnesty International reported that up to a dozen people had been tortured to death by Libya's new National Military Security agency.

In early February came the news that Libya's former ambassador to France, Omar Brebesh, had been killed shortly after being arrested by a militia group. According to the autopsy, he died after suffering "multiple bodily injuries and fractured ribs."

Such cases prompted Canada's Foreign Affairs Department to deliver a diplomatic note rebuking Libya for allowing such activities to take place.

But Libyan officials dismissed allegations of torture as unfounded. The head of Misrata's military council, Ibrahim Beitelmal, instead claimed that human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Médecins sans Frontières were part of "Gadhafi's fifth column."

- Still, Canada's Lt.-Gen. Bouchard remains optimistic about Libya's future. He argues that the country is in a good position to bounce back and become prosperous again. "I believe once we get there, mixed with a government that is transparent and representative, we will find our way toward a Libyan democracy," he recently told a Canadian senate meeting.

Asked by senators about the torture and the concerns raised by Médecins sans Frontières and other agencies, Bouchard said the Libyans needed to understand that such things were not right.

"I would offer that this is an emerging democracy by people who may not know all the things that need to be done and who may not understand all the human rights issues," he added.

- Some are not so sure Libya is an emerging democracy. They point to the country's warm welcome in January of Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of genocide and war crimes, was offering Tripoli the use of his military to help create a new Libyan army.

This was the same military Bashir used to ethnically cleanse Darfur. Ironically, the International Criminal Court had sought to try Gadhafi for similar war crimes.

- But Bashir felt at home in Tripoli. Asked by journalists if he was worried he might be arrested and handed over to the international court, he answered: "By God, No."

He said he felt absolutely safe in the new Libya.

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War in Libya continues on several fronts

<http://www.timescolonist.com/news/Libya+continues+several+fronts/6178586/story.html>

• War in Libya continues on several fronts

By David Pugliese, Postmedia News February 19, 2012

- The death of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi on Oct. 20 was greeted with relief in the capital cities of NATO nations.

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- The Conservative government wanted a major event: a flypast of CF-18 fighter jets and other aircraft, a parade, a choir and a feting of hundreds of military personnel in the Senate chambers.

The emphasis was on portraying all those who had taken part in the Libyan mission — from cooks to clerks to pilots and aircrew — as "heroes."

The PR campaign started with a news release issued Nov. 4 by the office of Defence Minister Peter MacKay, calling on Canadians to welcome their "military heroes" back from the war's staging base in Italy.

But even before Gadhafi's death, the government carefully had crafted strategic messages to be used by military officers and politicians in public and with the media when victory came in Libya. The main one was that Canada had taken a leading role in the NATO campaign and had "punched above its weight."

- MacKay was the first to use the phrase, which was soon parroted by generals and defence analysts.

Politicians in other nations also started using the term. Norway and Denmark punched above their weight in the war, U.S. officials said. British Prime Minister David Cameron declared Britain's military had also "punched above its weight."

NATO saw its victory as complete: 260 aircraft had flown more than 26,000 missions. Almost 6,000 targets, including tanks and other armoured vehicles, were destroyed. More than 200 cruise missiles were fired and 20,000 bombs dropped. Canadian CF-18s flew 946 sorties and dropped close to 700 bombs.

Libya's air force was almost entirely destroyed in the opening days of the war. More than 400 government buildings or command centres were attacked.

- With all the self-congratulation about victory in Libya, few in the Canadian government or military pointed out the obvious — that the third-rate army of an African state, outfitted with aging equipment, somehow had managed to withstand the full force of some of the largest militaries in the world and to hang on for more than 200 days.

As part of their PR campaign, government ministers also focused on Lt.-Gen. Charles Bouchard, whom they dubbed the "hero" of the Libyan war. The general would receive the Meritorious Service Cross, an honour military officers say usually takes quite a while to work its way through the bureaucracy before it's approved. In this case, the award was fast-tracked.

U.S. politicians were also full of praise for Bouchard's performance.

"He was tough, he was able, he took no prisoners," U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said in lauding the general's efforts.

- But not everyone was enamoured with a 'take no prisoners' approach to warfare.

There were growing questions about the number of civilian deaths caused by NATO airstrikes and the lack of answers from the alliance. Antiwar groups claimed thousands might have been killed and that the alliance had committed war crimes.

A committee of British MPs tried to determine how many civilians NATO killed, but would acknowledge in a report there was no way of knowing. They accepted, however, that coalition forces did their best to avoid such casualties and commended them for that.

Libyan government officials said such casualties were unfortunate, but in the grander scheme of things, they were inevitable. They pointed out Gadhafi's forces killed thousands of people during the civil war.

- Bouchard, who approved each and every airstrike, said NATO's process was extremely rigorous and geared to substantially reduce civilian deaths.

One investigation by the New York Times found that NATO bombs killed as many as 70 civilians during the conflict, including 29 women and children. Survivors told the Times that one tactic used by NATO was to restrike targets minutes after the first attack, a practice that killed civilians rushing to aid the wounded.

NATO said it didn't have any figures about such fatalities, but critics countered that the alliance never tried to compile any.

One of the most controversial NATO attacks happened in August in the farming community of Majar. Five women and seven children were killed in the initial attack. Minutes later, NATO aircraft were back dropping bombs, killing four more. When neighbours rushed to help dig people from the rubble, another bomb hit, killing 18 more civilians.

At the time, Gadhafi's government claimed 85 died, but that was dismissed as propaganda. Libya's new government now acknowledges approximately 34 civilians were killed.

- But NATO insists it had carefully planned out the airstrike and the dead were Libyan military personnel and mercenaries.

Back in Canada, there was disquiet as well, but for other reasons. Among some in uniform, the Conservative government's decision to honour the Libyan war didn't sit well.

A large number of Canadian military personnel had lost friends or acquaintances in the decade-long conflict in Afghanistan. Much blood and treasure had been spent, with 158 Canadians dead and almost 2,000 injured. More than 30,000 Canadian military personnel had served at some point in Afghanistan.

But a similar ceremony to honour Canadian troops who fought in that country, complete with a parade on Parliament Hill and a flyover, had been scuttled.

It seemed to some military personnel the Afghan war was an embarrassment to the Conservative government.

- Now, all the stops were being pulled out for a war where aircrew flew their missions before returning to a comfortable room and meal at night. No Canadian troops fought in the deserts of Libya. There were no casualties. Pilots at times, faced gunfire, but most of Libya's air defences were destroyed in the opening days of the conflict. The war was, as some pilots suggested, a turkey shoot.

But Libya was different in other respects. Unlike Afghanistan, it was a military action that had a clear beginning and end and what the government considered a victory.

The celebration that had been set for Nov. 24 on Parliament Hill would be televised nationally; some 300 military personnel were brought in from four bases across the country for the event.

The four-minute flight of CF-18s and other aircraft over Parliament Hill cost taxpayers an estimated \$850,000, although the Defence Department has not yet tallied the entire cost of the celebrations.

- But the public appeared largely indifferent. The event attracted only a couple of dozen Libyan-Canadians who waved flags as cannons sounded a 21-gun salute.

"History shows us this: that freedom seldom flowers in undisturbed ground," Prime Minister Stephen Harper told the assembled military personnel at the time. "Our job in Libya has been done and done well."

That, however, was open to debate.

While the Canadian government celebrated Gadhafi's overthrow, the countries in the region were feeling the effects.

The Libyan strongman not only had provided aid for many African nations, but employment for their citizens. His demise set into motion a mass exodus of workers back to their original countries.

That, in turn, created a domino effect as those nations struggled to deal with hundreds of thousands of traumatized and impoverished people, according to a recently released UN report for the Security Council.

- Crime and drug and human smuggling have spiked in the region and the return of more than one million people to their homelands has worsened an "already challenging, humanitarian, development and security situation," the report noted.

But Gadhafi's overthrow did breathe new life into one organization — al-Qaida.

As Gadhafi's forces retreated from NATO's relentless air attacks, they abandoned bases and ammunition depots holding thousands of weapons, including surface-to-air missiles. In the chaos that engulfed Libya, the sites were quickly pilfered, either by rebels or black marketeers.

African nations were the first to sound the warning. In late March, just weeks into the conflict, Chad's president, Idriss Deby Itno, told journalists that al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM as it is known, had obtained missiles and small arms from abandoned Libyan stockpiles. "This is very serious," he said. "AQIM is becoming a genuine army, the best equipped in the region."

- Canada was slow to recognize the problem. In April, Canadian Forces spokesman Brig.-Gen. Richard Blanchette said

the military didn't have any information about missing armaments or missiles.

But a month later, Algerian intelligence also was warning that looted Libyan weapons were in the hands of AQIM.

"The region has turned into a powder keg," Mohamed Bazoum, Niger's foreign minister, later would tell delegates to an anti-terrorism conference. "Things have changed and degraded since the Libya crisis and the region is on a war path. With stolen weapons circulating, al-Qaida's total impact is growing."

In November, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, one of AQIM's leaders, confirmed to the Mauritanian news agency that the terrorist group had acquired Libyan weapons.

"We have been one of the main beneficiaries of the revolutions of the Arab world," he boasted.

- And in Libya, the war was over, but the fighting went on. The country's new leaders were dealing with their own problems as rebel groups, representing various factions, started to fight each other for control of the country. In Tripoli, rival groups fought gun battles over control of the city's sports complex and airport.

"I want to assure the Libyan people that everything is under control," a Libyan senior official, Mustafa Abdel Jalil, said after one four-day battle on the outskirts of the capital.

But the militias, estimated to number between 100 and 300 groups, aren't hearing the message.

Tripoli residents have seen a different face of the rebellion than the one presented to the western media. Rebels have stopped people at gunpoint and stolen their vehicles. Other militia groups have taken over homes and buildings, evicting families and businesses. The militia from Zintan stole an elephant from Tripoli's zoo, taking the animal back to their city as a war trophy.

The militias refuse to disarm and clashes continue. It's estimated that some 125,000 Libyans have retained their weapons.

- A recent report from the International Crisis Group pointed to one of the key problems: Libyans had rejected the National Transitional Council. The group that the Canadian government recognized as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people, long before Gadhafi's regime fell, actually had little real power.

Although the NTC was the face of the uprising for western politicians and the media, those from the western part of the country saw it as dominated by militia groups from the east. For their part, Islamists saw the transitional council as overly secular, too geared to western values and out of touch with ordinary Libyans, according to the report. There was also bad blood between a number of towns and cities and the NTC. Militias in Misrata complained they received little support from rebels in Benghazi and that the NTC had made them pay for weapons at the height of the civil war.

Equally troubling for countries that supported the rebels was the ongoing widespread detention of individuals and the use of torture in the new Libya.

- An estimated 8,500 men, women and children are still being held in detention centres run by various militias. Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for human rights, reported that the detainees were being tortured and that both male and female prisoners were being raped.

In January, Medecins sans Frontieres pulled its medical staff from detention facilities in Misrata after they determined more than 100 people had been tortured. The group's doctors were being asked to keep prisoners alive so they could be tortured again.

Around the same time, Amnesty International reported that up to a dozen people had been tortured to death by Libya's new National Military Security agency.

In early February, came the news that Libya's former ambassador to France, Omar Brebesh, had been killed shortly after being arrested by a militia group. According to the autopsy, he died after suffering "multiple bodily injuries and fractured ribs."

- Such cases prompted Canada's Foreign Affairs Department to deliver a diplomatic note rebuking Libya for allowing such activities to take place.

But Libyan officials dismissed allegations of torture as unfounded. The head of Misrata's military council, Ibrahim Beitelmal, instead claimed that human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Medecins sans Frontieres were part of "Gadhafi's fifth column."

Still, Canada's Bouchard remains optimistic about Libya's future. He argues that the country is in a good position to bounce back and to become prosperous again.

"I believe once we get there, mixed with a government that is transparent and representative, we will find our way toward a Libyan democracy," he recently told a Canadian Senate meeting.

Asked by senators about the torture and the concerns raised by Medecins sans Frontieres and other agencies, Bouchard said the Libyans needed to understand that such things were not right.

- "I would offer that this is an emerging democracy by people who may not know all the things that need to be done and who may not understand all the human rights issues," he added.

Some are not so sure Libya is an emerging democracy. They point to the country's warm welcome in January of Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of genocide and war crimes, was offering Tripoli the use of his military to help create a new Libyan army.

This was the same military Bashir used to ethnically cleanse Darfur. Ironically, the International Criminal Court had sought to try Gadhafi for similar war crimes.

But Bashir felt at home in Tripoli. Asked by journalists if he was worried he might be arrested and handed over to the international court, he answered: "By God, no."

He said he felt absolutely safe in the new Libya.

Ottawa Citizen

[Probe demanded of Libya bombings : Views and News from Norway](http://www.newsenglish.no/2012/02/13/probe-demanded-of-libya-bombings)

<http://www.newsenglish.no/2012/02/13/probe-demanded-of-libya-bombings>

- Probe demanded of Libya bombings
- February 13, 2012
- Jan Egeland, the former Norwegian diplomat who now heads Human Rights Watch in Europe, is calling for an investigation into Norway's and NATO's bombing of Libya last year. Egeland fears the bombing killed too many of the civilians that the UN-backed mission was supposed to protect.
- Newspaper *Aftenposten* reported over the weekend that at least 60 civilians were killed during five separate attacks by NATO fighter jets, according to studies carried out by Human Rights Watch. Among them was the bombing of an estate owned by a retired general, in which his pregnant daughter-in-law and two children reportedly were killed.

Egeland, who also is a former top UN official in charge of refugee issues, wants Norway and its other NATO allies that carried out bombing missions to investigate what happened at the property owned by the al-Hamedi family along with other attacks where civilians were killed. He wants his own government to release information on the attacks and compensate survivors.

- Egeland told *Aftenposten* that Danish fighter jets were also active in the area at the time of the attack, and that Denmark is investigating, "but it can also be Norway that carried out these bombings."

He also criticized Norway and the other NATO countries that bombed Libya throughout most of last spring, for not being willing to investigate the consequences of the attacks. "NATO has refused to actively carry out investigations in Libya about where and when civilians may have been killed," Egeland told *Aftenposten*. "We contend that NATO and Norway are obliged to do this, in line with international law."

Egeland, who once worked in a Norwegian Labour Party government and is now criticizing former colleagues, said Human Rights Watch "also believes that it's wrong" for Norway and NATO allies to keep consequences of the bombing secret.

- **Norwegian jets among most active**

All told, NATO carried more than 9,000 bombing attacks, of which Norwegian F16 fighter jets were involved in 583 and dropped 569 bombs. Norwegian Defense Minister Espen Barth Eide maintains that neither Norway nor other NATO members have any obligation to provide compensation for casualties, nor does he want to comment on individual attacks.

"Norwegian jets only engaged legitimate targets," Eide claimed. "We have no information that suggests we should launch any investigations."

Asked whether Norwegian fighter jets were involved in the attack on the Hamedi family's estate, now the subject of an historic legal claim filed in Belgium by Khaled al-Hamedi, Eide said only that "Norway stood together with its allies on the assignment in Libya. Norway follows the principle that NATO accounts for the results of the operations, while we account for the range of our contribution.

"Both NATO and Norway know which operations Norwegian jets were involved in," Eide continued. "We stand together, and it would be wrong to comment on individual assignments."

[Diplomat: New Libyan Clashes Due to Local Dispute | Africa | English](http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Diplomat-New-Libyan-Clashes-Due-to-Local-Dispute-138074673.html)

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Diplomat-New-Libyan-Clashes-Due-to-Local-Dispute-138074673.html>

- January 25, 2012

Diplomat: New Libyan Clashes Due to Local Dispute

Margaret Besheer | The United Nations

- The U.N.'s top diplomat in Libya, Ian Martin, confirmed publicly Wednesday that recent fighting in the town of Bani Walid was due to a local dispute and not supporters of former Libyan ruler Moammar Gadhafi trying to reassert control over the city.

In his monthly update to the U.N. Security Council, Martin said the challenge of reconciliation can be highlighted by the outbreak of fighting in the northern town of Bani Walid.

Formerly a stronghold of loyalists to the former Gadhafi government, the town has been the scene of recent clashes. Some media reports say forces loyal to the interim government had been driven from town by pro-Gadhafi forces. Martin called that incorrect.

- "Regrettably, in the charged local atmosphere, a security-related incident triggered clashes between members of the local population and the revolutionary brigades stationed in the city, as a result of which several [people] were reportedly killed," said Martin. "This has been misreported as pro-Gadhafi forces taking back control of the city."

Martin said the Libyan authorities responded by sending units from the national army, and that it is engaging with all parties to contain the situation and address the underlying security and political challenges in the town.

Also present at Wednesday's Security Council meeting was U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay. She addressed outstanding questions regarding possible civilian deaths resulting from NATO operations during the mission to protect Libyan civilians from attacks by the Gadhafi government before it fell. Russia has been an outspoken critic of the NATO mission and among the loudest voices calling for an investigation into civilian casualties.

- Pillay said the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry is investigating the allegations.

"Information so far indicates that NATO made efforts to keep civilian casualties at a minimum," she said. "But where civilians have been killed and injured, the Alliance should disclose information about all such events and about remedial actions undertaken."

Libya's ambassador, Abdurrahman Shalgham, told the council that he knew of only four NATO bombing incidents where there were possible civilian casualties. In one of the incidents, he said, the Libyan commander had rushed in too soon with his men, putting them at risk.

Shalgham also accused the former dictator's fighters of hiding out in schools and hospitals, making them NATO targets. He held up a computer memory stick, saying it contained 80,000 telephone conversations between Moammar Gadhafi and the head of a hospital and others, in which the former dictator ordered the bodies of his opponents taken to sites where NATO had bombed, so it would appear as though they had been killed by NATO airstrikes.

- Shalgham said the victims' families would not allow it.

Ambassador Shalgham said Libya has let in several international organizations to investigate the matter and they have concluded that those who died, including civilians, were not killed by NATO.

"Libya is prepared to cooperate with any international investigating body under the auspices of the United Nations," he said via interpreter. "We are going to set up a mechanism to compensate victims psychologically and financially, once we have the results of the investigation."

The Libyan envoy said that without NATO's assistance "hundreds of thousands" of people would have died in Benghazi alone.

Last year the U.N. Security Council authorized NATO to impose a no-fly zone and conduct targeted airstrikes over Libya from March to October, part of a move to protect citizens in danger of Gadhafi forces who were trying to put down a

rebellion against his 42-year rule.

[The Illegal War on Libya: Mission Accomplished, Gaddafi Killed](http://www.twf.org/News/Y2011/0830-MissionA.html)

<http://www.twf.org/News/Y2011/0830-MissionA.html>

- August 30, 2011
Antiwar.com

Mission Accomplished in Libya?

by [Ron Paul](#)

- Even as a major hurricane hit America's eastern seaboard, the administration was determined to expand the war in Libya while threatening the regime in Syria. Is there any limit to government's appetite to create more problems for our nation and economy?

Americans may be tempted to celebrate the apparent victory of U.S.- and NATO-backed rebels in Libya, since it seems the Gadhafi regime is overthrown. But I believe any enthusiasm for our Libyan misadventure is premature.

The Obama administration attacked Libya without a constitutional declaration of war, without congressional authorization, without meaningful consultation with Congress -- and without a dollar being authorized from the House or Senate. It was a war started by a president who turned to the United Nations for its authority and ignored the authority of the U.S. Congress.

- Are we better off as a nation by ignoring and debasing our Constitution? Are we better off having spent more than a billion dollars attacking a country thousands of miles away that had not threatened us? Are we more financially sound having expanded the empire to include yet another protectorate and probable long-term military occupation? Are we more admired throughout the world for getting involved in yet another war?

Still, many will claim that getting rid of Libyan ruler Gadhafi was worth it. They will say that the ends justify the means. As the civilian toll from NATO bombs adds up in a war started under the guise of protecting a civilian population, even the initial argument for intervention is ridiculous. We should not forget that there were no massacres taking place in Libya before the NATO attack. The attack was dubbed a preventive humanitarian intervention. But as soon as NATO planes started bombing, civilians started dying.

- Gadhafi may well have been a tyrant, but as such he was no worse than many others whom we support and count as allies. Disturbingly, we see a pattern of relatively secular leaders in the Arab world being targeted for regime-change with the resulting power vacuum being filled by much more radical elements. Iraq, post-Saddam, is certainly far closer to Iran than it was before the U.S. invasion. Will Libya be any different?

We already see grisly reprisals from the U.S.-backed rebels against their political opponents. There are disturbing scenes of looting and lawlessness on the part of the rebels. We know that some rebel factions appear to be allied with Islamic extremists, and others seem to have ties to the CIA. They also appear to have a penchant for killing each other as well as supporters of the previous regime. The tribal structure of Libyan society all but ensures that an ongoing civil war is on the agenda rather than the Swiss-style democracy that some intervention advocates suggest is around the corner.

- What is next after such a victory? With the big Western scramble to grab Libya's oil reserves amid domestic political chaos and violence, does anyone doubt that NATO ground troops are not being prepared for yet another occupation?

Neoconservatives continue to dominate our foreign policy, regardless of the administration in power. They do not care that we are bankrupt, as they are too blinded by their desire for empire and their affection for the entangling alliances we have been rightly counseled to avoid. They have set their sights next on Syria, where the U.S. moves steadily toward intervention in another domestic conflict that has nothing to do with the U.S. Already the U.S. president has called for regime-change in Syria, while adding new sanctions against the Syrian regime. Are U.S. bombers far behind?

[If the Libyan war was about saving lives, it was a catastrophic failure | Seumas Milne | Comment is free | The Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/26/libya-war-saving-lives-catastrophic-failure)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/26/libya-war-saving-lives-catastrophic-failure>

• If the Libyan war was about saving lives, it was a catastrophic failure

Nato claimed it would protect civilians in Libya, but delivered far more killing. It's a warning to the Arab world and Africa

- As the most hopeful offshoot of the "[Arab spring](#)" so far flowered this week in successful elections in Tunisia, its ugliest underside has been laid bare in Libya. That's not only, or even mainly, about the YouTube lynching of Gaddafi, courtesy of a Nato attack on his convoy.

The grisly killing of the Libyan despot after his captors had sodomised him with a knife, was certainly a war crime. But many inside and outside Libya doubtless also felt it was an understandable act of revenge after years of regime violence. Perhaps that was Hillary Clinton's reaction, when she joked about it on camera, until global revulsion pushed the US to call for an investigation.

- As the reality of what western media have hailed as Libya's "liberation" becomes clearer, however, the butchering of

Gaddafi has been revealed as only a reflection of a much bigger picture. On Tuesday, [Human Rights Watch reported the discovery of 53 bodies](#), military and civilian, in Gaddafi's last stronghold of Sirte, apparently executed – with their hands tied – by former rebel militia.

Its investigator in Libya, Peter Bouckaert, told me yesterday that more bodies are continuing to be discovered in Sirte, where evidence suggests about 500 people, civilians and fighters, have been killed in the last 10 days alone by shooting, shelling and Nato bombing.

- That has followed a two month-long siege and indiscriminate bombardment of a city of 100,000 which has been reduced to a [Grozny-like state of destruction](#) by newly triumphant rebel troops with Nato air and special-forces support.
- And these massacre sites are only the latest of many such discoveries. Amnesty International has now produced compendious evidence of [mass abduction and detention, beating and routine torture, killings and atrocities](#) by the rebel militias Britain, France and the US have backed for the last eight months – supposedly to stop exactly those kind of crimes being committed by the Gaddafi regime.
- Throughout that time African migrants and black Libyans have been subject to a relentless racist campaign of mass detention, lynchings and atrocities on the usually unfounded basis that they have been loyalist mercenaries. Such attacks continue, says Bouckaert, who witnessed militias from Misrata this week burning homes in Tawerga so that the town's predominantly black population – accused of backing Gaddafi – will be unable to return.
- All the while, Nato leaders and cheerleading media have turned a blind eye to such horrors as they boast of a triumph of freedom and murmur about the need for restraint. But it is now absolutely clear that, if the purpose of western intervention in Libya's civil war was to "protect civilians" and save lives, it has been a catastrophic failure.
- David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy won the authorisation to use "all necessary means" from the UN security council in March on the basis that Gaddafi's forces were about to commit a Srebrenica-style massacre in Benghazi. Naturally we can never know what would have happened without Nato's intervention. But there is in fact no evidence – including from other rebel-held towns Gaddafi re-captured – to suggest he had either the capability or even the intention to carry out such an atrocity against an armed city of 700,000.
- What is now known, however, is that while the death toll in Libya when Nato intervened was perhaps around 1,000-2,000 (judging by UN estimates), eight months later it is probably more than ten times that figure. Estimates of the numbers of dead over the last eight months – as Nato leaders vetoed ceasefires and negotiations – range from 10,000 up to 50,000. The National Transitional Council puts the losses at 30,000 dead and 50,000 wounded.
- Of those, uncounted thousands will be civilians, including those killed by Nato bombing and Nato-backed forces on the ground. These figures dwarf the death tolls in this year's other most bloody Arab uprisings, in Syria and Yemen. Nato has not protected civilians in Libya – it has multiplied the number of their deaths, while losing not a single soldier of its own.
- For the western powers, of course, the Libyan war has allowed them to regain ground lost in Tunisia and Egypt, put themselves at the heart of the upheaval sweeping the most strategically sensitive region in the world, and secure valuable new commercial advantages in an oil-rich state whose previous leadership was at best unreliable. No wonder the new British defence secretary is telling businessmen to "pack their bags" for Libya, and the US ambassador in Tripoli insists American companies are needed on a "big scale".
- But for Libyans, it has meant a loss of ownership of their own future and the effective imposition of a western-picked administration of Gaddafi defectors and US and British intelligence assets. Probably the greatest challenge to that takeover will now come from Islamist military leaders on the ground, such as the Tripoli commander Abdel Hakim Belhaj – kidnapped by MI6 to be tortured in Libya in 2004 – who have already made clear they will not be taking orders from the NTC.
- No wonder the council's leaders are [now asking Nato to stay on](#), and Nato officials have let it be known they will "[take action](#)" if [Libyan factions end up fighting among themselves](#).
- The Libyan precedent is a threat to hopes of genuine change and independence across the Arab world – and beyond. In Syria, where months of bloody repression risk tipping into fullscale civil war, [elements of the opposition have started to call for a "no-fly zone"](#) to protect civilians. And in Africa, where Barack Obama has just sent troops to Uganda and [France is giving military support to Kenyan intervention in Somalia](#), the opportunities for dressing up a new scramble for resources as humanitarian intervention are limitless.
- The once savagely repressed progressive Islamist party An-Nahda won the Tunisian elections this week on a platform of pluralist democracy, social justice and national independence. Tunisia has faced nothing like the backlash the uprisings in other Arab countries have received, but that spirit is the driving force of the movement for change across a region long manipulated and dominated by foreign powers.
- What the Libyan tragedy has brutally hammered home is that foreign intervention doesn't only strangle national freedom and self-determination – it doesn't protect lives either.

[Nato accused of war crimes in Libya - Africa - World - The Independent](#)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/nato-accused-of-war-crimes-in-libya-6291566.html>

• Nato accused of war crimes in Libya

New report criticises Western forces for bombing civilian targets in Sirte during conflict

[Rachel Shabi](#)

Thursday 19 January 2012

- An independent report published by Middle Eastern human rights groups says there is evidence that war crimes and human rights violations were committed by all the participants – Nato, rebel forces and those loyal to Colonel Gaddafi – in last year's Libyan uprising.

The report, published today by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights together and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights with the International Legal Assistance Consortium, follows extensive fact-finding work carried out by law and war crimes experts. While the document stresses that findings are not conclusive, it adds weight to growing concerns about violations committed by all sides in the conflict.

- After interviews with eye-witnesses and victims of attacks, and after visiting areas targeted by Nato, the Independent Civil Society Mission to Libya report highlights the issue of Nato classifying some civilian sites as military targets during its operations.

Nato was authorised by the UN Security Council to protect civilians in Libya from attacks by the Gaddafi regime during the uprising of last year, but drew criticism for what many described as going further than the terms of the mandate.

Raji Sourani, the head of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights who took part in the Libya mission, said: "We are not making judgements – that is not the mission mandate. But we have reason to think that there were some war crimes perpetrated.

- "We are asking questions, especially about what happened in Sirte," referring to Nato strikes in that city last September, when 47 civilians were killed. Eye-witnesses in the city told report investigators that civilians converged at the site of Nato strikes on two trucks, and were subsequently killed by a third missile.

Whether or not this amounts to a war crime, the revelation, if proved, will serve as an embarrassment to the Alliance, which stressed its efforts to avoid civilian deaths. Separately, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, said last November that Nato forces would be investigated along with the two Libyan sides of the conflict for breaches of the laws of war.

Late last year, Nato's Secretary-General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said: "We have carried out this operation very carefully, without confirmed civilian casualties."

A Nato official said yesterday that, despite the Alliance's best efforts – including the cancellation of two-thirds of intended strikes because of the risk of casualties – its "goal of zero civilian casualties is highly unlikely".

- The official added: "Nato is working closely with the UN and with Libyan counterparts – they are the best place to have these concerns looked at and we have already started to provide information to help with that. If anyone else presents these concerns to us, we will do the same. We would like the opportunity to work with them and go through our data, to see if that can help allay concerns and determine what actually did happen."

Today's report observes that establishing what happened in Nato strikes in Libya was potentially hindered by the "apparent desire" among those interviewed on the ground "to protect Nato, or avoid any direct or indirect criticism".

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, last year rejected claims that Nato had exceeded its mandate in Libya: "Security Council resolution 1973, I believe, was strictly enforced within the limit, within the mandate," he said.

- The investigation also set out to probe alleged violations committed by former opposition forces allied to the National Transitional Council. As well as evidence of killing, torturing, detention and ill-treatment of individuals who may have been loyal to the former regime, the mission examines the forced displacement of suspected "enemies of the revolution" – especially in Tawergha.

Reports described Tawergha, near Misrata, as a "ghost town" – 30,000 residents had been driven out of their homes in what looked like an act of revenge and collective punishment carried out by anti-Gaddafi fighters.

Addressing such violations, the report quotes a senior military commander in Tripoli, who says: "What I fear most now are the revolutionaries themselves." The group's plan to follow up today's report with similar investigations in Syria and Yemen.

[SA's UN diplomat wants Libya Nato probe | News24](#)

<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/SAs-UN-diplomat-wants-Libya-Nato-probe-20120105>

• SA's UN diplomat wants Libya Nato probe

2012-01-05 08:10

- New York - The incoming UN Security Council president called on Wednesday for an investigation into human rights abuses committed during Nato's bombing campaign to oust Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

South Africa's UN Ambassador Baso Sangqu, who holds the rotating Security Council presidency for January, said he believed Nato overstepped its mandate enforcing a no-fly zone, killing an untold number of innocent civilians.

- "We were alive to the fact that the implementation of the resolution itself would have its own problems, but we now hear strong voices that talk about many mistakes that were made," Sangqu said. "They were supposed to be

precision strikes, but it was clear that those were not that precise."

Sangqu said the UN human rights officials are currently conducting investigations on the ground, but demanded that they must look at all parties involved.

"There must be investigations of human rights abuses in Libya across the board: by Gaddafi regime supporters, by the rebels, by Nato, anybody who was involved in that conflict as mandated by the resolution 1973 and 1970 should be held accountable especially those that were mandated," Sangqu said.

- Sangqu, who said he was speaking in his capacity as South Africa's ambassador, said he believed the Security Council resolution that his country supported only a no-fly zone but did not mean "regime change or anything else".

Sangqu's remarks echoed a similar call by Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, who recently expressed unhappiness with Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon over the UN chief's comment that Nato acted within its mandate in its bombing campaign in Libya.

Russia has also called for an independent UN investigation of civilian casualties. Syria's President Bashar Assad is a close Russian ally.

- Nato spokesperson Oana Lungescu denied that the alliance exceeded its mandate or that the bombing resulted in a large number of civilian casualties.

"Throughout the operation, we took every precaution to minimise the risk to civilians with solid intelligence, a very strict target selection and precision-guided munition," Lungescu said, speaking from Belgium.

"And we repeatedly warned civilians to stay away from military installations and equipment. We did everything we could to reduce the risk, while also making clear that in an air campaign that risk can never be zero."

- AP

[UN diplomat wants Libya NATO investigation - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/un-diplomat-wants-libya-nato-investigation-205355545.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/un-diplomat-wants-libya-nato-investigation-205355545.html>

• UN diplomat wants Libya NATO investigation



By MICHAEL ASTOR | AP

- UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The incoming U.N. Security Council president called Wednesday for an investigation into human rights abuses committed during NATO's bombing campaign to oust Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

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[FAIR Blog » Blog Archive » Now It Can Be Told: Libyan Civilian Deaths](http://www.fair.org/blog/2011/12/19/now-it-can-be-told-libyan-civilian-deaths)

<http://www.fair.org/blog/2011/12/19/now-it-can-be-told-libyan-civilian-deaths>

• Now It Can Be Told: Libyan Civilian Deaths

12/19/2011 by Peter Hart

- The Sunday **New York Times** (12/18/11) featured a powerful investigation of civilian casualties resulting from the NATO war in Libya--casualties that, to hear NATO officials tell it, maybe don't even exist.

The **Times'** [C.J. Chivers](#) and Eric Schmitt report:

But an on-the-ground examination by **The New York Times** of airstrike sites across Libya--including interviews with survivors, doctors and witnesses, and the collection of munitions remnants, medical reports, death certificates and photographs--found credible accounts of dozens of civilians killed by NATO in many distinct attacks. The victims, including at least 29 women or children, often had been asleep in homes when the ordnance hit.

- The **Times** even took its research--based on a small number of incidents--to NATO, which seemed to change its story immediately:

Two weeks after being provided a 27-page memorandum from the **Times** containing extensive details of nine separate attacks in which evidence indicated that allied planes had killed or wounded unintended victims, NATO modified its stance.

"From what you have gathered on the ground, it appears that innocent civilians may have been killed or injured, despite all the care and precision," said Oana Lungescu, a spokeswoman for NATO headquarters in Brussels. "We deeply regret any loss of life."

The **Times** reports that it "found significant damage to civilian infrastructure from certain attacks for which a rationale was not evident or risks to civilians were clear." The paper also noted that many witnesses talked about "warplanes restriking targets minutes after a first attack, a practice that imperiled, and sometimes killed, civilians rushing to the wounded." That is a tactic often associated with terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda.

- The **Times** also offers a sickening glimpse into the denial of NATO leaders after civilians were killed in an airstrike in Tripoli:

Initially, NATO almost acknowledged its mistake. "A military missile site was the intended target," an alliance statement said soon after. "There may have been a weapons system failure which may have caused a number of civilian casualties."

Then it backtracked. Kristele Younes, director of field operations for Civic, the victims' group, examined the site and delivered her findings to NATO. She met a cold response. "They said, 'We have no confirmed reports of civilian casualties,'" Ms. Younes said.

The reason, she said, was that **the alliance had created its own definition for "confirmed": Only a death that NATO itself investigated and corroborated could be called confirmed. But because the alliance declined to investigate allegations, its casualty tally by definition could not budge--from zero.**

- If you recall the corporate media coverage of the war while it was happening, Libyan leaders were [churning out](#) laughably clumsy propaganda about civilian deaths. "Libya Stokes Its Machine Generating Propaganda" was the June 7 headline of a **New York Times** story by [John Burns](#), who scoffed at the "nightly propaganda tour" of the Libyan capitol. It seemed obvious at the time that Burns and his ilk were offended by the Libyan government's inability to lie as effectively as the NATO generals.
- The **Times** also investigated August airstrikes that it termed "NATO's bloodiest known accidents in the war"--a series of strikes on buildings in the town of Majer:

The attack began with a series of 500-pound laser-guided bombs, called GBU-12s, ordnance remnants suggest. The first house, owned by Ali Hamid Gafez, 61, was crowded with Mr. Gafez's relatives, who had been dislocated by the war, he and his neighbors said.

The bomb destroyed the second floor and much of the first. Five women and seven children were killed; several more people were wounded, including Mr. Gafez's wife, whose her lower left leg had to be amputated, the doctor who performed the procedure said.

Minutes later, NATO aircraft attacked two buildings in a second compound, owned by brothers in the Jarud family. Four people were killed, the family said.

Several minutes after the first strikes, as neighbors rushed to dig for victims, another bomb struck. The blast killed 18 civilians, both families said.

The death toll has been a source of confusion. The Qaddafi government said 85 civilians died. That claim does not seem to be credible. With the Qaddafi propaganda machine now gone, an official list of dead, issued by the new government, includes 35 victims, among them the late-term fetus of a fatally wounded woman the Gafez family said went into labor as she died.

The Zlitan hospital confirmed 34 deaths. Five doctors there also told of treating dozens of wounded people, including many women and children.

- The airstrikes in Majer were discussed by FAIR in an [August 18 media advisory](#), where it was noted that several reports talked about a death toll of about 30. The deaths were barely covered at all. As we pointed out, the Paper of Record did not think much at the time:

The **New York Times** (8/10/11) ran a 170-word version of a **Reuters** dispatch which noted: "There was no evidence of weapons at the farmhouses, but there were no bodies there, either. Nor was there blood."

Corporate media were more offended by inflated Libyan claims about civilian casualties than they were about the false denials coming from the people doing the killing. What's worse, to kill people and then deny that you did so, or to overstate how many people your enemies were killing? Many reporters--too many--seemed to think the latter was the more serious crime.

[2011 Difficult for UN Security Council Unity | News | English](#)

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/2011-was-Difficult-for-UN-Security-Council-Unity-136186003.html>

- December 24, 2011

2011 Difficult for UN Security Council Unity

Margaret Besheer | United Nations

- Growing acrimony among the permanent five members of the U.N. Security Council is jeopardizing action on serious issues including the council's ability to send a strong signal on the situation in Syria. From the United Nations, Margaret Besheer reports 2011 has been a difficult year for the 15-member council and tensions among the permanent five could make consensus-building in 2012 a challenge.

The different political ideologies of the permanent five members - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States - have always made for an interesting dynamic on the U.N. Security Council. But this year, relations among the five have frayed over authorization of the NATO mission to protect Libyan citizens and a difference of opinion about events in Syria where the U.N. says more than 5,000 people have died during a government crackdown on political dissenters.

- The divisions among the so-called P5 became even clearer this week, when the Russian, American and French ambassadors took to the microphones after a meeting on Libya Thursday.

The Russian Ambassador demanded an independent investigation into the possibility that NATO bombings caused the deaths of some Libyan civilians. His American and French counterparts said he was seeking only to divert attention from events in Syria, an ally of Russia.

U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice told reporters that NATO's actions saved tens of thousands of Libyan lives - an accomplishment she said that should be celebrated - and she chided her Russian counterpart.

- "If the Libyans want to work with NATO to investigate any concerns they have, we are more than willing to do that," said Rice. "I think it is notable that we have not heard that call from the Libyan government. So let us see this for what it is - it is duplicative, it is redundant, it is superfluous, and it is a stunt. And if others want to go along with it they can, but I did not hear a majority of the members of the council indicate they think this is necessary."

Her French counterpart, Gérard Araud, noted that there are already two on-going investigations into how the Libyan crisis played out - one is being conducted by the U.N. Human Rights Council and the other by the International Criminal Court - and he brought the conversation back to Syria.

"There are two on-going investigations, so why ask for a third one while we do not have any investigation committee in Syria when in the last 3 to 4 days more than 250 people have been killed," noted Araud. "This is a bit strange. So we can say that we have seen today one more ploy."

- On Friday, Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, who is president of the council this month, expressed his frustration with his colleagues at a hastily called news conference. He said the growing acrimony among the P5 is affecting the council's work.

"I am worried. It has been my fifth and toughest presidency. I think that as a council we are not moving in a good direction," Churkin said. "There is a lot of nervousness, a lot of expectations that things are going to be done my way or no other way. That what I need to have I must have now, no objections entertained or no other views are entertained. I don't think this is a good way to work in the council. I think that if this trend were to continue it might seriously hurt the ability of the Security Council to work."

He said he does not know how to reverse this negative trend and said that even on the smallest issues there have

been disagreements.

- Some council members say the Libya resolution has had a lasting impact on how some council members approach matters such as Syria and Yemen, making them fearful of directly or indirectly authorizing outside intervention. Other diplomats say it is just a convenient excuse to do nothing.

After Friday's press conference, Ambassador Rice tweeted a friendly holiday message to Ambassador Churkin, but her spokesman tweeted a photo of a storybook character who steals Christmas with the face of the Russian diplomat super-imposed over the character's face.

As 2011 ends on a rocky note, it remains to be seen how the five powers will work together in the new year. Meanwhile, the council's draft resolution on Syria hangs in the balance as negotiations continue in this tense atmosphere.

[The Press Association: Russia and US in Libya bombing row](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALEqM5iDBgVGw5o8jn9dyoVy0BoV9R6k4A?docId=N0613771324604087134A)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALEqM5iDBgVGw5o8jn9dyoVy0BoV9R6k4A?docId=N0613771324604087134A>

- Russia and US in Libya bombing row

(UKPA)

- Russia and the US have clashed at the United Nations over Nato's bombing campaign in Libya.

Russia urged the UN Security Council to investigate civilian deaths from the campaign - a move the United States immediately dismissed as "a cheap stunt" to distract from Moscow's failure to condemn the Syrian government's continued killing of protesters.

The sharp exchange reflected the deep division in the council over the Nato campaign which the US, Britain, France, Germany and others hailed for saving hundreds of thousands of Libyan lives, but which Russia, China and the African Union have criticised strongly.

Russia and its supporters say Nato misused the limited security council resolution imposing a no-fly zone and authorising the protection of civilians as a pretext to promote regime change in Libya.

Libya's long-time dictator Muammar Gaddafi was ousted after 42 years, captured and killed in October.

Russia's UN ambassador Vitaly Churkin said a council-mandated investigation was essential "given the fact that initially we were led to believe by Nato leaders there are zero civilian casualties of their bombing campaign".

- US ambassador Susan Rice, who stepped to the microphone after Mr Churkin, responded: "Oh, the bombast and bogus claims. Is everyone sufficiently distracted from Syria now and the killing that is happening before our very eyes?"

"I think it's not an exaggeration to say that this is something of a cheap stunt to divert attention from other issues and to obscure the success of Nato and its partners - and indeed the security council - in protecting the people of Libya."

France's UN ambassador Gerard Araud, standing beside her, said there were two continuing investigations of Nato's actions in Libya, one by the UN Human Rights Council which is due to report in March, and the second by the International Criminal Court.

"We are not talking about years ... and in the two cases they are absolutely competent to handle the Nato military operations," he said. "So why ask for a third one while we don't have any investigation committee in Syria, when in the last three to four days more than 250 people have been killed?"

[U.N. chief defends NATO from critics of Libya war | Reuters](http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/14/us-libya-nato-un-idUSTRE7BD20C20111214)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/14/us-libya-nato-un-idUSTRE7BD20C20111214>

- U.N. chief defends NATO from critics of Libya war
- By [Louis Charbonneau](#)

UNITED NATIONS | Wed Dec 14, 2011

- (Reuters) - U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday defended NATO against criticism from Russia, [China](#) and other countries, which accuse the alliance of overstepping its U.N. mandate to protect civilians in Libya.

It was an unusual move by the cautious head of the United Nations, who will complete his first five-year term at the end of the month and begin his second term in January. Ban has rarely taken public positions that pit him with some permanent members of the 15-nation Security Council against others.

- "Security Council resolution 1973, I believe, was strictly enforced within the limit, within the mandate," Ban told reporters in New York. "This military operation done by the NATO forces was strictly within (resolution) 1973."

"I believe this is what we have seen, and there should be no misunderstanding on that," he said.

Resolution 1973, adopted in March 2011, authorized U.N. member states to impose a no-fly zone over Libya and take "all necessary measures" to protect civilians threatened by the government's crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators inspired by "Arab Spring" uprisings in [Tunisia](#) and Egypt.

- Russia, China, India, [Brazil](#) and South Africa -- the so-called BRICS nations -- have repeatedly accused NATO of using

the mandate to protect civilians as a cover to pursue regime change by aiding rebel forces who ousted and eventually killed Libya's long-time leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The United States, Britain, [France](#) and other NATO members have defended NATO, which says it adhered strictly to its Security Council mandate during its 8-month military operation, in which Britain and France launched repeated air strikes against Gaddafi's forces.

The United States was initially at the forefront of NATO's Libya operation alongside France and Britain, but later took a lower-profile role focusing on activities such as real-time intelligence gathering and surveillance.

- **BAN URGES ACTION ON SYRIA**

Ban said none of the Arab leaders ousted during the Arab Spring uprisings were removed with outside help.

"These changes of regime were done by the people, not by the intervention of any foreign forces, including the United Nations," Ban said.

In addition to Gaddafi, the long-serving presidents of Tunisia and Egypt were forced out, paving the way for elections that Western nations hope will install democratic governments. Yemen's president was also forced to cede power to his deputy.

- Ban said he was pleased that the concept of taking action to protect civilians -- often referred to as the "responsibility to protect" or R2P -- appeared to be gaining momentum.

But he reiterated that some kind of concerted international action was needed on [Syria](#), where the United Nations says more than 5,000 civilians have been killed in a government crackdown on pro-democracy protesters this year.

"This cannot go on," he said. "In the name of humanity, it is time for the international community to act."

Last month, [Russia](#) and China vetoed a European-drafted Security Council resolution that would have condemned the Syrian clampdown and threatened President Bashar al-Assad's government with possible sanctions.

[NATO rejects criticism over Libya action](#)

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/316476>

- NATO rejects criticism over Libya action
- By [Katerina Nikolas](#)
Dec 21, 2011
- Following Ban Ki-moon's strong defence of NATO action in Libya last week, NATO has now spoken out in its own defence, insisting its intervention saved civilian lives.

NATO has responded to criticism over its actions in Libya, following demands by Russia's UN envoy Vitaly Churkin that claims of civilian deaths caused by NATO air-strikes should be examined. NATO immediately defended its actions on Tuesday, stating it fulfilled its remit to save lives.

- [En.rian](#) reported that NATO Spokesperson Oana Lungescu said

"We took every precaution to minimize the risk to civilians with solid intelligence, a very strict target selection and precision-guided munitions. And we repeatedly warned civilians to stay away from military installations and equipment."

She added "Our mission for Libya saved countless lives and we have regularly informed the United Nations on its conduct in full compliance with UNSCR 1973."

Just one week ago U.N. General Secretary Bin Ki-Moon also sprung to the defence of NATO concerning the Libya mission. This followed repeated accusations by the BRICS nations that NATO had overstepped its remit of protecting civilians through a no fly zone and openly took sides in a civil war, assisting the rebels to overthrow the existing sovereign regime of Col. Muammar Gaddafi. Ban insisted that regime change was achieved through the efforts of the Libyan people rather than the intervention of NATO.

- According to [Reuters](#) Ban said

"Security Council resolution 1973, I believe, was strictly enforced within the limit, within the mandate," Ban told reporters in New York. "This military operation done by the NATO forces was strictly within (resolution) 1973."

Lungescu claims it is up to the new Libyan authorities to investigate any claims of civilian casualties during the civil war. However, the authorities have expressed their disinterest in war crimes unless allegedly committed by Gaddafi loyalists, by continuing to ignore the [atrocities](#) that are still being committed by former NATO-backed rebels. Notably there is no NATO intervention to prevent the ongoing murder and torture of civilians in post-war Libya.

[Biggest success? NATO proud of Libya op which killed thousands — RT](#)

<http://rt.com/news/nato-libya-operation-success-999>

- **Biggest success? NATO proud of Libya op which killed thousands**

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Published: 28 October, 2011

- Libyans wave the revolution flag on top of a tank as weapons and other items belonging to the former regime are displayed in Misrata (AFP Photo / PHILIPPE DESMAZES)
- With Gaddafi dead and its "military job now done," NATO has declared its campaign in Libya one of the "most successful in NATO history." However, untold casualties and a country devastated by war call into question the alliance's notion of success.

Coming through on last week's promise to end military operations in Libya, on Friday NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen declared the military operation in Libya would be wrapped up on October 31, the Associated Press (AP) reports.

His announcement came a day after the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution to lift the no-fly zone over Libya.

Speaking from Brussels, Rasmussen said that following the death of Gaddafi, military operations were able to wind down quickly, noting triumphantly that "*Operation Unified Protector is one of the most successful in NATO history*," as cited by AP.

US President Barack Obama was equally full of praise for the operation. Speaking on the popular late night talk show The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Obama told the host operations in Libya "*only cost us a billion dollars*" and no US troops were killed or injured.

• The price of success

Speaking on March 31, Bishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli, reported that "*the so-called humanitarian air raids have taken the lives of dozens of civilians in various areas of Tripoli*." The senior cleric went on to say "*in the district of Buslim, a building collapsed because of the bombing, killing 40 people*," as cited by Agenzia Fedes, the information service of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

However, despite the decision to turn a blind eye to the casualty figures, one of the few instances the alliance could not deny culpability in was a June 19 NATO missile strike that resulted in the deaths of nine civilians.

Attacks of this nature were happening on a daily basis throughout the intense bombing campaign.

- Speaking in September, the health minister in the new Libyan government estimated that at least 30,000 people had been killed and 50,000 wounded during the first six months of the war. Some, however, have estimated that the real figure could be much higher.

Writing back in September, Thomas C. Mountain, an independent journalist currently living in Africa who was a member of the 1st US Peace Delegation to Libya in 1987, estimated that NATO had dropped over 30,000 bombs on Libya, with an average of "*two civilians killed in each attack*." Thus, Mountain has estimated that some 60,000 Libyan civilians had been killed by NATO air strikes alone by the end of August.

Shortly thereafter, when rebel forces began the siege of Sirte, Moussa Ibrahim, a spokesman for the now-deceased Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, told Reuters via telephone on September 19 that "*in the last 17 days, more than 2,000 residents of the city of Sirte were killed in NATO air strikes*."

As of today, some 26,000 NATO sorties and 9,600 strike missions have been conducted by NATO, with an average of four bombs used per attack.

• A country in ruins

Though it may never be known just how many died in "the most successful operation in NATO history," the alliance has shown little interest in rebuilding a nation that has in many ways been wrecked by its seven-month military campaign.

According to Palestinian human rights activist Shawan Jabarin, "*The military operation damaged everything in Libya, not just Gaddafi and his regime, but the society [as well]*."

Former MI5 agent Annie Machon went further, telling RT that NATO's intervention had plunged Libya back into the Stone Age.

- "*They've had free education, free health, they could study abroad. When they got married they got a certain amount of money. So they were rather the envy of many other citizens of African countries. Now, of course, since NATO's humanitarian intervention, the infrastructure of their country has been bombed back to the Stone Age*," Machon asserted.

"*They will not have the same quality of life. Women probably will not have the same degree of emancipation under any new transitional government. The national wealth is probably going to be siphoned off by Western corporations. Perhaps the standard of living in Libya might have been slightly higher than it is now in America and the UK with the recession*," she concluded.

Outside of the damage done to Libya's infrastructure and economy, Thursday's UN resolution also expressed "*concern at the proliferation of arms in Libya and its potential impact on regional peace and security*," as cited by Reuters.

As the circumstances surrounding Muammar Gaddafi's death remain a mystery following his capture by a mob on the streets of Sirte, analysts fear that armed groups answering to no central authority could prove to be the new ruling model for some time to come in NATO's newly-liberated Libya.

[Libya / Commission of Inquiry concludes first part of investigations in Libya, news, StarAfrica.com](http://www.starafrika.com/en/news/detail-news/view/libya-commission-of-inquiry-concludes-209725.html)

<http://www.starafrika.com/en/news/detail-news/view/libya-commission-of-inquiry-concludes-209725.html>

• **Libya / Commission of Inquiry concludes first part of investigations in Libya**

TRIPOLI, Libya, December 20, 2011/African Press Organization (APO)/ -- The United Nations

- TRIPOLI, Libya, December 20, 2011/African Press Organization (APO)/ -- The United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Libya visited Tripoli in Libya from 31 November to 16 December 2011 as part of its continuing investigations into serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict in the country.

"We were pleased to receive assurances of the Government's continued commitment to human rights, and we are encouraged by the initial steps the Government is taking to address the human rights violations that occurred during the recent conflict," said Judge Philippe Kirsch, Chairperson of the Commission of Inquiry.

During their visit, Commissioners met with the Chairman of the National Transitional Council and other senior officials in the Libyan Government. They also met with representatives of non-governmental organizations and interviewed detainees at Matiga detention facility.

"The Commission has been investigating, as per its mandate, serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Gaddafi regime, as well as other forces involved in the conflict," said Judge Kirsch.

The Commissioners and investigators also visited a site where alleged extrajudicial killings were committed by Gaddafi forces in Tripoli and received testimony about other serious violations during their visit.

The Commission will return to Libya in January 2012 to continue its investigations in Ajdabiya, Benghazi, Bani Walid, Brega, Misratah, Nalut, Sirte, Yefren and Zintan, and is confident that it will receive the same cooperation from the Libyan authorities as it has received during this investigative mission.

• BACKGROUND

The UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Libya was established by the Human Rights Council pursuant to resolution S 15/1 of 25 February 2011. The Human Rights Council requested the Commission to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in Libya, to establish the facts and circumstances of such violations and of the crimes perpetrated and, where possible to identify those responsible, to make recommendations, in particular on accountability measures, all with a view to ensuring that those individuals responsible are held accountable.

The Commissioners are Judge Philippe Kirsch (Chair), Prof. Cherif M. Bassiouni and Ms Asma Khader. The Commission presented its first report to the Human Rights Council in June 2011 (A/HRC/17/44). The Human Rights Council extended the mandate of the Commission (resolution A/HRC/17/L.3) and requested it to present an oral update in September 2011 and its final report on 9 March 2012.

Provided by PR Newswire

[AFP: Russia demands NATO inquiry of Libya civilian deaths](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iswq8ZE4cflqvRzuI4qwM3OCVIDw?docId=CNG.c88e2f63c902c5dde153e9202f2d51aa.4f1)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iswq8ZE4cflqvRzuI4qwM3OCVIDw?docId=CNG.c88e2f63c902c5dde153e9202f2d51aa.4f1>

- Russia demands NATO inquiry of Libya civilian deaths

By Tim Witcher (AFP)

- UNITED NATIONS — Russia stepped up demands for NATO to account for civilian deaths from the air strike campaign which led to the downfall of Libyan strongman Moamer Kadhafi.

The campaign by Britain, France, the United States and their allies has severely divided the UN Security Council with

NATO's opponents blaming the strikes for the failure to condemn Syria's clampdown on demonstrators.

Russia's UN envoy Vitaly Churkin said he would take up with the UN Security Council this week estimates given by The New York Times that the NATO air attacks this year killed between 40 and more than 70 people in Libya.

Churkin also criticized UN leader Ban Ki-moon for supporting the strikes by the United States, Britain, France and its allies against Kadhafi targets after the strongman's clampdown on opposition protests.

- "We hope that NATO is going to revisit this entire problem, is going to investigate this matter," Churkin told reporters.

"Unfortunately NATO adopted a pure propaganda stand claiming zero civilian casualties in Libya which was completely implausible first of all and secondly not true," said the envoy.

"To avoid any misunderstanding this issue has to be faced squarely and seriously and needs to be investigated," he added.

- NATO leaders have said that while they regret any civilian deaths, they have no figures for the number of casualties for the campaign, which started after the UN Security Council passed resolutions in February and March allowing sanctions against Kadhafi.

Russia, China, Brazil, India and South Africa abstained in the vote allowing military action to protect civilians and have since frequently complained that NATO overstepped the resolutions to deliberately bring down Kadhafi.

- The NATO allies have insisted they remained within the UN resolutions and were backed last week by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Churkin said that it was "cruel and cynical" for the victims of the Libya strikes to be told that nothing had happened.

Last week, Ban said that NATO had acted "strictly" within UN resolution 1973 passed in March on military operations. He said he had stressed to NATO that there should be no civilian casualties and added: "I believe that this is what we have seen and there should be no misunderstanding on that."

Churkin replied that the UN leadership "should not throw its weight around when issues of such importance are being debated within the Security Council. Only the Security Council can be the judge of whether its resolutions have been faithfully implemented."

- The Russian envoy said he would raise the case on Thursday when Libya is discussed by the Security Council and in further meetings.

Russia and China have partly blamed the Libya campaign for their refusal to allow Security Council action against Syria.

[Sympathy, but little else, for Libyan civilians killed by NATO - The Globe and Mail](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/sympathy-but-little-else-for-libyan-civilians-killed-by-nato/article2275674/?utm_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm_source=Home&utm_content=2275674)

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/sympathy-but-little-else-for-libyan-civilians-killed-by-nato/article2275674/?utm_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm_source=Home&utm_content=2275674

• Sympathy, but little else, for Libyan civilians killed by NATO

greg mcarthur AND patrick brethour

From Monday's Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Dec. 18, 2011

- The revelation that dozens of Libyan civilians were killed in NATO air strikes, contrary to earlier claims by the military alliance that the campaign had incurred minimal civilian casualties, has prompted a muted response from Canadian politicians and military leaders.

A New York Times investigation, which involved visits to more than 25 Libyan bombing sites – as well as interviews with survivors, doctors and an analysis of munitions – found that at least 40 civilians were killed during the seven-month campaign, which has been held up by NATO as a model for future interventions. As recently as November, the secretary-general of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said: "We have carried out this operation very carefully, without confirmed civilian casualties."

- The discovery of previously unrecorded deaths garnered sympathy, but not ire, from the Canadian government, opposition politicians and the Libyan-Canadian community.
- A spokesman for Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird said he could not confirm any of the numbers as reported by the Times. (NATO acknowledged to the Times, after reviewing the newspaper's findings, that there had been unaccounted civilian deaths.)

"Of course, we always regret the loss of innocent life, but note that the people of Libya have praised NATO for the care it took in protecting civilians from the Qadhafi regime," Mr. Baird's spokesman, Joseph Lavoie, said in an e-mailed statement.

Adel Esayed, president of the Canadian-Libyan Council, which was formed during the revolution to bring awareness to the rebels' cause, said he was not surprised by the deaths even if they had been omitted from the war's official record.

- "We believe that NATO did their best to target the military installations," said Mr. Esayed. "If anything went wrong, I

don't blame them. They were there for the Libyan people."

The Department of National Defence declined to comment, explaining it was a matter for NATO to address. Lieutenant-General Charles Bouchard, the Canadian who served as commander of the mission in Libya, had previously acknowledged in an interview with The Globe and Mail in October that civilian deaths must have occurred. "Any time there was a civilian death and we caused it, it got to me," he said.

Gen. Bouchard is on leave and could not be reached for comment Sunday.

The Times investigation raised questions about the effectiveness of NATO's post-conflict reporting and its capacity to investigate allegations of civilian casualties. Commanders are expected to file a "lessons-learned" report to NATO headquarters in February, but it's unclear how the alliance can address mistakes it has never acknowledged.

- Kristele Younes, a field director for Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict, investigated the errant bombing of a three-storey house in Tripoli that killed a couple and their two children, aged 2 and 7, in June. When Ms. Younes reported the casualties to the alliance, she says she was told that the deaths would still go unrecognized because NATO hadn't confirmed the deaths itself – even though it declined to investigate.
- "The position was absurd," Ms. Younes told the newspaper. "But they made it very clear: there was no appetite within NATO to look at these incidents."

Roland Paris, an international security expert at the University of Ottawa, said the deaths are, on their face, not a large number of casualties for a campaign that saw more than 7,000 combat sorties. "There is no such thing as a clean and surgical war," he said.

But Mr. Paris said NATO has an obligation to investigate, in order to determine if mistakes were made that can be avoided in any future bombing campaign.

The NDP said it plans to raise the issue when Parliament resumes, and that the party believes NATO should fully investigate. Liberal defence critic John McKay said the revelations are a reminder of the "unhappy calculus" of the Libyan campaign, with civilian casualties an unfortunate result of the need to displace a dictator.

With a report from Les Perreux

[Scores of Unintended Casualties in NATO War in Libya - NYTimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/18/world/africa/scores-of-unintended-casualties-in-nato-war-in-libya.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all)

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/18/world/africa/scores-of-unintended-casualties-in-nato-war-in-libya.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all

- In Strikes on Libya by NATO, an Unspoken Civilian Toll



- Tyler Hicks/The New York Times

When NATO bombs hit an apartment building in Surt, Libya, on Sept. 16, Mahmoud Zarog Massoud's wife was killed. [More Photos »](#)

- By [C. J. CHIVERS](#) and [ERIC SCHMITT](#)

Published: December 17, 2011

- TRIPOLI, Libya — NATO's seven-month air campaign in Libya, hailed by the alliance and many Libyans for blunting a lethal crackdown by Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi and helping to push him from power, came with an unrecognized toll: scores of civilian casualties the alliance has long refused to acknowledge or investigate.
- By NATO's telling during the war, and in statements since sorties ended on Oct. 31, the alliance-led operation was nearly flawless — a model air war that used high technology, meticulous planning and restraint to protect civilians from

Colonel Qaddafi's troops, which was the alliance's mandate.

"We have carried out this operation very carefully, without confirmed civilian casualties," the secretary general of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said in November.

- But an on-the-ground examination by The New York Times of airstrike sites across Libya — including interviews with survivors, doctors and witnesses, and the collection of munitions remnants, medical reports, death certificates and photographs — found credible accounts of dozens of civilians killed by NATO in many distinct attacks. The victims, including at least 29 women or children, often had been asleep in homes when the ordnance hit.

In all, at least 40 civilians, and perhaps more than 70, were killed by NATO at these sites, available evidence suggests. While that total is not high compared with other conflicts in which Western powers have relied heavily on air power, and less than the exaggerated accounts circulated by the Qaddafi government,

- it is also not a complete accounting. Survivors and doctors working for the anti-Qaddafi interim authorities point to dozens more civilians wounded in these and other strikes, and they referred reporters to other sites where civilian casualties were suspected.
- Two weeks after being provided a 27-page memorandum from The Times containing extensive details of nine separate attacks in which evidence indicated that allied planes had killed or wounded unintended victims, NATO modified its stance.

"From what you have gathered on the ground, it appears that innocent civilians may have been killed or injured, despite all the care and precision," said Oana Lungescu, a spokeswoman for NATO headquarters in Brussels. "We deeply regret any loss of life."

- She added that NATO was in regular contact with the new Libyan government and that "we stand ready to work with the Libyan authorities to do what they feel is right."

NATO, however, deferred the responsibility of initiating any inquiry to Libya's interim authorities, whose survival and climb to power were made possible largely by the airstrike campaign. So far, Libyan leaders have expressed no interest in examining NATO's mistakes.

- The failure to thoroughly assess the civilian toll reduces the chances that allied forces, which are relying ever more heavily on air power rather than risking ground troops in overseas conflicts, will examine their Libyan experience to minimize collateral deaths elsewhere. Allied commanders have been ordered to submit a lessons-learned report to NATO headquarters in February. NATO's incuriosity about the many lethal accidents raises questions about how thorough that review will be.
- NATO's experience in Libya also reveals an attitude that initially prevailed in Afghanistan. There, NATO forces, led by the United States, tightened the rules of engagement for airstrikes and insisted on better targeting to reduce civilian deaths only after repeatedly ignoring or disputing accounts of airstrikes that left many civilians dead.
- In Libya, NATO's inattention to its unintended victims has also left many wounded civilians with little aid in the aftermath of the country's still-chaotic change in leadership.
- These victims include a boy blasted by debris in his face and right eye, a woman whose left leg was amputated, another whose foot and leg wounds left her disabled, a North Korean doctor whose left foot was crushed and his wife, who suffered a fractured skull.

The Times's investigation included visits to more than 25 sites, including in Tripoli, Surman, Mizdah, Zlitan, Ga'a, Majer, Ajdabiya, Misurata, Surt, Brega and Sabratha and near Benghazi. More than 150 targets — bunkers, buildings or vehicles — were hit at these places.

- NATO warplanes flew thousands of sorties that dropped 7,700 bombs or missiles; because The Times did not examine sites in several cities and towns where the air campaign was active, the casualty estimate could be low.
- There are indications that the alliance took many steps to avoid harming civilians, and often did not damage civilian infrastructure useful to Colonel Qaddafi's military. Elements of two American-led air campaigns in Iraq, in 1991 and 2003, appear to have been avoided, including attacks on electrical grids.
- Such steps spared civilians certain hardships and risks that accompanied previous Western air-to-ground operations. NATO also said that allied forces did not use [cluster munitions](#) or ordnance containing depleted uranium, both of which pose health and environmental risks, in Libya at any time.
- The alliance's fixed-wing aircraft dropped only laser- or satellite-guided weapons, said Col. Gregory Julian, a NATO spokesman; no so-called dumb bombs were used.

While the overwhelming preponderance of strikes seemed to have hit their targets without killing noncombatants, many factors contributed to a run of fatal mistakes. These included a technically faulty bomb, poor or dated intelligence and the near absence of experienced military personnel on the ground who could help direct airstrikes.

- The alliance's apparent presumption that residences thought to harbor pro-Qaddafi forces were not occupied by civilians repeatedly proved mistaken, the evidence suggests, posing a reminder to advocates of air power that no war is cost- or error-free.
- The investigation also found significant damage to civilian infrastructure from certain attacks for which a rationale was not evident or risks to civilians were clear. These included [strikes on warehouses that current anti-Qaddafi guards said contained only food](#), or near businesses or homes that were destroyed, including [an attack on a munitions bunker](#) beside a neighborhood that caused a large secondary explosion, scattering warheads and toxic rocket fuel.
- NATO has also not yet provided data to Libyans on the locations or types of unexploded ordnance from its strikes. At least two large weapons were present at sites visited by The Times. "This information is urgently needed," said Dr. Ali Yahya, chief surgeon at the Zlitan hospital.

Moreover, the scouring of one strike site found remnants of NATO munitions in a ruined building that an alliance spokesman explicitly said NATO did not attack.

- That mistake — a pair of strikes — killed 12 anti-Qaddafi fighters and nearly killed a civilian ambulance crew aiding wounded men. It underscored NATO's sometimes tenuous grasp of battle lines and raised questions about the forthrightness and accuracy of the alliance's public-relations campaign.

- The second strike pointed to a tactic that survivors at several sites recounted: [warplanes restriking targets minutes after a first attack](#), a practice that imperiled, and sometimes killed, civilians rushing to the wounded.
- Pressed about the dangers posed to noncombatants by such attacks, NATO said it would reconsider the tactic's rationale in its internal campaign review. "That's a valid point to take into consideration in future operations," Colonel Julian said.
- That statement is a shift in the alliance's stance. NATO's response to allegations of mistaken attacks had long been carefully worded denials and insistence that its operations were devised and supervised with exceptional care. Faced with credible allegations that it killed civilians, the alliance said it had neither the capacity for nor intention of investigating and often repeated that disputed strikes were sound.
- The alliance maintained this position even after two independent Western organizations — [Human Rights Watch](#) and the [Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict](#), or Civic — met privately with NATO officials and shared field research about mistakes, including, in some cases, victims' names and the dates and locations where they died.
- Organizations researching civilian deaths in Libya said that the alliance's resistance to making itself accountable and acknowledging mistakes amounted to poor public policy. "It's crystal clear that civilians died in NATO strikes," said Fred Abrahams, a researcher for Human Rights Watch. "But this whole campaign is shrouded by an atmosphere of impunity" and by NATO's and the Libyan authorities' mutually congratulatory statements.
- Mr. Abrahams added that the matter went beyond the need to assist civilians harmed by airstrikes, though he said that was important. At issue, he said, was "who is going to lose their lives in the next campaign because these errors and mistakes went unexamined, and no one learned from them?"
- Human Rights Watch and Civic also noted that the alliance's stance on civilian casualties it caused in Libya was at odds with its practices for so-called collateral damage in Afghanistan. There, public anger and political tension over fatal mistakes led NATO to adopt policies for investigating actions that caused civilian harm, including guidelines for expressing condolences and making small payments to victims or their families.

"You would think, and I did think, that all of the lessons learned from Afghanistan would have been transferred to Libya," said Sarah Holewinski, the executive director of Civic, which helped NATO devise its practices for Afghanistan. "But many of them didn't."

• Choosing Targets

When foreign militaries began attacking Libya's loyalists on March 19, the United States military, more experienced than NATO at directing large operations, coordinated the campaign. On March 31, the Americans transferred command to NATO.

Seven months later, the alliance had destroyed more than 5,900 military targets by means of roughly 9,700 strike sorties, according to its data, helping to dismantle the pro-Qaddafi military and militias. Warplanes from France, Britain, the United States, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Canada dropped ordnance. Two non-NATO nations, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, participated on a small scale.

- France carried out about a third of all strike sorties, Britain 21 percent and the United States 19 percent, according to data from each nation.

The attacks fell under two broad categories. So-called deliberate strikes were directed against fixed targets, like buildings or air-defense systems. These targets were selected and assigned to pilots before aircraft took off.

Deliberate strikes were planned to minimize risks to civilians, NATO said. In Naples, Italy, intelligence analysts and targeting specialists vetted proposed targets and compiled lists, which were sent to an operations center near Bologna, where targets were matched to specific aircraft and weapons.

- For some targets, like command bunkers, NATO said, it conducted long periods of surveillance first. Drones or other aircraft chronicled the daily routines at the sites, known as "patterns of life," until commanders felt confident that each target was valid.

Other considerations then came into play. Targeting specialists chose, for example, the angle of attack and time of day thought to pose the least risk to civilians. They would also consider questions of ordnance. These included the size and type of bomb, and its fuze.

Some fuzes briefly delay detonation of a bomb's high-explosive charge. This can allow ordnance to penetrate concrete and explode in an underground tunnel or bunker, or, alternately, to burrow into sand before exploding — reducing the blast wave, shrapnel and risk to people and property nearby.

- (NATO could also choose inert bombs, made of concrete, that can collapse buildings or shatter tanks with kinetic energy rather than an explosion. NATO said such weapons were used fewer than 10 times in the war.)
- Many early strikes were planned missions. But about two-thirds of all strikes, and most of the attacks late in the war, were another sort: dynamic strikes.

Dynamic strikes were against targets of opportunity. Crews on aerial patrols would spot or be told of a potential target, like suspected military vehicles. Then, if cleared by controllers in [Awacs](#) aircraft, they would attack.

- NATO said dynamic missions, too, were guided by practices meant to limit risks. On Oct. 24, Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard of Canada, the operation's commander, described a philosophy beyond careful target vetting or using only guided weapons: restraint. "Only when we had a clear shot would we take it," he said.

Colonel Julian, the spokesman, said there were hundreds of instances when pilots could have released ordnance but because of concerns for civilians they held fire. Col. Alain Pelletier, commander of seven Canadian CF-18 fighters that flew 946 strike sorties, said Canada installed a special computer software modification in its planes that allowed pilots to assess the likely blast radius around an intended target and to call off strikes if the technology warned they posed too great a risk to civilians.

Colonel Julian also said that NATO broadcast radio messages and that it dropped millions of leaflets to warn Libyans to stay away from likely military targets, a practice Libyan citizens across much of the country confirmed.

• A Blow to the Rebels

Civilians were killed by NATO within days of the alliance's intervention, the available evidence shows, beginning with one of the uglier mistakes of the air war: [the pummeling of a secret rebel armored convoy](#) that was advancing through the desert toward the Qaddafi forces' eastern front lines.

Having survived the first wave of air-to-ground attacks, the loyalists were taking steps to avoid attracting NATO bombs. They moved in smaller formations and sometimes set aside armored vehicles in favor of pickup trucks resembling those that rebels drove. Pilots suddenly had fewer targets.

On April 7, as the rebel armor lined up on a hill about 20 miles from Brega, NATO aircraft struck. In a series of attacks, laser-guided bombs stopped the formation, destroyed the rebels' armor and scattered the anti-Qaddafi fighters, killing several of them, survivors said.

- The attack continued as civilians, including ambulance crews, tried to converge on the craters and flames to aid the wounded. Three shepherds were among them.

As the shepherds approached over the sand, a bomb slammed in again, said one of them, Abdul Rahman Ali Suleiman Sudani. The blast knocked them over, he said. His two cousins were hit.

One, he said, was cut in half; the other had a gaping chest wound. Both died. Mr. Sudani and other relatives returned to the wreckage later and retrieved the remains for burial in Kufra. The men had died, he said, trying to help.

"We called their families in Sudan and told them, 'Your sons, they have passed away,'" he said.

Colonel Julian declined to discuss this episode but said that each time NATO aircraft returned to strike again was a distinct event and a distinct decision, and that it was not a general practice for NATO to "double tap" its targets.

This practice was reported several times by survivors at separate attacks and cited to explain why some civilians opted not to help at strike sites or bolted in fear soon after they did.

Colonel Julian said the tactic was likely to be included in NATO's internal review of the air campaign.

• **An Errant Strike**

NATO's planning or restraint did not protect the family of Ali Mukhar al-Gharari when his home was shattered in June by a phenomenon as old as air-to-ground war: errant ordnance.

A retiree in Tripoli, Mr. Gharari owned a three-story house he shared with his adult children and their families. Late on June 19 [a bomb struck it](#) squarely, collapsing the front side. The rubble buried a courtyard apartment, the family said, where Karima, Mr. Gharari's adult daughter, lived with her husband and two children, Jomana, 2, and Khaled, 7 months.

All four were killed, as was another of Mr. Gharari's adult children, Faruj, who was blasted from his second-floor bed to the rubble below, two of his brothers said. Eight other family members were wounded, one seriously.

- The Qaddafi government, given to exaggeration, claimed that nine civilians died in the airstrike, including a rescue worker electrocuted while clearing rubble. These deaths have not been independently corroborated. There has been no dispute about the Gharari deaths.

Initially, NATO almost acknowledged its mistake. "A military missile site was the intended target," an alliance statement said soon after. "There may have been a weapons system failure which may have caused a number of civilian casualties."

Then it backtracked. Kristele Younes, director of field operations for Civic, the victims' group, examined the site and delivered her findings to NATO. She met a cold response. "They said, 'We have no confirmed reports of civilian casualties,'" Ms. Younes said.

- The reason, she said, was that the alliance had created its own definition for "confirmed": only a death that NATO itself investigated and corroborated could be called confirmed. But because the alliance declined to investigate allegations, its casualty tally by definition could not budge — from zero.
- "The position was absurd," Ms. Younes said. "But they made it very clear: there was no appetite within NATO to look at these incidents."
- The position left the Gharari family disoriented, and in social jeopardy. Another of Mr. Gharari's sons, Mohammed, said the family supported the revolution. But since NATO's attack, other Libyans have labeled the family pro-Qaddafi. If NATO attacked the Ghararis' home, the street logic went, the alliance must have had a reason.
- Mohammed al-Gharari said he would accept an apology from NATO. He said he could even accept the mistake. "If this was an error from their control room, I will not say anything harsh, because that was our destiny," he said.

But he asked that NATO lift the dishonor from the family and set the record straight. "NATO should tell the truth," he said. "They should tell what happened, so everyone knows our family is innocent."

• **A 'Horrible Mistake'**

In the hours before his wife and two of their sons were killed, on Aug. 4, Mustafa Naji al-Morabit thought he had taken adequate precautions.

When Colonel Qaddafi's officers began meeting at a home next door in Zlitan, he moved his family. That was in July. The adjacent property, Mr. Morabit and his neighbors said, was owned by a loyalist doctor who hosted commanders who organized the local front.

About a month later, as rebels pressed near, the officers fled, Mr. Morabit said. He and his family returned home on Aug. 2, assuming that the danger had passed.

Calamity struck two days later. [A bomb roared down in the early morning quiet and slammed into their concrete home](#), causing its front to buckle.

- Mr. Morabit's wife, Eptisam Ali al-Barbar, died of a crushed skull. Two of their three sons — Mohammed, 6, and Moataz,

3 — were killed, too. Three toes on the left foot of Fatima Umar Mansour, Mr. Morabit's mother, were severed. Her lower left leg was snapped.

"We were just in our homes at night," she said, showing the swollen leg.

The destruction of their home showed that even with careful standards for target selection, mistakes occurred. Not only did NATO hit the wrong building, survivors and neighbors said, but it also hit it more than two days late.

- Mr. Morabit added a sorrowful detail. He suspected that the bomb was made of concrete; there seemed to be no fire or explosion when it struck, he said. NATO may have tried to minimize damage, he added, but the would-be benefits of its caution were lost. "I want to know why," he said. "NATO said they are so organized, that they are specialists. So why? Why this horrible mistake?"

It is not clear whether the mistake was made by the pilot or those who selected the target. NATO declined to answer questions about the strike.

- On Aug. 8, four days after destroying the Morabit home, NATO hit buildings occupied by civilians again, this time in Majer, according to survivors, doctors and independent investigators. [The strikes](#) were NATO's bloodiest known accidents in the war.

The attack began with a series of 500-pound laser-guided bombs, called GBU-12s, ordnance remnants suggest. The first house, owned by Ali Hamid Gafez, 61, was crowded with Mr. Gafez's relatives, who had been dislocated by the war, he and his neighbors said.

The bomb destroyed the second floor and much of the first. Five women and seven children were killed; several more people were wounded, including Mr. Gafez's wife, whose her lower left leg had to be amputated, the doctor who performed the procedure said.

- Minutes later, NATO aircraft attacked two buildings in a second compound, owned by brothers in the Jarud family. Four people were killed, the family said.

Several minutes after the first strikes, as neighbors rushed to dig for victims, another bomb struck. The blast killed 18 civilians, both families said.

The death toll has been a source of confusion. The Qaddafi government said 85 civilians died. That claim does not seem to be credible. With the Qaddafi propaganda machine now gone, an official list of dead, issued by the new government, includes 35 victims, among them the late-term fetus of a fatally wounded woman the Gafez family said went into labor as she died.

- The Zlitan hospital confirmed 34 deaths. Five doctors there also told of treating dozens of wounded people, including many women and children.

All 16 beds in the intensive-care unit were filled with severely wounded civilians, doctors said. Dr. Ahmad Thoboot, the hospital's co-director, said none of the victims, alive or dead, were in uniform. "There is no doubt," he said. "This is not fabricated. Civilians were killed."

Descriptions of the wounds underscored the difference between mistakes with typical ground-to-ground arms and the unforgiving nature of mistakes with 500-pound bombs, which create blast waves of an entirely different order.

- Dr. Mustafa Ekhal, a surgeon, said the wounds caused by NATO's bombs were far worse than those the staff had treated for months. "We have to tell the truth," he said. "What we saw that night was completely different."

In previous statements, NATO said it watched the homes carefully before attacking and saw "military staging areas." It also said that it reviewed the strikes and that claims of civilian casualties were not corroborated by "available factual information." When asked what this information was, the alliance did not provide it.

Mr. Gafez issued a challenge. An independent review of all prestrike surveillance video, he said, would prove NATO wrong. Only civilians were there, he said, and he demanded that the alliance release the video.

Ms. Younes said the dispute missed an essential point. Under NATO's targeting guidelines and in keeping with practices the alliance has repeatedly insisted that it followed, she said, if civilians were present, aircraft should not have attacked.

The initial findings on the Majer strikes, part of the United Nations' investigation into actions by all sides in Libya that harmed civilians, have raised questions about the legality of the attack under international humanitarian law, according to an official familiar with the investigation.

• Homes as Targets

NATO's strikes in Majer, one of five known attacks on apparently occupied residences, suggested a pattern. When residential targets were presumed to be used by loyalist forces, civilians were sometimes present — suggesting holes in NATO's "pattern of life" reviews and other forms of vetting.

[Airstrikes on June 20 in Surman leveled homes](#) owned by Maj. Gen. El-Khweldi el-Hamedi, a longtime confidant of Colonel Qaddafi and a member of his Revolutionary Council. NATO has said the family compound was used as command center.

The family's account, partly confirmed by rebels, claimed that the strikes killed 13 civilians and wounded six more. Local anti-Qaddafi fighters corroborated the deaths of four of those killed — one of the general's daughters-in-law and three of her children.

- General Hamedi was wounded and has taken refuge in Morocco, said his son Khaled. Khaled has filed a lawsuit against NATO, claiming that the attack was a crime. He said that he and his family were victims of rebel "fabrications," which attracted NATO bombs.

On Sept. 25, a smaller but [similar attack destroyed the residence of Brig. Gen. Musbah Diyab in Surt](#), neighbors and his family members said.

General Diyab, a distant cousin of Colonel Qaddafi, was killed. So were seven women and children who crowded into his home as rebels besieged the defenses of some of the Qaddafi loyalists' last holdouts, witnesses said.

- By this time, tables in Libya had turned. The remaining loyalists held almost no territory. They were a dwindling, disorganized lot. It was the anti-Qaddafi forces who endangered civilians they suspected of having sympathies for the dying government, residents of Surt said.
- On a recent afternoon, Mahmoud Zarog Massoud, his hand swollen with an infection from a wound, wandered the broken shell of [a seven-story apartment building in Surt, which was struck in mid-September](#). His apartment furniture had been blown about by the blast.

He approached the kitchen, where, he said, he and his wife had just broken their Ramadan fast when ordnance hit. "We were not thinking NATO would attack our home," he said.

Judging by the damage and munitions' remains, a bomb with a delayed fuze struck another wing of the building, burrowed into another apartment and exploded, blasting walls outward. Debris flew across the courtyard and through his kitchen's balcony door.

His wife, Aisha Abdujodil, was killed, both her arms severed, he said. Bloodstains still marked the floor and walls.

- Provided written questions, NATO declined to comment on the three strikes on homes in Surman and Surt.
- C. J. Chivers reported from Libya, and Eric Schmitt from Washington, Brussels and Naples, Italy.
- A version of this article appeared in print on December 18, 2011, on page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Libya's Civilian Toll, Denied by NATO.

[NATO Airstrikes in Libya - Video Library - The New York Times](#)

<http://video.nytimes.com/video/2011/12/17/world/africa/100000001231448/nato-air-strikes-in-libya.html>

[Anatomy of a NATO War Crime » Counterpunch: Tells the Facts, Names the Names](#)

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/12/16/anatomy-of-a-nato-war-crime>

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Return to Sorman

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Anatomy of a NATO War Crime

by FRANKLIN LAMB

Sorman, Libya

- It was a warm early Monday morning along the Libyan coast on June 20, 2011.

At approximately 0200 GMT the next day in NATO Headquarters in Brussels and 30 minutes later in its media center in Naples, staffers finished tabulating NATO's 92nd day of aerial attacks on Libya and began to post the data on its website (www.nato.int).

Twenty four hours earlier an Atlantic Alliance command unit, located approximately 30 miles off the Libyan coast, in a direct line with Malta, and NATO's targeting unit had signed off on 49 bombing missions for June 20, the last day of spring and the last day of NATO's original UN bombing mandate.

The authority for NATO's bombing, which far exceeded earlier estimates was claimed from the hastily adopted UN Security Council Resolutions 1970 and UNSCR 1973. UN resolutions 1970 & 1973 gave NATO UN Chapter 7 authority to enforce a no-fly zone over Libyan airspace, initially for 90 days which ironically ended the day before its bombing at Sorman.

- The two UN Security Council Resolutions were insisted upon by their main sponsors, France, the UK, Italy and the US who claimed that "a limited no-fly zone would protect Libya's civilian population from the wrath of the government of Libya's leader, Muammar Kaddafi." NATO requested and was granted two additional 90 days extensions to continue its Libyan mission which gave its air force until the end of 2011 to continue Operation Unified Protector.

It was early Monday morning, June 20, 2011.

Sorman Libya. A quiet and peaceful Libyan town, Sorman is located 45 miles west of Tripoli, near the Mediterranean coast, in the Zawiya District of the Tripolitania region in northwestern Libya. Many of the town's children grew up exploring the 3rd Century magnificent Roman ruins at nearby Zabratha. Some archeologists consider Zabratha, located almost in direct line with Rome across the Mediterranean, and built on a high cliff above the sea, as the most complete extant Roman architecture with only a small part of this large Roman city having been excavated. This observer has visited Zabratha a few times since the mid-1980s and each visit elicits more awe. Families from Sorman and nearby villages regularly visit and picnic there.

- In the early hours of June 20, 2011 it was dark in Sorman except for some muted half-moon light. A few dim street lights and some partially illuminated homes provided some light as residents began to rise and prepare for the Al Fajr ("Dawn") prayers.

At the homestead of Khaled K. El-Hamedi, the 37 year old President of the International Organization for Peace, Care & Relief (IOPCR), one of Libya's most active social service organizations everyone was asleep following a rambunctious birthday party for his three year old son. The Hamedi family members included Khaled's three year old son Khweldi, five year old daughter Khaleda, his pregnant wife Safa, his aunt Najia, and his six year old niece Salam, among others.

At NATO's Control and Command Center, the 49 bombing missions planned for early morning of June 20, included a target at Sorman, which would push the number of NATO reconnaissance sorties over Libya to 11,930. This number would become 26,500 by midnight on October 31, when NATO would end its air campaign. The day's bombing sorties would also bring the tally of rocket and bombing targets to 4,521. This figure would increase to more than 11,781 by late fall, when NATO was instructed to end OUP (Operation Unified Protector).

- **NATO prepares to bomb Sorman's "command and control center"**

Before the bombs were fired at Khaled K. al-Hamedi compound, NATO staff conducted a six-step process, the first of which was surveillance using the MQ-9 Reaper UAV, which sometimes is also used to fire missiles. Also above Sorman was a Predator drone with full-motion video. During June 19 and the early hours of June 20, the drones locked on the Hamedi homestead target and relayed updated information to NATO's command center.

The Hamedi home was not what NATO labels a "time-critical target" so there was plenty of time for its staff to transmit information about the site from unmanned reconnaissance aircraft to intelligence analysts. Almost certainly, according to a source at Jane's Weekly, NATO UAV's watched the Hamedi compound over a period of days and presumably observed part of the birthday party being held for three old Khweldi, the day before the order to bomb was issued.

- NATO Rules of Engagement for Operation Unified Protector, constitute a set of classified documents which present specific and detailed instructions about what is a legitimate target and who can approve the target, whether pre-planned or "on the fly" when a pilot happens upon a target of opportunity. The Sorman attack on the Hamedi home was planned as part of what NATO calls its "Joint Air Tasking Cycle (JATC)". A target development team put the Hamedi home on the June 20 daily list of targets. The team used a report from NATO intelligence analysts who determined that retired officer Khaled al Khweldi, Hamedi, one of the original members of the Gadhafi-led 1969 coup against King Idris in 1969, and a former member of the Al Fatah Revolution's Revolutionary Command Council was living on the property. His assassination had been ordered by NATO because they hoped to weaken the regime in some way even though the senior Hamedi was retired and had no decision making role in Libya.

On June 19, the day before the bombing attack on the Hamedi family at Sorman, NATO was obliged by its own regulations and by the international law of armed conflict to conduct a "potential for collateral damage review" of this mission. There is no evidence that this was every done.

- A requested US Congressional NATO Liaison Office review of the Sorman bombing, initially requested from Libya on August 2, was completed in early September 2011 and found no documentary evidence or other indication that anyone in NATO's Target Selection Unit, evaluated, discussed, or even considered the subject of potential civilian casualties at the Hamedi home in Sorman.

Following the green light to bomb the Hamedi home, the coordinates were fixed at 32°45'24"N 12°34'18"E. Specific aim points on the Hamedi property were chosen and eight bombs and missiles were readied and attached to the strike aircraft.

At Sorman, NATO used a variety of bombs and missiles including the "bunker busting" BLU-109 (Bomb Live Unit) which is designed to penetrate 18 feet of concrete. NATO also used the American MK series of 500 lb, (MK 81) 1000 lb, (MK-82) and the 2000 lb (MK-84) that Israel used so widely during its 2006 invasion of Lebanon.

- Following the inferno at Sorman, NATO denied responsibility but the next day NATO admitted carrying out an air strike somewhere in Sorman but denied that there were civilian deaths even as its drones filmed the scene close up. NATO's media office in Naples issued a statement claiming "A precision air strike was launched against a high-level command and control node in the Sorman area without collateral damage." NATO spokespersons also told Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch that "the facility was a legitimate military target and that all necessary precautions were taken before conducting the strike which minimized any potential risk of causing unnecessary casualties".
- The official NATO record of its bombing of Libya for June 20, 2011 reads as follows and remains unchanged:

"Allied Joint Force Command NAPLES, SHAPE, NATO HQ. Over the past 24 hours, NATO has conducted the following activities associated with Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR:

Air Operations Sorties conducted 20 JUNE: 149

Strike sorties conducted 20 JUNE: 52

Key Hits

20 JUNE: In the vicinity of Tripoli: 1 Command & Control Node, 8 Surface-To-Air Missile Launchers, 1 Surface-To-Air Missile Transport Vehicle. In the vicinity of Misratah: 3 Truck-Mounted Guns, 2 Self-Propelled Anti-Aircraft Guns, 1 Tank. In the vicinity of Tarhunah: 1 Military Equipment Storage Facility. In the vicinity of Al-Khums: 1 Military Vehicle Storage Facility. In the vicinity of Zintan: 1 Rocket Launcher."

Oddly, NATO records for June 20 as well as subsequent reports of bombing attacks listed for June 20th and June 21st in its daily logs have never included the bombing attack on Sorman or the attack on the Al-Hamedi residence which indisputably killed 15 civilians.

- Just before the bombs hit, eye witnesses, reported seeing red specks in the sky and then flashes of intense light, immediately followed by thunderous ear splitting blasts as eight American bombs and rockets pulverized their neighbor's homestead.

In an instant Khaled El-Hamedi's family was dead. The children were crushed, blown apart or shredded into pieces, along with friends and extended family members who had slept overnight.

Khaled was working late, attending meetings with displaced Libyans driven from their homes and urgently in need of IOPCR help. As he returned home, Khaled saw from his car window the sky light up and heard exploding bombs. He was frozen in horror as entered his property and observed rescue workers frantically digging and futilely trying to move the thick concrete slabs of his home hoping against hope that they would miraculously find survivors.

- Libyan government spokesman Mousa Ibrahim announced the death of 15 people, including three children, were killed at Sorman. He slammed the NATO bombing as a "cowardly terrorist act which cannot be justified." Investigators, who visited Sabratha hospital 10 kilometers from Sorman, saw nine bodies, including three young children. They also saw body parts including a child's head.

For those who visited the Al-Hamidi family compound following the NATO bombings, as this observer did less than a week after the crime as part of an international delegation, the scene was one of total devastation. Collapsed and blown apart concrete and tiled homes, small body parts, and bits of family belongings and memorabilia, trees, some blown over, others bending and nearly denuded of their foliage, dead, terrified and dying petting zoo animals, including exotic birds, ostrich, deer, small animals and large moose killed or left near death and most in a blind stupor staring blankly from what remained of their shelters while dying of wounds and from trauma.

- Outside one of the bombed houses I noticed crushed cartons of spaghetti pasta and cans of tomato sauce, stockpiled for distribution to the needy as part of the work of IOPCR during the summer and in preparation for the coming Holy month of Ramadan observances which includes doing performing charitable works and individual humanitarian acts.

Under growing pressure from the international community including NATO member states, NATO HQ claimed equipment malfunction, missed target, poor intelligence and pilot errors. Finally US Defense secretaries Gates and his replacement, Leon Panetta admitted that NATO lacked effective intelligence on the ground to identify military targets with certainty. Former Defense Secretary Gates, in criticizing NATO's operation in Libya implied that NATO used a *bomb first ask questions later* paradigm in Libya. And this appears to have been the case. These excuses in no way absolve NATO and its 28 NATO member states of responsibility. Canadian Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard insists to this day that only Libya's military was targeted: "This important strike will greatly degrade Gadhafi regime forces' ability to carry on their barbaric assault against the Libyan people," he told the media from his office in Brussels. The civilian deaths at Sorman came just hours after NATO acknowledged that one of its missiles had gone astray early on Sunday, hitting a residential neighborhood of Tripoli.

- At the request of Khaled al-Hamedi, himself being sought by Libya's new government, and aware that I was going to return to Sorman, I felt honored as I made my way to his loved ones' gravesites on the family homestead where he and I first met, in order to deliver a message from him to his loved ones.

Picking my way through debris in the dark, under the cold and suspicious eyes of a couple of local militiamen, I stood at the same spot, where on June 27 his family's freshly dug graves bore witness to what Khaled was describing to our shocked delegation concerning the details of the horror and hellfire that NATO unleashed upon his family.

- Back in June I had moved to the rear of our group as Khaled spoke to us about the loss of his babies, his beauties and his precious pregnant wife. I was embarrassed because for some reason, uncontrollable tears would not stop streaming down my face and, despite averting my eyes, I saw that Khaled noticed. I was touched when this young man, to whom I was a total stranger, came to me and put his arm around my shoulder in comfort. Clearly he understood that each of us can feel the pain of others, even of strangers, as well as connect them with our own losses of loved ones in life.

Later, as I learned more about Khaled's family and saw their most expressive and revealing photos, I came to believe that with respect to the wanton criminal aggression that caused thousands of needless deaths of innocents over the period of nearly nine months, that Najia, Safa, Salam, Khaleda, and Khweldi, and the others slaughtered at Sorman, are forever iconic representatives of all the innocent civilians who were slaughtered in Libya since March 2011.

- During my recent visit to Sorman, I stood at the same location as last June. I surveyed the area and then approached the graves of Najia, Safa, Salam, Khaleda, and Khweldi. In the cold darkness with the piles of rubble still in place it was eerie.

I knelt close, felt a strange source of warmth and looked over my shoulder. I whispered in the silent night that I had a message from your loving Husband, Father, Uncle and Nephew that he asked me to deliver to you.

- I read to them the message entrusted to me. And I left a copy in Arabic, pinned to a bouquet of flowers. The message read:

"Please say a very big hello to them and tell them I am coming. Please tell them I won't leave you alone And I miss each of you so very much. And please write them each a note. Najia, Safa, Salam, Khaleda, and Khweldi. Franklin, Tell them, "You are my life. You are my love. I miss you very, very much. Life without you is so painful, so hard and completely empty. I won't stay and live away from you. I promise. I'll return and be close to you. Baba will be back. I love you."

As I made my way back to the main road in search of a taxi, a militiaman stopped me and interrogated me about why I was there, confiscated my camera and ordered me to leave the area at once.

- I paused for a moment and looked back toward what had been a loving family home, a petting zoo and bird sanctuary that had delighted the children in this neighborhood.

A little boy and girl, perhaps siblings, maybe six or seven years old, approached me with their Ethiopian nanny and asked: "Wien, (where is) Khaleda? Wien Khweldi? metta yargeoun ila Al Bayt (when will they come home?) "When will they come home?"

Unable to speak, I kissed and patted their heads and continued on my way.

Khaled K. Al-Hamedi is strong, deeply religious, and fatalistic. He has pledged to family and friends around the world that he will continue his work with the International Organization for Peace, Care & Relief in spite of the life shattering loss of his loved ones. An honorable family, a peaceful and welcoming town, a devastated country, and a shocked and angry international community demand justice from those who sent 'Unified Protector' and NATO's no-fly zone to destroy Libya in order to "protect the civilian population."

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[NATO urged to probe civilians killed in Libya war | Reuters](http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/16/us-libya-civilians-idUSTRE7BF0DC20111216)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/16/us-libya-civilians-idUSTRE7BF0DC20111216>

- NATO urged to probe civilians killed in Libya war
- By Lou Charbonneau UNITED NATIONS | Fri Dec 16, 2011
- (Reuters) - A New York-based rights group is urging NATO to investigate civilian deaths it may have caused during its eight-month military operation in Libya that helped bring about the ouster and death of Muammar Gaddafi.
- Libya's new interim government, which has been in control of the oil-producing OPEC member since former leader Gaddafi was forced to flee Tripoli in August, estimates that more than 40,000 Libyans were killed during the country's civil war, Libyan U.N. envoy Ibrahim Dabbashi told Reuters.

"Gaddafi was responsible for these deaths," Dabbashi told Reuters on Thursday.

Fred Abrahams of Human Rights Watch (HRW), a rights advocacy group, is in Libya and has been investigating several dozen civilian casualties allegedly caused by NATO.

During the war, Gaddafi's forces were eager to show journalists, HRW and other rights groups what it claimed were sites of civilian massacres caused by NATO airstrikes.

- Many of the corpses displayed for reporters were clearly military personnel, not civilians. Nor were the civilians necessarily victims of NATO attacks.

Abrahams has been investigating the matter to determine as precisely as possible how many civilians were killed by the NATO airstrikes, which began in March and ceased in October.

"By our count, up to 50 civilians died in the (NATO) campaign, perhaps more," Abrahams told Reuters.

"We're not alleging unlawful attacks, let alone war crimes," he said. "We believe the onus is on NATO to investigate these cases thoroughly so they can identify and correct the mistakes."

He urged NATO to consider compensation "as appropriate."

- LIYBA SEES NO NEED FOR NATO INVESTIGATION

Western diplomats from NATO members say the alliance never targeted civilians, which would constitute a war crime, though they fear critics of the NATO's handling of the war will seize on estimates of civilian deaths to accuse NATO of war crimes.

- The alliance has been highly criticized for civilian casualties in [Afghanistan](#), though the estimated death tolls are far higher than what HRW alleges NATO caused in Libya.

The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, is investigating allegations that NATO, Gaddafi's forces and the rebels all committed war crimes.

NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu said the alliance had no figures for the number of civilian casualties its bombing campaign may have caused but took "every possible precaution to minimize the possibility of civilian casualties." She added that it was impossible to entirely remove the risk to civilians.

She said the alliance "deeply regrets any loss of civilian life and if there is credible evidence it is for the Libyan authorities to take the lead in dealing with any such claim."

- But Libya's government has not asked NATO to investigate.

"There is no need for a NATO investigation," Dabbashi said. "Usually it is acceptable that there will be some civilian casualties because of some errors."

He added that all Libyan casualties were regrettable and that Gaddafi, who was captured and killed by rebel forces in October, deserved most of the blame for civilian deaths.

"Gaddafi placed his forces inside civilian areas, like schools," Dabbashi said. He added that the government was conducting its own inquiry into the war.

- After abstaining from a March 17 vote on U.N. Security Council resolution 1973, which authorized U.N. member states to enforce a no-fly zone and use "all necessary measures" to protect Libyan civilians, Russia and [China](#) repeatedly accused NATO of overstepping its mandate by seeking to oust Gaddafi.
- U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday dismissed the idea that NATO had acted beyond its mandate: "Security Council resolution 1973, I believe, was strictly enforced within the limit, within the mandate."

Lungescu acknowledged that there was an incident in June when a bomb malfunctioned and apparently killed some civilians.

- "On the case where they admit a mistake, I've been there," HRW's Abrahams said. "It's the al-Gharari family - five members including a little girl. I have photos and death certificates. NATO knows this."

Abrahams said that he and a representative of another rights group, CIVIC, personally presented NATO with their reports of civilian casualties in Libya caused by NATO on August 15.

A press officer at NATO said the alliance was unaware of any reports from rights groups but was ready to receive them.

(Additional reporting by [David Brunnstrom](#) in Brussels and [Christian Lowe](#) in Algiers; editing by [Cynthia Osterman](#))

[NATO urged to investigate Libyan deaths](#)

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/NATO+urged+investigate+Libyan+deaths/5875570/story.html>

• NATO urged to investigate Libyan deaths

Up to 50 civilians died in strikes, group says

Reuters December 17, 2011

- A New York-based rights group is urging NATO to investigate civilian deaths the alliance may have caused during its eight-month military operation in Libya that helped bring about the ouster and death of Moammar Gadhafi.

Libya's new interim government, which has been in control of the oil-producing OPEC member since the former leader was forced to flee Tripoli in August, estimates that more than 40,000 Libyans were killed during the country's civil war, Libyan UN envoy Ibrahim Dabbashi told Reuters.

- "Gadhafi was responsible for these deaths," Dabbashi said.

Fred Abrahams of Human Rights Watch, a rights advocacy group, is in Libya and has been investigating several dozen civilian casualties allegedly caused by NATO, to determine as precisely as possible how many civilians were killed by the NATO airstrikes, which began in March and ceased in October.

"By our count, up to 50 civilians died in the (NATO) campaign, perhaps more," Abrahams said. "We're not alleging unlawful attacks, let alone war crimes."

[Is Libya NATO's Final Bow? - Brookings Institution](#)

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/1202_libya_odonnell_vaisse.aspx

- Topics

• Is Libya NATO's Final Bow?

[NATO](#), [Transatlantic Relations](#), [Libya](#), [North Africa](#), [Middle East](#)

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The Brookings Institution

- December 02, 2011 —
- While U.S. President Barack Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister David Cameron jostle for public acclaim for the recent military operation in Libya, significant unease can be found amongst officials from NATO allies. Indeed, although on certain levels, the multinational deployment performed very well in its UN sanctioned efforts to protect Libyan civilians against attacks by Muammar Gaddafi, the mission also raised some difficult questions for countries on both sides of the Atlantic, not least – once again – about the long term sustainability of the NATO alliance.
- Contradicting the warnings from many experts and politicians in both Europe and the United States, the military intervention in Libya did not lead to a protracted stalemate. Seven months after the international coalition led by France, the U.K. and the United States deployed – initially as an ad-hoc coalition and subsequently under NATO command – the operation was called to an end in light of Gaddafi's fall from power. In addition the nations contributing to the mission, which relied primarily on a naval embargo and air strikes, suffered no casualties and managed to keep the level of collateral damage remarkably low – largely due to the extensive and skilled use of precision guided munitions.

Europeans, which have long been criticized within the United States for not contributing sufficiently to international deployments, not least the NATO operation in Afghanistan, provided a large share of the military effort. This allowed the U.S. to scale back its own contribution after playing a leading role in neutralizing Libya's air defenses during the first days of the campaign. Although Britain and France provided the most significant European military contributions, eleven other European countries participated in the arms embargo and the aerial campaign. And Denmark, Norway, and Belgium together hit as many targets during their strikes as France.

- In addition, institutionally, NATO provided an invaluable 'plug and play' umbrella to co-ordinate the military campaign. According to most officials, only the United States and NATO have military command chains capable of controlling an operation of such complexity as the one in Libya. Once the alliance agreed to take full control of the mission on March 27th, it took only four days for it to implement its decision. Although not all NATO allies had initially supported the military deployment to Libya, none obstructed the command of the operation – in contrast to initial French fears. Even the use of shared NATO military assets was not too adversely affected. Although Germany, which abstained from endorsing the operation at the UN, refused to let its air crews participate in the deployment of NATO AWACS aircraft over Libyan airspace, it increased its contributions to AWACS operations in Afghanistan in order to free up crews from other NATO allies in Libya. NATO was able to bring non-alliance countries such as Sweden and the UAE into the military effort, and although their integration into the command chain was not seamless, it was greatly facilitated by years of joint training through a variety of NATO partnerships. In addition, operating under the NATO flag made it easier for Britain, France and the United States to convince their partners to remain committed to the military operation, not least over the summer when support for the mission started to wane.
- But for many within NATO, the balance sheet of operation Unified Protector is far from fully positive. Some NATO officials raise questions about the implications of the mission for future operations aimed at protecting civilians. NATO strikes might have led to limited collateral damage. But during the course of the operation, according to a U.S. official, around 8,000 Libyans were killed as a result of fighting between Gaddafi's forces and those opposing his rule. And the Libyan National Transitional Council estimates the death toll to be around 25,000. This has led some officials from NATO allies to argue that the level of casualties could have been lower if the U.S. had contributed more actively to the operation, because its unparalleled firepower could have enabled the mission to end sooner. Others have gone as far as suggesting that the death toll would have been lower if NATO had not intervened at all – although this would most probably mean that Gaddafi would still be in power.
- In addition, although NATO officially maintained the UN's mandate of protecting civilians as its sole objective, de facto the unwillingness of the Libyan rebels and Gaddafi to negotiate led the success of the NATO operation to rely on Gaddafi's demise, raising questions about the feasibility of 'responsibility to protect' without regime change. Finally, there is an uneasy recognition amongst officials that the nations which provided weapons and training to the rebel forces during the last months of the operation – at a minimum – 'exploited the grey zones' of the UN resolution which allowed for all necessary measures excluding a foreign occupation force. Such a wide interpretation of the UN mandate might have been necessary for the success of the mission. And many officials acknowledge that air power and the naval embargo alone would not have sufficed to shift the balance of forces, particularly once Gaddafi's troops responded to NATO's air campaign by blending into Libya's civilian population. But the actions of several nations contributing to Unified Protector have significantly reduced the level of support from Russia, China and other international players for similar interventions in the future, with direct (although hard to measure) consequences on the willingness to pressure Syria.
- In addition, although the North Atlantic Council eventually agreed to take control of the deployment to Libya, the major disagreements which marked the initial debates about the merit of military intervention – be it at the G8, the UN, NATO or the EU – were a strong reminder to transatlantic allies of the continued lack of a common strategic culture within the alliance. For some countries, in particular the U.K., the experience strengthened the growing conviction that it is futile to cooperate with certain European allies. For others, it reinforced the weariness of investing in shared military capabilities. And several countries – including Britain and France – were rattled by the United States' unprecedented decision not to maintain a leading role within a NATO operation.

Most problematically, operation Unified Protector brought to the fore once more the significant shortcomings within European armed forces. Aerial intelligence assets, air to air refueling and fighter aircraft that can fly outside NATO airspace were all found to be in very short supply – notwithstanding the fact that several of these capabilities have been identified for years as key priorities for NATO allies. As Robert Gates, then U.S. Defense Secretary, remarked in June, although NATO should have been able to manage more than 300 air sorties a day, it was a struggle to launch 150, largely because of an acute shortage of targeting specialists. And some military officers within the NATO command

chain – including senior ones – lacked the experience to perform their duties, forcing other allies to deploy additional military officials to assist them.

- Yet so far, Libya has not incentivized European governments to limit their ongoing military spending cuts or to commit to the NATO and EU efforts aimed at limiting the impact of budget cuts through stronger cooperation amongst European armed forces. Governments continue to disagree about whether to develop the Allied Ground Surveillance program, designed to provide NATO with a commonly owned source of aerial intelligence – a program that has been in the pipeline for decades. Most officials predict that the upcoming NATO summit in Chicago will not lead to any significant breakthroughs on closer ‘pooling and sharing’ amongst European armed forces. And U.S. officials believe that on current trends, NATO will not be able to replicate a mission similar to the one conducted in Libya in a few years from now. Operation Unified Protect could well become a noble but final bow from the transatlantic alliance.

[Beijing wants stability restored to Libya - The Irish Times - Mon, Mar 21, 2011](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2011/0321/1224292709163.html)

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2011/0321/1224292709163.html>

- The Irish Times - Monday, March 21, 2011

Beijing wants stability restored to Libya

- **CHINA:** BEIJING – China wants stability restored to Libya as soon as possible, the foreign ministry said yesterday after western forces launched strikes against Muammar Gadhafi's troops.

Expressing regret about the attacks, the Chinese foreign ministry said that it hoped the conflict would not escalate and lead to greater loss of civilian life.

- China had the chance to veto last week's United Nations Security Council resolution that authorised "all necessary measures", a term for military action, to protect civilians against Gadhafi's forces. Instead, it joined Russia, Germany, India and Brazil in abstaining. It has been trying to balance its worries about allowing military action with the demands of Arab and other governments angered by Gadhafi's unyielding response to uprisings demanding an end to his rule.

"China has noticed the latest developments in Libya and it expresses regret about the military attacks," the foreign ministry said. "We hope that Libya can recover stability as soon as possible and that an escalation of military conflict leading to more civilian deaths can be avoided," it added.

China's comments came just hours after French planes fired the first shots in what is the biggest international military intervention in the Arab world since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Western forces hit targets along the Libyan coast. Libyan state television said 48 people had been killed and 150 wounded in the air strikes. Throughout the recent tumult across the Middle East and North Africa, China has sought to avoid becoming deeply enmeshed and has little appetite for turning the regional upheaval into a point of confrontation with the US.

– (Reuters)

[Arab League chief urges protection of citizens - The Irish Times - Mon, Mar 21, 2011](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2011/0321/1224292709168.html)

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2011/0321/1224292709168.html>

- The Irish Times - Monday, March 21, 2011

Arab League chief urges protection of citizens

- RUADHÁN Mac CORMAIC in Paris
- **NO-FLY ZONE IMPOSED:** EUROPEAN AND US forces said they had successfully imposed a no-fly zone over Libya after a series of air and missile strikes, but the multinational coalition suffered a setback when the Arab League chief condemned the "bombardment of civilians".

As French, American and British warplanes continued to target Muammar Gadhafi's air defences and armour, the defence ministry in Paris said its 15 jets in Libyan airspace yesterday encountered no opposition in enforcing the no-fly zone.

The chairman of the US military's joint chiefs of staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, said the aerial blockade had effectively been "put in place".

However, the first sign of strain in the coalition of states that support the UN-mandated action in Libya emerged yesterday when Arab League president Amr Moussa called for an emergency meeting of the group of 22 states.

- He requested a report into the bombardment, which he said had "led to the deaths and injuries of many Libyan civilians".

"What is happening in Libya differs from the aim of imposing a no-fly zone, and what we want is the protection of civilians and not the bombardment of more civilians," Egypt's official state news agency quoted Mr Moussa as saying.

Arab support for the UN security council resolution was crucial to its adoption last week, and western allies have stressed that regional powers will have a central role in halting attacks on Libyan civilians by Col Gadhafi's forces.

As the military build-up continued at bases in the Mediterranean yesterday, French foreign minister Alain Juppé said the operations would continue until the Libyan regime accepted the UN resolution and agreed to a ceasefire. Asked if the military operation was meant to remove Col Gadhafi from power, Mr Juppé said: "No. The plan is to help Libyans choose their future."

French aircraft fired the first shots of the intervention on Saturday, destroying tanks and armoured vehicles near Benghazi.

Paris also sent an aircraft carrier towards Libya and its aircraft were over the country again yesterday, while Britain said its aircraft had targeted Libya's air defences mainly around the capital, Tripoli.

- The US has portrayed France and Britain as the lead actors in imposing the no-fly zone, but American forces played a significant role in early efforts to knock out Libya's air defence systems.

Between them, US and British warships and submarines launched 110 Tomahawk missiles on Saturday night into yesterday morning against air defences around Tripoli and Misrata, US military officials said.

The strikes against Col Gadafy's forces began shortly after the conclusion of an emergency meeting attended by the prime ministers or foreign ministers of more than a dozen countries in Paris on Saturday. The countries represented included France, the United States, Britain, Canada, Germany, Jordan, the Netherlands, Greece, Norway, Italy, Qatar, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Denmark, Belgium, Spain and Poland.

Mr Moussa of the Arab League was present, as were UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon, European council president Herman Van Rompuy and EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton.

"Those taking part agreed to put in place all necessary means, especially military, to enforce the decisions of the United Nations Security Council," French president Nicolas Sarkozy said after the meeting at the Élysée Palace.

- German chancellor Angela Merkel, who had been sceptical about plans for a no-fly zone, said her country would not take part in the intervention "in military terms" but would take on additional responsibilities in Afghanistan to relieve pressure on Nato forces.

She said the UN resolution must be put into effect and called for a comprehensive oil embargo "because this would hit the Libyan regime hard".

Meanwhile, Italy signalled a radical change in policy on Libya when defence minister Ignazio La Russa said it would place no caveats on the use made of the eight fighter aircraft that Italy has contributed to a Naples-based coalition operation centre.

Ten days ago, Italian foreign minister Franco Frattini had said that it could not take part in any military action in Libya, given its colonial past in the north African country.

The change of policy was enough to prompt the prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, to reassure Italians yesterday, telling them that Col Gadafy "does not have the military means to hit us".

Making his first specific reference to the Libyan crisis yesterday, Pope Benedict XVI told pilgrims in St Peter's Square that he was following events there with "trepidation and fear" and called for those with responsibility to ensure the safety and security of civilians.

[News de la Semaine](#)

http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/NewsManager/EMB_NewsManagerView.asp?ID=7175&L=2

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24/11/2011

Migration, Refugees and Population

Lives lost in the Mediterranean: PACE hearing to examine Europe's responsibility

Strasbourg, 24.11.2011 – It is estimated that over a thousand boat people have perished in the Mediterranean Sea since January 2011 while attempting to reach Europe. Who may be responsible? What could have been done to avoid these tragedies? What lessons can be learned from these events? These questions will be central to a hearing organised on Tuesday 29 November in Paris by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in connection with the preparation of a report on the subject by Tineke Strik (Netherlands, SOC).

The hearing will look at the loss of human life at sea, it will examine the right of families to receive information on the victims, and it will consider the rules applicable under international law and maritime law relevant to rescue at sea. The hearing will also examine international co-ordination regarding interception and rescue at sea, as well as the role of the national authorities, NATO and FRONTEX.

The participants include representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, FRONTEX, the Italian Council for Refugees, and the International Institute of Humanitarian Law.

* * *

The hearing, which will take place on Tuesday 29 November from 2 to 6.30 pm at the Council of Europe Office in Paris (55 avenue Kléber, Paris 16th arrondissement, Métro station: Boissière), is open to the press.

Contact : Micaela Catalano, Head of the PACE Communication Division, tel. +33 (0)6 08 56 40 65

[More questions than answers about NATO's Libya role | World | Deutsche Welle | 22.11.2011](http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,15548186,00.html)

<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,15548186,00.html>

-  [Großansicht des Bildes mit der Bildunterschrift: NATO's role in Libya is still under scrutiny](#)

• Arab World | 22.11.2011

More questions than answers about NATO's Libya role

- The reasons and the consequences behind NATO's bombing on the Libyan town of Majer still remain unclear three months on. Deutsche Welle visited the scene of one of the darkest episodes in Libya's war.
- Ali Ahmed welcomes us into a makeshift funeral chapel set up amid the rubble of his former house. Once inside, it's impossible to avoid gazing at the 35 portraits hanging on the walls of this small room.

Majer, a town 160 kilometers (99 miles) east of Tripoli, used to be known for its delicious juice made from dates. But since August 8, Majer has been a name closely linked to what may have been NATO's biggest massacre in Libya. One of the residents, Ali Ahmed, was a witness to those events.

"There was a giant blast just after 11 pm. Everything happened very quickly," Ali told Deutsche Welle before pointing to the portrait of Anan, his sister. Two 500-pound bombs dropped from the air sandwiched the three floors of this house killing 14 people - five of them children - and injuring many more.

- Ali was lucky because he was sleeping in his room on the ground floor, the only one which was not reduced to rubble. Around us, mattresses, shoes and books still litter the area.

"There were two more families at home, one from Benghazi and ours," Ayed Hamid, another survivor, told Deutsche Welle. He lost his brother Salim. Three of the five children killed were his nephews.

"Do you know why NATO bombed our house?" asked Ayed, with a genuine sense of curiosity that seemed to belie his pain.

- Apart from the 14 victims of that house, 21 other people were trapped in the debris of another residence that came

[portraits on a wall](#)



under attack. Two other homes were also destroyed that night but they were empty.

Bildunterschrift: [Großansicht des Bildes mit der Bildunterschrift: Some of the 35 alleged victims of NATO's strike in Majer](#)

Muhammed Ali Jarud survived the strike on the second house.

- "The first was after 11 pm. By 1am many people had gathered to help us rescue the bodies from the rubble, and then came another bomb," he told Deutsche Welle. The 26-year old lost his mother in the bombing but also a sister, her husband and their eight-day-old baby. He says three other relatives, who suffered terrible injuries, were sent to Germany for surgery.

"We had gathered for the *iftar* - the meal that breaks the daily fast during the month of Ramadan," Muhammed recalled. Today he works hard with three friends to rebuild a house to move into before winter comes.

"We always help each other, otherwise we would not be able to survive," said Muhammed, who only agreed to talk to us once we were out of sight of Majer's new authorities.

"We have many problems with the rebel militias and we don't want to be spotted talking to journalists."

Muhammed's fears are not unfounded as arbitrary arrests in Gadhafi's former strongholds are a common occurrence in post-revolution Libya.

- **Chain of lies**

What exactly happened in Majer is difficult to reconstruct. Most of those affected are remaining silent as is the mainstream media. It's impossible to retrace the events in Majer with the information provided by the former government, the handful of reporters who were taken on a daytrip from Tripoli and NATO's reports. At this point, many feel that the only certain thing about Majer is that somebody, if not everybody, is lying.

- On the morning of August 9, then Gadhafi spokesman, Moussa Ibrahim, accompanied a delegation of foreign journalists to the scene. The figures provided by the Libyan government and repeated by Ibrahim himself spoke of 85 victims, including 33 children. The journalists were shown 30 bodies in the local morgue. The other 50 had reportedly been transferred to other family burial places and the badly wounded to Tripoli.

According to Ibrahim, NATO's bombing of Majer was meant "to clear the way for rebels to advance on the embattled Gadhafi-controlled city of Zlitan, 10 kilometers to the north."

"This is a crime beyond imagination," concluded Gadhafi's spokesman.

- After Ibrahim's statements, foreign journalists attended the funeral of 28 bodies, each covered with the green flag representing Libya's ousted regime.

Forty-eight hours after the first bomb destroyed Ahmed's house, NATO claimed to have a comprehensive record of what had happened. "Four buildings and nine vehicles targeted the site between 23.33 on Monday and 02.34 on Tuesday."

The times of the attacks matched the testimonies of Majer residents, but not the description of the objectives.

"Our assessment, based on the level of destruction of the buildings, confirms the likelihood of military and mercenary casualties. The allegation of civilian casualties made by the Gadhafi regime was not corroborated by available factual information at the site," explained NATO's deputy spokeswoman, Carmen Romero, and Colonel Roland Lavoie at a joint Naples-Brussels press conference. "We always take extraordinary measures before a strike to protect civilians," added Lavoie.

- **Nothing from NATO**

Libyen policemen



Bildunterschrift: [Großansicht des Bildes mit der Bildunterschrift: Libyan rebels have acknowledged NATO's decisive role in the war](#) Despite the numerous requests by Amnesty International and the United Nations to investigate alleged civilian casualties in Majer as well as in the rest of Libya, NATO appears to be sticking to the same protocol as in Afghanistan by systematically denying any accusations and, therefore, closing the doors on any further investigations.

- Like many others, nobody has apologized to Milad Ibrahim for his terrible loss. The 33-year old gets emotional every time he visits his brother's grave. He knows Mustafa has been laid to rest in an area of around 20 square feet, but not exactly where. However, he always says his prayers from the northern section of the humble graveyard.

"We buried the remains of the men on this side and the womens' on the other. We could not identify many of the

bodies," Milad told Deutsche Welle, while keeping an eye on the militia's patrols criss-crossing Majer in their pick-up trucks.

Three months after NATO's strikes, recognition of any kind for Ibrahim and the rest of the families seems further away than ever. There is no reason why their claims should be taken at face value but everything here suggests that something significant happened last August.

For now it seems that for many of those families, their treatment at the hands of Libya's new regime may well be the more pressing issue.

Author: Karlos Zurutuza, Majer, Libya
Editor: Rob Mudge

[Some NATO Ambassadors Mull Possible Libya Review - ABC News](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ap-exclusive-nato-worried-icc-probe-14930263#.TsJbSj0r27t)

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ap-exclusive-nato-worried-icc-probe-14930263#.TsJbSj0r27t>

- Some NATO Ambassadors Mull Possible Libya Review
- By SLOBODAN LEKIC Associated Press

BRUSSELS November 11, 2011

- Members of NATO's governing body are discussing informally whether to direct alliance staff members to perform an internal legal review of its Libya operations to assist any outside investigation into civilian casualties, diplomats accredited to the organization say.

Two ambassadors accredited to NATO said that the North Atlantic Council, the alliance's top governing body, has not yet formally taken up the issue. But they said that they and other members of the council have been informally discussing with one another the possibility of launching an internal review of all incidents in which NATO airstrikes caused civilian casualties.

Officials from the NATO missions of three other countries also said they had heard of the discussions.

The council is comprised of the ambassadors from the 28 countries that are members of NATO. The officials all spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to discuss internal NATO matters.

- NATO spokesperson Oana Lungescu said NATO is confident its forces carried out the campaign "in full compliance with international law."

"NATO has no intention of conducting a legal review of its air operations," she said. "Furthermore, NATO has not received a request to help the (International Criminal Court) with any specific inquiries. If we receive a request for information, NATO is prepared to assist in any way it can."

- Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in the Hague, said this month that any allegations of crimes committed by NATO in Libya would be examined "impartially and independently."
- Moreno-Ocampo's statement does not necessarily mean he will open a formal investigation. Following findings of a U.N. Commission of Inquiry in Libya, due in March, he could decide there is no need for further investigation or ask judges for authorization to open a formal probe.

"We are not talking about any specific incident. We are saying, 'Yes, if there are allegations of crimes we will review that,'" Moreno-Ocampo told The Associated Press.

Following a U.N. resolution authorizing the protection of civilians, NATO led a campaign of airstrikes against the regime of then-Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi from March through October. NATO leaders have hailed the precision with which the mission was carried out, citing the small number of civilian deaths caused by the bombing as evidence of its success.

[Testimony of a Libyan man who has filed a lawsuit against NATO for killing his family « Eccleza](http://eccleza.net/2011/11/05/testimony-of-a-libyan-man-who-has-filed-a-lawsuit-against-nato-for-killing-his-family)

<http://eccleza.net/2011/11/05/testimony-of-a-libyan-man-who-has-filed-a-lawsuit-against-nato-for-killing-his-family>

- **Testimony of a Libyan man who has filed a lawsuit against NATO for killing his family**



- 2011

11/05

- *Khaled K. El-Hamedi (center) lost his pregnant wife and his three young children during a NATO bombing raid on June 20, 2011.*

"My name is Khaled K. El-Hamedi, I am Libyan and I run an international charity for children called the International Organization for Peace, Care and Relief (IOPCR). We have done work helping children affected by conflict including helping orphans in Bosnia and Gaza, Palestine, where I also helped with reconciliation efforts between Hamas and Fatah.

In early February 2011 my country witnessed what now clearly seems to be a Western organised attack on my country, starting with protests fuelled by comments such as those by British Foreign Minister William Hague when he said our leader – Muammar Gaddafi – had fled to Venezuela. Western media outlets and some Arab channels such as Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera helped to escalate the situation which then resulted in the NATO bombardment of my country since March 2011. I decided to stay in my country despite the devastation from the NATO campaign to help the civilians, especially the children, to cope with this war.

- I am the son of a well-known Libyan army leader and that seems to be enough for some media to broadcast the lie that I had a personal militia that was attacking Libyan civilians. Like so many other stories this has been a complete fabrication.

My children used to ask me what the noises were from the NATO bombing raids on our country, to try and ensure my children would not get too upset I told them that they are fireworks and assured them that we soon would go and visit Euro-Disney, something they had always wanted to do.

On June 20, tragedy befell my family after my Son Khweldi's third birthday, NATO attacked my family home with seven bombs, killing my Son Khweldi, my pregnant Wife Sala, my Daughter Khalida who was four and a half years old and Salam who was one and a half years old, and our chef Bashir. They have claimed it was a military site, but it was the family farm house to which we used to invite Libyan children and orphans to see our small collection of animals and to enjoy the grounds of our farm.

NATO bombing of this kind has not just targeted my family, but hundreds of other families now in Libya, in what is clearly an illegal war waged by NATO that is not protecting civilians but murdering them in their hundreds.

This NATO aggression must cease, and I am seeking justice through international courts against NATO for this crimes."

- *Khaled K. El-Hamedi was born on December 31, 1973 in Tripoli, Libya. He grew up in the city and received his Bachelor of Engineering Science with a major in Computing in 1996 from the Faculty of Engineering at Tripoli's Al Fatah University. In 2001 he obtained a Masters Degree in Business Administration in Telecommunications from the International University in Geneva, Switzerland, having passed with high distinction.*

As President of the International Organization for Peace, Care and Relief, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status on the Economic and Social Council, of the United Nations, El-Hamedi stimulated the activities of the organization in many humanitarian fields around the globe.

El-Hamedi's personal brochure on the NATO massacre of his family, including (graphic) photos can be found [here](#) (PDF).

El-Hamedi's websites:

- IOPCR.org (Arabic)
- khaleda.org (Arabic and English)
- natocrimes.com (Arabic and English)
- Twitter: [@natocrimes](https://twitter.com/natocrimes)

Video: El-Hamedi Family murdered by NATO:

[Libya elects new govt head, NATO lifts air cover - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/nato-ends-most-successful-libya-mission-075900707.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/nato-ends-most-successful-libya-mission-075900707.html>

• Libya elects new govt head, NATO lifts air cover



By Laurent Thomet and Imed Lamloum | AFP – Mon, Oct 31

- Libya's interim rulers Monday elected academic Abdel Rahim al-Kib to head a transitional government as NATO was set to end an air campaign that played a major role in ousting dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

Kib, a native of Tripoli, was elected prime minister in a public vote carried out by the members of the National Transitional Council, an AFP correspondent reported.

The little-known academic who specialises in electrical engineering beat four other candidates, winning 26 out of 51 votes.

- "This vote proves that Libyans are able to build their future," NTC chairman Mustafa Abdel Jalil said after he voted.

NATO chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen earlier made a brief visit to Tripoli, saying he foresaw no major role left for the alliance in Libya hours before its air mission was due to officially end.

"At midnight tonight, a successful chapter in NATO's history is coming to an end. But you have also started writing a new chapter in Libya's history," he told a joint press conference with Abdel Jalil.

Rasmussen was whisked off directly for talks at the Rixos Hotel but later had a chance to talk about the country's future with a group of about 60 young Libyans.

The visit came seven months after Western powers fired the first barrage of missiles against Moamer Kadhafi's forces in an air war that played a major role in ousting the veteran dictator.

- The no-fly zone and naval blockade, enforced by NATO since March 31, will end Monday at 11:59 pm Libyan time (2159 GMT), as stipulated by a UN Security Council resolution last week that closed the mandate authorising military action.

Operation Unified Protector was terminated even though Abdel Jalil had asked for the alliance to stay until the end of the year, warning that Kadhafi loyalists still posed a threat.

But NATO deemed that civilians were safe from attacks after the new regime declared the country liberated following Kadhafi's death and the fall of his hometown of Sirte on October 20.

Despite having his request for an extension of the mission turned down, the NTC chairman hailed NATO's crucial support and the precision of its air strikes.

"On behalf of the Libyan people, we express our appreciation and gratitude to the alliance, both the NATO alliance and Arab countries and friends. Thank you for that effort, which achieved victory for us," Abdel Jalil said.

"The NATO operation in Libya was successful in a great way... It was very accurate in the way that civilians were not affected. I think the people of Tripoli testify to that," he added.

- Earlier, in an exclusive interview with AFP, Rasmussen said the military alliance was ready to help the new Libya.

"We have... clearly stated that if the new political leadership in Libya so requests, NATO stands ready to help them in their transformation to a democracy," he said.

Areas where NATO could help included defence and security reform, he said, adding that member countries might be able to assist with border control.

"(But with) no NATO troops on the ground, I don't foresee a major NATO role. It's now for the United Nations to take the lead of the international assistance to the new authorities in Libya," the NATO secretary general told AFP.

His trip came three days after NATO allies confirmed a decision to end the mission, declaring that the 28-nation alliance had fulfilled its UN mandate to protect civilians from a brutal repression.

Western strikes helped tip the balance of power in Libya's conflict, preventing him from crushing a revolt that erupted in mid-February.

The bombing raids stopped Kadhafi forces from marching into the rebel eastern city of Benghazi in February and pulverised the strongman's air force.

- The conflict then appeared headed into a stalemate as the ill-trained rebel forces struggled to fight their way west towards Tripoli. But with NATO destroying thousands of military targets, the NTC eventually took the capital in August, sending Kadhafi into hiding.

While NATO has steadfastly denied targeting Kadhafi during the campaign, it was an alliance air strike that hit his convoy as it fled Sirte, leading to his capture and killing.

Rasmussen insisted NATO did not know Kadhafi was in the convoy.

"No, we didn't know. Kadhafi was not a target of our operations. We hit legitimate military targets and an armed convoy is a legitimate military target because it can constitute a threat to civilians," he told AFP on Monday.

A coalition led by the United States, France and Britain launched the first salvos in the air war on March 19, before handing over command of the mission to NATO at the end of March.

The alliance, joined by Arab partners Qatar and United Arab Emirates, flew some 26,000 sorties and hit almost 6,000 targets during the conflict.

Rasmussen said NATO had no confirmed civilian casualties caused by its operations.

"On one occasion we publicly declared that we could not exclude the possibility that we might have caused civilian casualties but the follow up investigation couldn't confirm that," he said.

[Libya names new prime minister - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/libya-names-prime-minister-190402725.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libya-names-prime-minister-190402725.html>

• Libya names new prime minister



By KARIN LAUB and SLOBODAN LEKIC - Associated Press | AP

- TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — Libya's interim leadership has chosen an electronics engineer from Tripoli as the country's new prime minister.

Abdel-Rahim al-Keeb was chosen Monday by 51 members of the National Transitional Council and will appoint a new Cabinet in coming days. The new government is to run Libya in the coming months and to pave the way for general elections.

Jalal el-Gallal, an NTC spokesman, says al-Keeb received 26 votes. He says the NTC wanted to form a new interim government after the fall of Moammar Gadhafi because its initial members started out as an impromptu group.

- THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — NATO's top official praised the alliance's 7-month sea and air campaign in Libya — key in ousting longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi — saying the mission's end Monday marks the close of a "successful chapter in NATO's history."

Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who was making his first visit to Tripoli since the end of the civil war less than two weeks ago, also congratulated the country's revolutionaries on their victory and said they "helped change the region."

"You acted to change your history and your destiny, we acted to protect you," Fogh Rasmussen said at a joint news conference with Libya's interim leader, Mustafa Abdul-Jalil. "Together we succeeded: Libya is finally free."

- Also Monday, preparations were under way to choose a new Libyan prime minister who is to appoint a government that will run the country in coming months and pave the way for general elections and the drafting of a constitution. Libya's 52-member National Transitional Council gathered at an Islamic college in Tripoli to choose the prime minister from five candidates, officials said. The current prime minister, Mahmoud Jibril, has said he is resigning.

NATO operations in the country officially end at midnight Monday Libyan time (2200 GMT, 6 p.m. EDT). Last week, the U.N. Security Council — which authorized the mission in March — ordered an end to all military action in Libya.

Over the past seven months, allied air forces carried out 9,600 strike sorties, destroying about 5,900 military targets. An average of 15 warships were on station at all times off the Libyan coast to enforce an arms embargo.

- "At midnight tonight, a successful chapter in NATO's history is coming to an end, but you have already started writing a new chapter in the history of Libya, a new Libya based on freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law," Fogh Rasmussen said. "We know it's not easy. We know the challenges, and if you ask us for help in areas where we can help, we will."

NATO persevered during a monthslong period of stalemate on the battlefield, when it appeared that Libya could become an Afghanistan-like quagmire. With the alliance airstrikes helping open the way, revolutionary forces eventually captured Tripoli in late August, and brought an end to the war with the capture and death of Gadhafi on Oct. 20.

Abdul-Jalil, who is the head of Libya's National Transitional Council, thanked Fogh Rasmussen for the alliance's support.

"NATO operations were successful, with the grace of God and the determination of fighters," he said. "The strikes were accurate so that civilians were not impacted, the people of Libya can testify to this."

The end of the NATO mission clears the way for passenger flights to and from Libya. Transportation Minister Anwar al-Fitouri said that Libya's four airports would resume operations Tuesday.

- In recent weeks, some airlines had resumed limited service, with planes landing at Tripoli's Metiga military airport. Several flights carrying Muslim pilgrims to Saudi Arabia have taken off from Tripoli's main airport.

With the Libya mission drawing to a close, spokesman Col. Roland Lavoie said NATO staff temporarily seconded to the headquarters in Naples, Italy, for the operation are being reassigned to regular duties. The alliance concluded its airstrikes soon after Gadhafi's capture and death on Oct. 20, but maintained regular air patrols over Libya.

The operation's critics — including Russia, China, the African Union, and others — have argued that NATO misused the limited U.N. resolution imposing a no-fly zone and authorizing the protection of civilians as a pretext to promote regime change.

With the end of NATO's Libya mission, the alliance has faced some calls to intervene in Syria's uprising.

But Fogh Rasmussen said NATO has no intention to get involved in Syria.

"I can completely rule that out," he said. "Having said that, I strongly condemn the crackdowns on the civilian population in Syria. What has happened in Libya sends a clear signal to autocratic regimes all over the world — you cannot neglect the will of the people."

[Gadhafi hometown pays heavy price in Libyan battle - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/gadhafi-hometown-pays-heavy-price-libyan-battle-201344775.html;_ylt=Au2SXPTQXaI3hTDDcGo.t78aQ8F;_ylu=X3oDMTRoaGw2bG51BGNjb2RIA2dtcHRvcDIwMHBvb2xyZXN0BG1pdANC;_ylg=X3oDMTJ2ZDJ0Y28wBGluGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi1cwRwc3RhaWQDODgxMWwEwYzgtMzJlYi0zMjZiLWJmMmMtZmJmYmJkYTMzMzMTg1)

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• Gadhaifi hometown pays heavy price in Libyan battle



By KARIN LAUB - Associated Press | AP

- SIRTE, Libya (AP) — Moammar Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte paid a heavy price for sheltering him in the final battle of Libya's civil war.

Much of the Mediterranean city of palm tree-lined boulevards has been destroyed. Whole neighborhoods are uninhabitable, with shells punching huge holes through homes blackened with soot. There's no electricity or water. Debris-filled streets are flooded from broken pipes.

"It used to be a beautiful city, one of the most beautiful in Libya," said Zarouk Abdullah, 42, a university professor, standing outside his badly damaged family home. "Today it looks like (postwar) Leningrad, Gaza or Beirut."

Sirte once was favored by the old regime with investment and jobs. Now, six weeks of fighting has left many of the 140,000 residents seething over what they believe was wanton destruction by vengeful anti-Gadhafi combatants.

Although some blame Gadhafi for bringing the war home by hiding here in his final days, residents feel overwhelmed by the task of reconstruction and expect little help from Libya's interim government.

- Most of the dead appear to have been removed or hastily buried, but there is still a stubborn stench of decay that remains — even a week after Gadhafi's death, which ended the eight-month battle to oust him.

On Thursday, shovel-wielding volunteers wearing surgical or gas masks dug up shallow graves to identify and rebury bodies.

Meteeg al-Gazhali stood on a sandy lot behind a clinic in Sirte's seaside District No. 2 and watched as several men pulled up a corpse, wrapped in a blanket.

"That's Ali," he said quietly after lifting the blanket, identifying his 30-year-old son.

The battle for Sirte began in mid-September, or about a month after revolutionary forces had already taken control of most of Libya, including the capital of Tripoli. Sirte was one of the last holdouts, along with two other loyalist areas.

- Resistance in Sirte was fierce, and three weeks into the battle, anti-Gadhafi forces had advanced only a few hundred yards (meters) into the city.

With fighting intensifying, most civilians fled, and only die-hard loyalists remained behind in the city some 250 miles (400 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli.

There were no indications that Gadhafi was in Sirte beforehand, with reports of him hiding deep in the southern desert, possibly trying to flee the country.

In fact, Gadhafi was hiding in Sirte in the final weeks of the war, living in abandoned homes in District No. 2 with an entourage of about two dozen, including his son Muatassim.

- On Oct. 20, as revolutionary forces encircled the neighborhood, Gadhafi and his followers tried to escape in a convoy that was struck by NATO on a highway on the outskirts.

Gadhafi, who suffered some injuries, tried to flee on foot, but he was captured, beaten by a mob and died later that day in mysterious circumstances, prompting international demands that Libya's new leaders investigate his death.

Fighters from the coastal city of Misrata, which rose up early against Gadhafi and suffered immensely under weeks of siege by regime forces in the spring, took the lead in the battle for Sirte and Gadhafi's capture.

It was they who put Gadhafi's body on display in Misrata like a trophy for four days before burying him Tuesday in an anonymous desert grave.

Residents now believe the Misrata fighters intentionally destroyed Sirte, beyond the collateral damage of fighting, to settle old scores.

"I am very angry with the rebels. Look at all this damage," said 26-year-old electrician Mustafa Ali, standing in the debris-filled courtyard of a two-story villa in District No. 2 that was rumored by neighbors to have been Gadhafi's last hiding place.

- "If one shot was fired from a house, they would destroy the entire house," he said.

Over the weekend, more than 50 bodies were found strewn across the ocean-view lawn of the Mahari Hotel, which according to the New York-based Human Rights Watch, had been in the hands of Misrata rebels during the fighting.

Farraj al-Hemali, a Sirte resident who was among those to discover the dead, said 25 of the corpses were found with their hands tied behind their backs. Blood had soaked into the grass, indicating they were killed on the spot. Among the dead were civilians and Gadhafi loyalists, and most had been shot in the head or chest, he said.

Human Rights Watch called for an investigation of what it described as an "apparent mass execution."

Ibrahim Beitelmal, spokesman for the Misrata military council, denied that fighters from his city were responsible. He said he believes the loyalists were killed by their own comrades, possibly after refusing orders to keep fighting.

Beitelmal also alleged that "the damage in Sirte was done by Gadhafi forces to blacken the image of the rebels."

- Anti-Gadhafi fighters did their utmost to prevent bloodshed by giving civilians ample time to leave, he said, adding that those who stayed in the final days were clearly hardcore loyalists.

Zarouk Abdullah, the university professor, scoffed at such claims, alleging that Misrata fighters killed his 34-year-old brother Hisham, whom he described as a civilian.

Abdullah said his brother had stayed behind in Sirte to protect the family home, was taken prisoner and killed with others at the Mahari Hotel. He did not explain how he knew this.

On Wednesday, Abdullah visited Sirte's Ibn Sina Hospital and viewed pictures of disfigured or bloated corpses that had been discovered in recent days, photographed and numbered before temporary burial. Hisham was No. 90. His lower left jaw had been shot off. Abdullah snapped three pictures to take back to his parents so they could start grieving.

Abdullah said he is worried about score-settling. "The (real) war has not started yet. The war will start Nov. 1, after NATO leaves," he said, referring to the end of the military alliance's seven-month mission in Libya.

"People will take revenge," Abdullah predicted, but like others here, he said he does not want more bloodshed.

- Beitelmal, the Misrata spokesman, said officials from his city are working with anti-Gadhafi forces in Sirte to help restore basic services, including water and power.

However, al-Hemali said there has been no outside help, dismissing promises from visiting officials from neighboring cities as empty words.

Sirte, which sustained far greater damage than Misrata, must fend for itself, said al-Hemali, the owner of a car wash, as he oversaw the cleanup of the grounds of the Mahari Hotel.

Libya's new government, which is to be formed in coming weeks, will deal with reconstruction but there is no quick fix, said a spokesman, Jalal el-Gallal.

"For sure, all the cities that were destroyed during the war will be rebuilt, but the interim government can't do anything right now, and the new government will provide temporary housing," he said.

In District No. 2, truck driver Muftah Mubarak, 42, said the Gadhafi regime provided security and jobs, blaming the unrest on foreign intervention, including NATO.

He referred to the anti-Gadhafi fighters as "rats," a term used by the former dictator. With Libya awash with weapons, the country could soon see another civil war, he said.

In a gesture of defiance, he stuck his head out of his truck before driving off, yelling the slogan of regime supporters: "Only Allah, Moammar and Libya."

[Libya is not about who Gaddafi was. It's about what America under Obama has become.](http://www.stopwar.org.uk/index.php/middle-east-and-north-africa/876-libya-is-not-about-who-gaddafi-was-its-about-what-america-is#.TqmY66niuUs.twitter)

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• [Libya is not about who Gaddafi was. It's about what America under Obama has become.](#)

24 October 2011

Michael Collins

[Middle East and North Africa](#)

There's a new sheriff in town, NATO. Those who resist will be publicly humiliated in the most primitive way and then killed. And it's not just leaders who will be punished.

- By **Michael Collins**
[The Smirking Chimp](#)
23 October 2011
- ***"It's not acceptable to kill a person without trying him," said Louay Hussein, a Syrian opposition figure in Damascus. "I prefer to see the tyrant behind bars." New York Times, October 20***

The New York Times reported that [a NATO jet and drones](#) disabled vehicles in a convoy carrying Muammar Gaddafi near the besieged town of Sirte on October 20. Loyalists in the remaining vehicles scattered becoming easy prey for the emboldened fighters of the new Libyan state.



Sirte, Libya: "Not one building is intact. Windows are shattered. Shops are shuttered and the city's 120,000 residents are nowhere to be seen." - Report on the day Gaddafi was killed.

Reuters [expanded the narrative](#) on the 21st by reporting that Gaddafi fled from his jeep, hid in a drainage pipe, and emerged with an automatic weapon and side arm. He was manhandled and slapped by the soldiers of the new Libya. He allegedly asked the crowd, "Don't you know right from wrong?" They took exception to the question and shot him twice in the head.

- He was transported to Misurata, scene of one of the few decisive victories by the former rebels. Gaddafi's corpse was placed on a bare mattress and put on display for the public on the 22nd. It remains there today, although it is now reportedly covered by a blanket ([Reuters, October 23](#)).

There's a new sheriff in town, NATO.

On one level, the truth of this story matters a great deal. On another level, accuracy is not as important as the clear message to those who oppose United States, French, and British policy executed by NATO. Those who resist will be publicly humiliated in the most primitive way and then killed. The composite story indicates intent and intent reveals policy

- **It's not just leaders who will be punished**

"You have won your revolution. And now, we will be a partner as you forge a future that provides dignity, freedom and opportunity." [President Barack Obama, White House, October 20, 2011](#)

The citizens of Gaddafi's home town, [Sirte](#), were said to be special beneficiaries of the ruler's largesse. The Mediterranean port was prosperous and productive amidst the strangeness and strictures of his arbitrary rule. Were citizens supposed to object on moral grounds because their benefactor favored them? What risk would they have incurred by doing so, even if they wanted to turn away special favors? They had no choice but they got the message from NATO. It's your turn to die.

- Hadn't they heard the pronouncements from the [United States](#), Great Britain, and France that Gaddafi was reformed and a member in good standing of the world community? Perhaps they missed President Barack Obama's announced change in that assessment.

When the Libyan rebels and their NATO allies prevailed over Gaddafi's forces, Sirte stood as the most prominent holdout against the government that denies that it is, in fact, a government, the [National Transition Council](#) (NTC). The citizens of Sirte didn't attack any other city. They simply lived there.

In early September, the top commander of the RTC announced that Sirte would be taken by force if the town failed to surrender. There were pro Gaddafi forces in the city. But city officials, separate from those forces, tried to [negotiate](#) a peaceful end to the threatened siege. Unfortunately, the residents and their representatives lacked the power to do the one thing that was needed to save their lives, surrender Gaddafi. For this, the town was [demolished](#) by NATO bombings and many were injured or killed.

- **Civilization in the balance**

The statement by Syrian opposition activist, [Louay Hussein](#), supporting due process of law and basic human rights stands in stark contrast to the entirety of President Obama's statement on the same day Gaddafi was murdered. Louay's long time opposition to violence as a means of change is not at all apparent by Obama's behavior as a leader.

Obama increased fighting in Afghanistan along with troops. Libya is the Nobel Peace Prize winner's second major descent into violence, this time through the NATO proxy. In his October 20 statement from the White House, Obama said:

"So this is a momentous day in the history of Libya. The dark shadow of tyranny has been lifted. And with this enormous promise, the Libyan people now have a great responsibility -- to build an inclusive and tolerant and democratic Libya that stands as the ultimate rebuke to Qaddafi's dictatorship." [President Barack Obama, October 20](#)

Obama pairs lifting the "dark shadow of tyranny" with the death of Gaddafi and then lectures the Libyan people about inclusivity and tolerance. What an odd world view this is. Libyan cities are in ruin, thousands are dead, many more injured, and the city where *the dark shadow* was lifted is devastated. Is it *tolerant* to blow a people and city to bits because they won't surrender? Is it *inclusive* to kill off citizens simply because they're in the former leader's hometown?

Who would fail to get the message? When the president says your time is up, you're in serious trouble. Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein were both cooperative members of the US-NATO team at different points in their careers. Yet both Iraq and Libya were attacked, their population ravaged, and, after the destruction of people and infrastructure, the leaders were captured and killed.

- Where will it end?

When will someone in leadership stand up and say that behaving in a brutish, violent, and uncivilized fashion is immoral, repulsive, and unacceptable. Representatives Ron Paul (R-TX) and Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) have said just that, as have [others](#). They're ignored by their political peers and ridiculed by the corporate media.

There is a deafening silence among those in the power structure and their patrons. They miss this simple point. This is not about who Gaddafi is. It's about who we are and how our good name is hijacked by leaders who order violence without any restraint.

For decades, the strength and humanity of the nation has been siphoned off to support these overseas adventures concocted by presidents of limited vision and intellect, bereft of any fundamental notion of the value of human life, and

unable to think beyond the next election or even the next meeting with a supporter from the defense-national security state industry.

And, they do all this in our name.

[Avoiding civilian casualties was main Libya objective, Canadian general says - The Globe and Mail](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/avoiding-civilian-casualties-was-main-libya-objective-canadian-general-says/article2210901)

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/avoiding-civilian-casualties-was-main-libya-objective-canadian-general-says/article2210901>

- **Libya**

Avoiding civilian casualties was main Libya objective, general says

[paul koring](#)

WASHINGTON— Globe and Mail Update

Published Sunday, Oct. 23, 2011

- As far as Canadian air force Lieutenant-General Charles Bouchard was concerned, avoiding killing civilians was the overriding objective of the war in Libya – even if it meant calling off carefully planned air strikes against pro-Gadhafi forces and sometimes letting high-value targets escape.

“Any time there was a civilian death and we caused it, it got to me,” said Gen. Bouchard, who commanded NATO operations over Libya, the first time a Canadian had led such a major combat effort for the alliance. He didn’t say how many civilians he thought were killed, and the precise number may never be known.

- Perhaps the best, albeit indirect, evidence that civilian casualties were minimal is that the daily bombing never alienated the Libyan people, even in the capital, Tripoli.

In one of his first interviews since the death Thursday of former Libyan ruler Colonel Moammar Gadhafi, Gen. Bouchard was both reflective and cautious in his assessment.

“We are not there to kill civilians, we were there to protect civilians,” said Gen. Bouchard, who personally signed off on every strike target during the seven-month war, and who instilled that mantra as part of the day-to-day targeting effort and the rules of engagement for warplane pilots.

“We were absolutely rigorous in all of our targeting,” he said. “It’s painful, but you go through it or you lose the support of the population.”

- Worries over that single errant air strike or badly targeted salvo of bombs also gave Gen. Bouchard what he admits was the worst moment of his war. That came in mid-September when Gadhafi spokesman Moussa Ibrahim graphically detailed a slaughter: More than 300 civilians, many of women and children, torn apart – he said – by air strikes from NATO warplanes in embattled Sirte.

“He went in front of the cameras with pictures of [dead] women and children behind him,” Gen. Bouchard said. “It got to me. I went for a walk.”

After Mr. Ibrahim’s comments, he ordered an immediate, round-the-clock comprehensive review of the Sirte strikes. It took 24 hours, but the results were clear. The images were gruesome, but the accusations were baseless. NATO hadn’t caused the deaths.

“They were just trying to milk the media,” Gen. Bouchard said.

The successful air war, he said, applied some lessons learned from past campaigns.

“You can’t just destroy all the infrastructure,” he said. And you need to “to make sure you don’t become ‘the enemy’ or hated by the population.”

- And he was careful not to suggest that air power alone toppled the regime.

“There were boots on the ground: They were Libyan flip flops and Libyan running shoes,” he said, referring to the rag-tag rebel forces that slowly, and after heavy casualties, developed enough combat prowess. But the local forces maintained Libyan ownership of the war, rather than it looking like yet another “regime change” imposed on a Muslim nation by outside military force.

The general also confirmed that there were no air strikes against rebel forces, although he said that at least at one point in the conflict he arranged for anti-Gadhafi commanders to be warned that NATO aircraft would attack them unless they were more careful about attacks that threatened civilians.

Gen. Bouchard also had high praise for the Canadian contingent. Ottawa sent a warship, seven CF-18 fighter-bombers, several air-to-air refuellers and a pair of Aurora surveillance aircraft as well as scores of targeters and other

command and control personnel.

"I know it's corny, but that can-do attitude, really warms my heart," Gen. Bouchard said. "The Canadians want to do well, they want to do their best and they certainly did."

[Fleeing Gadhafi bastion, bitter at the new Libya - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/fleeing-gadhafi-bastion-bitter-libya-174111762.html;_ylt=AmxTfmwUqeKRuvUWohk7U2NvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNqZ2NkYWVhBG1pdAMEcGtnAzZIMmE1YTZiLTJm2EtM2M3Ni0;_ylv=3)

http://news.yahoo.com/fleeing-gadhafi-bastion-bitter-libya-174111762.html;_ylt=AmxTfmwUqeKRuvUWohk7U2NvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNqZ2NkYWVhBG1pdAMEcGtnAzZIMmE1YTZiLTJm2EtM2M3Ni0;_ylv=3

. Fleeing Gadhafi bastion, bitter at the new Libya

AP Associated Press

By HADEEL AL-SHALCHI - Associated Press | AP

- SIRTE, Libya (AP) — Families flowed out of Moammar Gadhafi's besieged hometown Tuesday, exhausted and battered by weeks of hiding from shelling and gunbattles with no meat or vegetables or electricity — but unbowed in their deep distrust of the revolutionaries trying to crush this bastion of the old regime.
- The fleeing residents were a sign of how resistance to Libya's new rulers remains entrenched among those who benefited from Gadhafi's nearly 42-year rule. Many of those fleeing Sirte said that the stiff defense against revolutionary fighters who have been trying to battle their way into Sirte for three weeks is coming not from Gadhafi's military units but from residents themselves, volunteering to take up arms.
- "This so-called revolution is not worth it," said Moussa Ahmed, 31, who sat in a line of cars waiting to go through a checkpoint of fighters searching those exiting the city. "But we can't say anything now; when we meet the revolutionaries we have to hide our feelings."
- The battle for Sirte, on the Mediterranean coast 250 miles (400 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli, has become the focal point of the campaign by Libya's new rulers to break the last remnants of Gadhafi's rule. More than six weeks after the then-rebels swept into Tripoli and ousted the longtime leader, Gadhafi remains on the run, his whereabouts unknown, and his supporters remain in control not only of Sirte but also the city of Bani Walid and parts of the desert south.
- U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Tuesday that the NATO air mission over Libya can't end and the political process can't begin until Sirte is taken. Libya's de facto Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril said Monday that Sirte must fall before the transitional leadership can declare victory and set a timeline for elections.
- The fight has been grueling. After three weeks, revolutionary forces have managed to get just over a mile (two kilometers) into the city. Heavily armed Gadhafi loyalists are holed up in the Ouagadougou Conference Center, a grandiose hall built by Gadhafi in the city center for international summits, and in the city hospital, revolutionary commanders said.

- On Tuesday, fighters eased shelling to allow residents to escape, and hundreds of cars filled with men, women and children lined up at checkpoints at Sirte's eastern exit. Mothers carrying babies in blankets stood by the side of the road, their children clutching their robes, as revolutionary fighters rifled through their cars, searching through mattresses, clothes and other belongings for hidden weapons.

"We haven't had vegetables or meat to eat for over a month," said one of the mothers, Attiya Mohammed. "The water is polluted, and forget about electricity — it's been out since the middle of August."

- The city was a war zone, she said, buildings pockmarked with bullet holes and parts of the main hospital demolished.

Like many, she had been afraid to step outside her home. "The city was our prison," she said. "If you left your house you risked being shot and killed."

- There was a palpable dislike between those fleeing and the fighters searching through their belongings, though there was no visible harassment and families said they were well treated, some given food and water. During his rule, Gadhafi turned Sirte into virtually a second capital, pouring in investments and giving residents prominent positions. As a result, support for the regime ran high — and many of those fleeing were dismayed at the fall of the old order.

Many of the fighters besieging Sirte are from the neighboring city of Misrata, which rose up against Gadhafi early and was brutalized under a bloody, weeklong siege by his forces during the revolt that began in mid-February. As a result, there is little love lost between the two cities.

- One Misrata revolutionary at the checkpoint, al-Hussein al-Sireiti, said they find four or five cars a day with hidden weapons.

"We also check for people with bullet injuries, because that means they likely were fighting for Gadhafi," he said. They also search for those on a list of known Gadhafi loyalists wanted for interrogation, he said.

Among those fleeing, Fatima al-Gadhafi — from the same tribe the ousted leader — bent her head over her five-month old baby girl and sobbed softly.

"They wanted a revolution — so do it in Misrata and leave the rest of us alone," she said.

- Wearing a black headscarf, her face freckled from the sun, she said she had never met revolutionary forces before Tuesday as she exited Sirte. She told one fighter to stop shooting his rifle so near her family's car, but he refused.

"He said Moammar used to do worse than this, but I never saw anything bad from the old regime. We lived in safety and peace always," she said.

- Halima Salem, 44, sat patiently in her son's pickup truck while he showed their papers to fighters at the checkpoint. The truck bed was filled with blankets, appliances and clothes. In the seat behind her, four birdcages were filled with colorful love birds and canaries chirping away oblivious of sound of shelling.

"I couldn't leave them behind, they're like one of the family," she exclaimed, smiling at her birds.

- She said she had been reluctant to abandon her home because gangs have been looting houses — she wasn't sure what side they were loyal to, if either. During shelling, she hid under the bed in her master bedroom, clutching the youngest children. Finally, after bad shelling the night before, her sons forced her to pack up.

"How can it be that Libyans are doing this to us? Aren't we the same people?" she lamented, shaking her head. "I feel bad for our (former Gadhafi) army ... They were honorable men with high morals. And now this chaos."

- She and many others on the way out said volunteer residents were fighting in the city's defense. "They are all normal men," said Moussa Ahmed, who was leaving to undergo treatment for a kidney stone, but said he would return to Sirte as soon as his could.

"This so-called revolution is just not worth anything, not worth the blood of Libyans that has been spilled," said a friend who was driving Ahmed. He refused to give his name for fear of reprisals.

- Staffers from the International Committee of the Red Cross crossed the front lines into Sirte and delivered urgently needed oxygen and other medical supplies to the hospital Monday. Aid workers were providing food for thousands who fled.

At the checkpoint out of Sirte, fighters propped up hoods to look around the engines for hidden weapons or ammunition. They piled mattresses, blankets, food and children's toys by the side of the road.

Fighters passed around a bottle of colorless liquid pulled from one pile of blankets.

"Is it alcohol?" one fighter asked.

It turned out to be eau de toilette, and the fighters gave it back to the family.

"I don't really care if they drink," said al-Sireiti. "As long as there is no weapons in the car, the drinking is between him and his God."

[Civilians flee horror of the battle for Sirte - AFP](http://news.yahoo.com/sirte-civilians-fear-regime-bombings-more-130154124.html;_ylt=Ah4pyJPTxw0wv8ERV5LwrTpvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNma3NzOTFoBG1pdAMEcGtnAzNjNTIyZDRILTA5NjEtMzNhOC1h1-;_ylv=3)

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• Civilians flee horror of the battle for Sirte



By Rory Mulholland | AFP

- Civilians pouring out of Moamer Kadhafi's hometown Sirte said on Tuesday the horror of the battle for the city finally forced them to conquer their fear of the besieging new regime forces and leave.

In Cairo, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said NATO operations in Libya should continue as long as heavy combat on the ground continues.

"I think fighting has to end," he replied when asked how long the air campaign would last.

- NATO operations were likely to continue as "they can't continue to have the level of fighting that they have there."

An AFP reporter said there was regular fire from National Transitional Council (NTC) tanks just outside Sirte late on Tuesday.

"Obviously there continues to be fighting by Sirte, by other areas" and "we still don't know where Kadhafi is," Panetta said in Egypt.

But he said the conflict "certainly is moving in the right direction" and "a lot of progress has been made" since the NATO operation was launched in March.

- The civilian exodus from Sirte comes as an NTC commander of forces besieging the other remaining loyalist bastion of Bani Walid said Kadhafi's son Seif al-Islam was directing the last stand in the desert oasis.

Vehicles crammed with families and piled high with possessions queued at the succession of checkpoints on the coastal highway out of Sirte to have their belongings searched and identities checked by suspicious NTC forces.

NTC fighters manning the checkpoints made no secret of their disdain for the residents of a city which was so privileged under the ousted regime and where loyalty to the ousted Kadhafis ran deep.

- Farak Mussa, whose blue minivan was carrying his family of eight jammed in beside mattresses and suitcases, said he had held out for days for fear of the NTC fighters but the ferocity of the clashes finally made him take the chance.

"We were afraid to come out because they (Kadhafi loyalists) told us that the NTC would cut our throats. But we

couldn't stay because of the bombing -- we had to take the risk. Why is NATO bombing us?" he asked.

- The alliance said it carried out no strikes in Sirte on Monday, although its warplanes did strike two targets in the area the previous day.
- There was fierce fighting on the front line on the western side of Sirte on Monday after what NTC forces said was a rocket and rocket-propelled grenade barrage against their positions by Kadhafi forces inside the city.

Salem Hamees, who was leaving with his extended family, said: "Our house was hit by a bomb. It destroyed three rooms. We were lucky we were in the other rooms.

"We don't know where it came from. The NATO bombing is scary. It is all scary. There is no difference between their bombs."

Both Mussa and Hamees said their vehicles had been repeatedly stopped and searched.

- NTC fighter Mohammed Shahomi had little sympathy for the long line of frightened families waiting to be inspected.

"They are all Kadhafi loyalists," he said.

"You think they are leaving because they believe in the revolution? They are just scared."

The fleeing civilians all spoke of an increasingly desperate situation inside Sirte as food supplies ran out.

- An International Committee of the Red Cross team managed to deliver some desperately needed medical supplies on Monday.

But the persistent exchanges prevented it from carrying out a more detailed assessment of the needs, the ICRC said.

"ICRC staff crossed the front line with a fully loaded truck from the west side of Sirte," the statement said.

"Fifty oxygen cylinders and other items required for hospital care were handed over to medical staff and representatives of civil society."

- A Dutch nurse who had been working in Sirte's Ibn Sina hospital was also evacuated.

Team leader Hichem Khadraoui said: "The situation on the ground was very tense with ongoing fighting.

"Under such conditions, we had to limit ourselves -- after obtaining clearances from all the parties concerned -- to bringing in the most urgently needed humanitarian aid without further assessing needs. We hope to return soon."

Khadraoui had led a previous mission into Sirte on Saturday during which the hospital came under rocket fire when NTC fighters surrounded Kadhafi forces in a nearby showpiece conference centre.

NTC forces again shelled Kadhafi forces towards the city centre on Tuesday afternoon from positions south of the hospital and conference centre using tanks and an anti-tank gun, an AFP correspondent reported.

- Outside Bani Walid, the other remaining diehard loyalist bastion 170 kilometres (100 miles) southeast of Tripoli, an NTC commander said Seif al-Islam, Kadhafi's best-known son, is leading the final stand inside the besieged oasis.

"We captured a general from the pro-Kadhafi brigades, and he said Seif al-Islam is in Bani Walid and directing military operations there," Adel Benyur told journalists.

Seif al-Islam, his father and Kadhafi's intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi are the subject of International Criminal Court war crimes arrest warrants for murder and persecution in the bloody uprising.

A delegation from Libya's southern neighbour Niger met NTC chief Mustafa Abdel Jalil in Benghazi on Tuesday. An AFP

correspondent said the NTC gave the delegation a letter, but its contents are not known.

Another Kadhafi son, Saadi, is in Niger, but Niamey has no plans to send him home to face justice, Nigerien Prime Minister Brigi Rafini said on Thursday.

Global police agency Interpol had issued a notice warning to its member states -- which include Niger -- that Libya wants Saadi's arrest for alleged crimes while head of the country's football federation.

[Sky News: Libyan children killed fleeing Sirte](http://www.skynews.com.au/world/article.aspx?id=668372&vId=2745313&cId=World)

<http://www.skynews.com.au/world/article.aspx?id=668372&vId=2745313&cId=World>

• Libyan children killed fleeing Sirte

Updated: 05:24, Sunday October 2, 2011

- A rocket has killed two children as their family joined the quickening exodus of civilians fleeing the battle for Muammar Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte, a Libyan medic said.

Some of the hundreds of people escaping the city said on Saturday there had been civilian casualties in the city when residential buildings were hit by artillery fire by besieging new regime forces or NATO air strikes.

National Transitional Council (NTC) forces besieged the Ouagadougou Conference Centre on Saturday, a showpiece venue in Sirte where Gaddafi hosted the launch of the African Union.

A large force of some 100 vehicles, including anti-tank guns and multiple missile launchers, entered the city from the south at around midday (2100 AEST) and surrounded the compound.

'We are surrounding the Ouagadougou Centre,' fighter Osama Blao told AFP as he returned from the front line.

A senior NTC commander said growing numbers of Gaddafi loyalists were also trying to get out of the city as their supplies of food and munitions dwindled.

- The coast road west to Libya's third-largest city of Misrata was clogged with convoys of fleeing civilians, an AFP correspondent reported.

The two children killed 'were torn to pieces', said Dr Ahmed Abu Oud, a field medic on the western side of Sirte. 'They collected the body parts in bags.'

Redwan Abdulrahim, whose small truck was piled high with suitcases and other possessions, said the situation in Sirte was increasingly difficult.

'It was really bad. We didn't know where the bullets and rockets were coming from,' he said.

Hassan Duha, a commander in the Misrata military council operations room, said a growing number of Gaddafi troops were trying to hide among the escaping civilians.

'They throw away their IDs and they try to come out with the families,' he said.

'We hear them on the radio saying they don't have electricity and they are running out of food and ammunition.'

An AFP correspondent saw one Gaddafi officer surrendering on Saturday.

Major Mohammed Usba Hanish told his NTC captors that although he came from Gaddafi's birthplace in the small town of Qasr Abu Hadi, 20 kilometres south of Sirte, he had not been fighting as he was on sick leave.

- 'I am not involved. If I was involved, I would not be here,' he said.

Hanish said that troops still loyal to the toppled dictator were facing growing shortages.

'The Gaddafi people are eating just bread. They are running out of food and ammunition.'

At midday local time NTC forces opened an artillery barrage from the east on administrative buildings in the city centre.

'We are targeting buildings where Gaddafi's men are holed up. Our scouting teams have informed us that a lot of mercenaries are still in there and we are striking them too,' said Colonel Hussein Idris as he supervised the barrage.

An AFP correspondent saw young NTC fighters open up with six Russian-built 130mm cannons in the desert, firing dozens of shells in an hour.

Idris said most civilians have now fled the city as they had 'time to leave in the past two days'.

'There are some civilians still left, but most of them inside the city now are Gaddafi loyalists,' he told AFP.

- Dozens of Pakistani migrant workers were among the hundreds of Sirte residents fleeing to the east.

'NATO struck one big building, Imarat Tamim, two days ago, with 12 or 13 bombs,' said Ashiq Hussein, who fled the city with 11 family members, including six children.

'The whole building with nearly 600 flats is razed to the ground now.'

Hussein, an electrician originally from Lahore, worked in construction with a Libyan builder and has been in Sirte for 30 years.

'Two of my neighbours died yesterday in a NATO bomb which hit their home,' he said as his family fled in two cars packed with essentials including mattresses, bags of rice and clothing.

Asked why NATO was hitting civilian buildings, Hussein said: 'Maybe they have information that on rooftops there were Gaddafi men... But a lot of civilian buildings were getting hit.

'Also the incoming shells from NTC forces were hitting civilian homes. They are missing their targets and often hit civilian homes.'

Mohammed, a Libyan, also said civilians were being caught in the shelling.

'My home was struck yesterday so I decided to leave early today with my family. I don't know whether it was a NATO bomb or one fired by rebels,' he said.

[Libya: exodus from Sirte as thousands flee rebel offensive - Telegraph](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8794617/Libya-exodus-from-Sirte-as-thousands-flee-rebel-offensive.html)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8794617/Libya-exodus-from-Sirte-as-thousands-flee-rebel-offensive.html>

• **Libya: exodus from Sirte as thousands flee rebel offensive**

Libyan families fled in terror in the face of a mounting rebel offensive on the loyalist stronghold of Sirte on Wednesday

- By Ruth Sherlock in Sirte

5:45PM BST 28 Sep 2011

- Plumes of smoke rose over the city from the barrages of heavy Grad rocket fire. As the tanks rolled forward, civilian cars streamed in the opposite direction.

"They are bombing us and women and children are dying," said an elderly woman, wrapping her shroud to hide her face.

Over three thousand men, women and children have fled the besieged city in the last three days. Risking their lives to cross the front lines in search of refuge, they described grim and bloody conditions inside the town.

"There is no medicine, no food, no electricity. It is a disaster," said Mohammed Omar Farjan, 37, his two young boys sitting wide-eyed on the laps of their mother and aunts crammed in the back of the car.

"I have to go to Tripoli as my wife is expecting a baby in the next week. I don't know what we will find there but the situation is too bad to stay here," said Ahmed Gaddadfa, 42.

- The city hospital is occupied by loyalist fighters and has run short of primary supplies, including anaesthetic. Power and phone lines have been cut since August, and fuel costs have soared to over 300 Libyan dinar (£200) for 20 litres, said fleeing families.

Regime forces and loyalist volunteers controlling the central areas of the city are trying to stop the exodus, residents said.

"They took all of our identity cards. They shouted and cursed at us, calling us rats and traitors," said Milad Ali, 22. "Three days ago a group of thirty cars tried to leave the main gate. They took all of their cards and sent them to their homes."

"We snuck out through the farms. They have people with guns on the road blocks, we don't know if they would let us out," said another man, driving a pickup piled high with mattresses, kettles, and other possessions.

Despite the conditions many in the home town of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi remain staunchly loyalist. Locals continue to profess their allegiance to the "brother leader".

- "There is no sign of an internal uprising, the civilian areas are filled with volunteers for Gaddafi," said Milad.
- In Gaddafi's last stronghold, the war is an ever more brutal battle between civilians with differing allegiances, fuelled and embittered by the bloodshed of the last eight months.

"They have captured a lot of Misrata families," said a Sirte resident who last week came to the rebel side.

- Rebel fighters manning rows of rocket launchers said they knew they were fighting civilians, but that Sirte's residents had "chosen to die".
- "They are ashamed. It is their pride that kills them," said Mohamed Khalifa, 25, of a Misrata brigade. "Look at how they laid siege to our town, and killed so many people!"

The interim government forces have laid siege to the city this week, as fighters who had spent months pushing from the east linked forces with rebels from Misrata.

- Benghazi fighters inside the city mounted the push to take the city airport, as the rebel brigades from Misrata provided support. Trucks piled full of rockets, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and bullets followed hundreds of rebel pickups with mounted machine guns. From a vantage point on the hill side, they sent rockets and tank shells raining down on the city.

Along the road, rebel checkpoint guards meticulously searched fleeing families' vehicles. They rifled through stacks of farmer's hay bales, opened and emptied suitcases, and checked inside the car's engine parts for hidden weapons.

"We have 10,000 names of wanted men, so we have to check everyone carefully," said the man issuing the refugees with stamped permission slips.

The fleeing residents viewed the checkpoints with fear and suspicion, and many remained unsympathetic to the rebel side.

"Since the 19th March when Nato started bombing we have been living in hell," said an elderly woman angrily at a checkpoint guard, as her husband fearfully entreated her to stay quiet.

"Here, inside, most people still want Gaddafi. When we liberated other cities they would be so happy to see us they would kiss the new flag," said checkpoint guard.

[Civilians flee Sirte battle, fighting hampers aid: U.N. - Reuters](http://news.yahoo.com/civilians-flee-sirte-battle-fighting-hampers-aid-u-230728920.html;_ylt=AmMv8gpNFqDPi2EjGQm7Fsqwag8F;_ylu=X3oDMTQ0OG91YnRoBG1pdANBcnRpY2xlIFNlY3Rpb24gV29ybGQEcGtn-;_ylg=X3oDMTJ0bGZkMWwNvBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDZjNmYmEwODgtOGU5Yi0zZjkwLWJlMTQ0tNzc0NGU3YjM5ZmJl;_ylv=3)

http://news.yahoo.com/civilians-flee-sirte-battle-fighting-hampers-aid-u-230728920.html;_ylt=AmMv8gpNFqDPi2EjGQm7Fsqwag8F;_ylu=X3oDMTQ0OG91YnRoBG1pdANBcnRpY2xlIFNlY3Rpb24gV29ybGQEcGtn-;_ylg=X3oDMTJ0bGZkMWwNvBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDZjNmYmEwODgtOGU5Yi0zZjkwLWJlMTQ0tNzc0NGU3YjM5ZmJl;_ylv=3

• Civilians flee Sirte battle, fighting hampers aid: U.N.



By William Maclean | Reuters

- TRIPOLI (Reuters) - Desperate civilians are fleeing the besieged Libyan coastal city of Sirte where the battle to dislodge fighters loyal to ousted leader Muammar Gaddafi has caused heavy casualties, U.N. and other sources said.

Interim government forces on Thursday recaptured the airport in Sirte, where Gaddafi loyalists have been using sniper, rocket and artillery fire to fight off full-scale assaults and retain one of their last two main bastions.

But the prolonged fight for Gaddafi's hometown has raised mounting concern for civilians trapped inside the city of about 100,000 people, with each side accusing the other of endangering civilians.

- "They're shelling constantly. There's indiscriminate fire within individual neighborhoods and from one area to another," Hassan, a resident who escaped the city, told Reuters.

Aid agencies said on Wednesday that a humanitarian disaster loomed in Sirte amid rising casualties and shrinking supplies of water, electricity and food.

Libya's interim government has asked the United Nations for fuel for ambulances to evacuate its wounded fighters from Sirte, a U.N. source in Libya said on Thursday.

The U.N. is sending trucks of drinking water for the increasing flow of civilians crammed into vehicles on the road from Sirte, heading either toward Benghazi to the east or Misrata to the west, he added.

- But fighting around the city and continuing insecurity around Bani Walid, the other loyalist hold-out, are preventing the world body from deploying aid workers inside, he said.

"There are two places we'd really like access to, Sirte and Ben Walid, because of concern on the impact of conflict on the civilian population," the U.N. source in Tripoli, speaking by telephone on condition of anonymity, told Reuters in Geneva.

- CARE FOR FIGHTERS

In Tripoli, interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril said the NTC had allocated \$400 million to treat fighters who were wounded in the rebellion against Gaddafi and provide grants for Libyan students studying abroad.

Jibril also said that families of fighters killed in fighting would be paid 400 Libyan dinars (\$335) a month and a monthly salary of 450 to 500 Libyan dinars would be paid to Libyans who quit their jobs to pick up arms against Gaddafi. He did not say for how long those payments would be made.

Libya's new rulers are trying to get a grip on the whole country, rein in their own unruly militias and get on with reconstruction and democratic reform.

- Jibril said efforts to form a new interim government have been suspended until after the capture of Sirte and Bani Walid.

"There are no negotiations at the moment to form a transitional government after the NTC decided to keep the current formation to facilitate the (country's) affairs until the land is liberated," Jibril said.

"There are two fronts, Sirte and Bani Walid. I hope those two areas would be liberated soon so that we can start forming a new interim government," he said, ruling out any role in the future government.

There has been speculation that divisions are preventing the formation of a more inclusive interim government.

- INTERPOL ALERT

More than a month after NTC fighters captured Tripoli, Gaddafi remains on the run, trying to rally resistance to those who ended his 42-year rule. Some of his family members have taken refuge in neighboring Algeria and Niger.

Interpol issued an alert calling for the arrest of Gaddafi's son Saadi who fled to Niger three weeks ago. The Lyon-based police agency said it was acting at the request of the NTC, which accuses Saadi of leading military units that cracked down on protests and of misappropriating property.

- Interpol has already issued "red notices" for the arrest of Gaddafi, his son Saif al-Islam and his intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi, all wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged crimes against humanity.

Gaddafi's former prime minister, Al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmoudi, who had fled to Tunisia, only to be arrested for illegal entry, has started a hunger strike in prison to protest a Libyan request for his extradition, his lawyer said.

Tunisian prosecutors say Mahmoudi will stay in jail pending an extradition decision, even though he won an appeal against a six-month prison sentence for entering Tunisia illegally.

[Sirte civilians accuse NATO of genocide | The Australian](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/sirte-civilians-accuse-nato-of-genocide/story-e6frg6so-1226147923376)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/sirte-civilians-accuse-nato-of-genocide/story-e6frg6so-1226147923376>

• Sirte civilians accuse NATO of genocide

- by: [Tom Coghlan](#)
- From: [The Times](#)
- September 27, 2011

- **CIVILIANS pouring out of the besieged city of Sirte accused NATO of committing genocide yesterday as revolutionary forces reinforced their numbers and prepared for a new attack on Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's home town.**

Long lines of civilian vehicles were seen leaving after a night punctuated by NATO air attacks. Forces fighting for the National Transitional Council (NTC) added their own artillery and mortar rounds at regular intervals.

Civilians, many looking scared or sullen, said that conditions inside Sirte were "disastrous". They made claims which, if verified, offer a conundrum for Nato, which operates with a UN mandate on the need to protect civilian life

- "It has been worse than awful," said Riab Safran, 28, as his car was searched by revolutionary fighters. His family had been sleeping on the beach, he said.

"They have hit all kinds of buildings: schools, hospitals," he said, referring to NATO airstrikes.

Start of sidebar. [Skip to end of sidebar.](#)

End of sidebar. [Return to start of sidebar.](#)

He said he could not distinguish between NATO and NTC attacks but believed it was a NATO bomb that destroyed part of his home on Saturday. NATO said it hit a number of military targets including a rocket launcher, artillery, and three ammunition stores.

- Another resident said: "NATO bombing is killing civilians. Where is the United Nations? Where is the Muslim world to stop this genocide of the people of Sirte?"

The man, who gave his name as Mohammed Ali Alum Sekily, said six members of his family had been killed, but declined to give details. An eight-day-old baby brought out in one car was born on the beach, the family said.

Some of those interviewed by The Times said that Gaddafi loyalists were forcing residents to stay in the city. Others said that residents were frightened of revolutionary fighters who were rumoured to be abducting women from cars trying to leave Sirte.

- NTC fighters denied the charges. I saw them offering food and water to those queueing to leave.

Residents said that power and water had run out and petrol was 400 Libyan dinars (\$A330) a gallon. The water shortage has produced an epidemic of diseases, according to medical staff at a clinic in the town of Harawa, 35km east of Sirte. However, Gaddafi loyalists appeared to have plentiful stores of pasta, oil, flour and ammunition, residents said. Loyalists used an open radio channel to taunt NTC fighters, insisting that the city would never be taken.

The NTC forces checked the identity papers of those leaving against lists of known Gaddafi security personnel and senior former government figures, and they detained a number of men.

- Following their unsuccessful assault on Saturday, one commander said that the NTC leadership thought that the attack was badly co-ordinated.

"We don't want to lose people, we don't want another Saturday, this was a mistake," said Omran Al Awaib from the Tiger Brigade.

The attacking forces lost eight dead and 153 wounded as they tried to move up the main road into the city. But the hard-won gains were abandoned the same evening as NTC troops retreated, leaving a barricade of sand-filled shipping containers. It has now been dismantled by Gaddafi forces.

There was almost no fighting yesterday except for long-range artillery and mortars. NTC forces were finally able to link up with reinforcements pushing towards the city from Benghazi, completing their encirclement of Sirte.

An NTC commander said that a new offensive would begin in the coming days.

[Libya rulers says Gaddafi running out of options | Reuters](#)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/22/us-libya-idUSTRE7810I820110922>

- Libya rulers says Gaddafi running out of options
- By Alexander Dziadosz and [Maria Golovnina](#)

Thu Sep 22, 2011

- SIRTE/NORTH OF BANI WALID, Libya - Libya's interim rulers said on Thursday they had further consolidated their control over Sahara desert towns that had been among Muammar Gaddafi's last strongholds, and said Gaddafi himself was running out of places to hide.

But a spokesman for the fugitive Libyan leader told Reuters that forces with the new government had killed over a hundred people while trying to capture Gaddafi's birthplace of Sirte, though there was no independent confirmation of this.

Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC), the country's de facto government after Gaddafi was swept from the capital last month, is anxious to show that it is establishing military control over the country and can govern Libya effectively.

- Progress has been slow in seizing the towns of Sirte and Bani Walid, with military ineptitude hampering the advance. Reuters saw one fighter blow his own head off and kill a comrade while handling a rocket propelled grenade.

If the NTC is unable to swiftly assert its control over the country and its own forces, it could embarrass Western leaders, especially France's Nicolas Sarkozy and Britain's David Cameron, who took a gamble by backing the anti-Gaddafi leadership.

"Our revolutionaries are controlling 100 percent of Sabha city, although there are some pockets of resistance by snipers," NTC military spokesman Ahmed Bani told reporters in the capital, Tripoli.

- "This resistance is hopeless ... They know very well that at the end of the day they will show the white flag or they will die. They are fighting for themselves, not for the tyrant," he said, referring to Gaddafi.

Until now some parts of Sabha, the traditional base for Gaddafi's own tribe about 800 km (500 miles) south of Tripoli, had been occupied by fighters loyal to him.

The council says its forces have now also taken control of Jufra, to the north-east of Sabha, and the nearby oasis towns of Sokna, Waddan, and Houn.

The NTC official said the manhunt for Gaddafi, in hiding for weeks though he occasionally issues defiant audio messages, was drawing closer to its target.

"There is no whole tribe or city on Gaddafi's side," said Bani. "I'm asking everyone in the south who has any news about the tyrant or his loyalists ... to notify the legal bodies about them."

"We are doing our best looking for the tyrant. There is some news here and there that he ran away from Sabha to another place but it cannot be confirmed."

- CLAIM OF CIVILIAN DEATHS

Despite support from NATO warplanes, government forces have struggled to capture Sirte, the biggest of the towns still outside their control.

Gaddafi's spokesman told Reuters on Thursday that NATO air strikes and interim government forces' shelling of Sirte were killing civilians.

"Between yesterday and this morning, 151 civilians were killed inside their homes as the Grad rockets and other explosives fell upon their heads," Moussa Ibrahim said in a satellite phone call to Reuters from an undisclosed location.

His claims could not immediately be verified as journalists are unable to reach the city. NATO comment was not immediately available.

But the account of casualties from Ibrahim, whose family is from Sirte, underlined the thorny problem the new government faces in taking Sirte, a city where there are still large numbers of civilians, including many whose sympathies lie with Gaddafi.

On the eastern side of Sirte, NTC forces came under heavy artillery attack more than 50 km (30 miles) outside the city. One fighter said Gaddafi artillery batteries appeared to have found the range of the NTC tanks, and were targeting them.

"There has been heavy shelling from Gaddafi forces," said Adel Al-Tarhouni, an anti-Gaddafi fighter in the village of Sultana, which came under artillery attack. "I was able to see palm trees cut from the top by the shrapnel."

A Reuters reporter on the western side of Sirte said hundreds of civilians in pickup trucks and sedans loaded with mattresses, food and water, were pouring out of the city.

- At checkpoints, NTC fighters searched their vehicles to make sure they were not loyalist fighters, and then handed out juice, biscuits, water and yoghurt to the fleeing civilians.

Aid groups have expressed concern about deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Sirte, under siege by NTC forces.

"There is no water inside, there is no gas, there is nothing," said one resident, who declined to give his name, at a checkpoint as he drove his white sedan away from Sirte.

Fighters patrolling the outskirts of the city in pickup trucks mounted with machine guns and rocket launchers said there had been skirmishes with Gaddafi loyalists. They said they were waiting for civilians to evacuate before launching an assault.

"It's not a problem with the army. It's not a military problem," said Hishem, a fighter whose pickup was mounted with a 106 mm recoilless rifle.

"The problem is that there are families still inside. Getting them out is still the most important thing."

- LACK OF Organization

North of Bani Walid on Thursday morning, NTC military forces were bringing forward tanks and Grad rocket launchers in preparation for a renewed attempt to take the town. It was not clear though when that attack would begin.

Later in the day, a Reuters reporter near the town said fighting had resumed after a lull, though it did not appear to be an all-out assault.

Gaddafi loyalists were firing shells at NTC positions on the edge of the town, and plumes of smoke could be seen rising up from within Bani Walid.

The offensive there has been frustrated by stiff resistance from well-drilled loyalist fighters, and also by a lack of organization among the NTC forces. They operate in disparate units based on their home town, with little overall command.

On Wednesday, one fighter shot his own head off and killed another fighter while handling a rocket-propelled grenade in full view of a Reuters team. In another incident, a fighter wounded himself and another fighter after losing control of his machinegun.

The nascent NTC national army tried to bring order.

"We have set up a unified operations room to unite all brigades," said brigade commander Omar Kabout. "The purpose is to increase coordination and end all this chaos because many rebels have arrived without commanders. We need to put them into brigades and stop all this random shooting."

But the message was not getting through to all the fighters, many of whom go into battle wearing flip-flop sandals, T-shirts and jeans and have no military training.

"We don't take orders from the NTC. We listen only to our own commander," said Ziyad Al Khemri, a fighter from the town of Zawiyah, just west of Tripoli.

(Reporting by [William Maclean](#), Joseph Logan and [Emma Farge](#) in Tripoli, Sherine El Madany east of Sirte, [David Brunnstrom](#) in Brussels, [Barry Malone](#) in Tunis, [John Irish](#), [Matt Spetalnick](#) and [Laura MacInnis](#) at the United Nations; Writing by [Christian Lowe](#); Editing by [Giles Elgood](#))

[WRAPUP 1-Libyan forces say they captured part of Sabha | Reuters](#)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/20/libya-idUSL5E7KJ46920110920>

- WRAPUP 1-Libyan forces say they captured part of Sabha
- Mon Sep 19, 2011 9:25pm EDT

* Interim leaders struggle to form new administration

* Disorder and infighting among NTC soldiers

* NTC dismisses reports of foreign mercenaries (Adds quotes, detail, reported arrest of mercenary leader)

- By [Maria Golovnina](#) and Alexander Dziadosz
- BANI WALID/SIRTE, Libya, Sept 20 (Reuters) - Libya's interim government said its forces seized the airport and fort in Sabha, one of the last strongholds of forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi which also controls the main route south out of Libya.

"Our forces are there in the airport and in the castle ... Our flags are flying there," Ahmed Bani, a military spokesman for the National Transitional Council (NTC), told a news conference in Tripoli on Monday. It was not possible to get independent confirmation.

Sabha, 770 km (480 miles) south of Tripoli and overlooked by an old fort built by Libya's former Italian colonial rulers, controls the main trail south to neighbouring Niger, an escape route used by members of Gaddafi's entourage.

Any advance on the town would be an important boost for government forces who have struggled to contain disunity in their ranks and faced stark reversals on other parts of the battlefield.

- Nearly a month after Gaddafi was driven from power, his loyalist holdouts have beaten back repeated assaults by NTC forces at Bani Walid and Sirte, Gaddafi's birthplace. NTC fighters have been sent fleeing in disarray after failing to storm Gaddafi bastions.

NTC forces with huge rocket launchers and artillery gathered outside Sirte on Monday, saying their were preparing for a fresh assault, as hundreds of families fled the town.

NTC fighter Mohamed Ahmed told Reuters the troops were advancing slowly, but holding back their heavy weaponry until civilians were clear.

Rockets fired by Gaddafi loyalists fell near NTC lines, throwing up clouds of dust.

Humanitarian groups have voiced alarm at reported conditions in Sirte.

"There's no electricity, no phone coverage. Nothing," resident Ibrahim Ramadan said, standing by a car packed with his family at a checkpoint.

Residents said homes had been destroyed and cars smashed to pieces as disorder spread through the city.

"People are fed up. There are explosions going off everywhere and you don't know where the bullets will come from next," said Abubakr, a resident making his way out of the city.

"Look at this," he said, pointing to a bullet hole in his windshield. "Bullets are coming down from above. People are just firing randomly."

- MERCENARY REPORT DENIED

NTC spokesman Bani denied an assertion by Gaddafi's spokesman that Gaddafi's forces had captured 17 mercenaries, some of them British and French, in the fight for Bani Walid. "There are no British or French prisoners" in the town, Bani said.

The report by Gaddafi's spokesman Moussa Ibrahim could not be verified and no immediate proof was presented.

"A group was captured in Bani Walid consisting of 17 mercenaries. They are technical experts and they include consultative officers," Ibrahim said on [Syria](#)-based Arrai television, which has backed Gaddafi.

"Most of them are French, one of them is from an Asian country that has not been identified, two English people and one Qatari."

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said there were "no French mercenaries in Libya", while the British foreign office said it had no information about whether the report was true. Qatar's foreign ministry was not available for comment. NATO, which is staging air strikes on Gaddafi loyalist positions, says it has no troops on the ground in Libya.

Western nations have sent special forces in the past, and media have reported that private security firms have aided anti-Gaddafi forces in training, targeting and with leadership.

Bani said NTC forces on Monday arrested pro-Gaddafi mercenary leader Belqasem Al-Abaaj, who had been operating in the south of the country.

- POLITICAL INFIGHTING

The NTC, still based in the eastern city of Benghazi, has faced questions about whether it can unify a country divided on tribal and local lines. A long-promised attempt to set up a more inclusive interim government fell apart overnight.

On Monday, NTC forces were unable to approach the northern gate of Bani Walid, 150 km (95 miles) southeast of Tripoli, to attack the town because of heavy gunfire from Gaddafi loyalists.

"There is a lack of organisation so far. Infantrymen are running in all directions," said Zakaria Tuham, a senior fighter with a Tripoli-based unit.

Many fighters spoke of tension between units drawn from Bani Walid itself and those from other parts of the country.

Some fighters openly disobeyed orders. In one incident, an officer from Bani Walid was heckled by troops from Tripoli after he tried to order them to stop shooting in the air.

In Benghazi, interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril failed to name a new cabinet on Sunday when his proposals did not receive full backing from all current members.

Sources familiar with the negotiations said Jibril's own role had been a sticking point. There was also disagreement about whether it was right to form a transitional government before declaring Libya "liberated", which NTC officials say can only happen when all Gaddafi loyalists are defeated.

The political infighting reveals some of the fractures in an alliance that was united in civil war by hatred of Gaddafi but remains split among pro-Western liberals, underground Islamist guerrillas and defectors from Gaddafi's government.

The NTC has its roots in Libya's east, but most of the militiamen who finally succeeded in driving Gaddafi out of Tripoli are from towns in the west. (Additional reporting by [John Irish](#) in New York, William MacLean and Joseph Logan in Tripoli, Sherine El Madany east of Sirte, Ahmed Al-Shemi in Benghazi and Juliane von Reppert-Bismarck in Brussels; Writing by [Peter Graff](#) and Andrew Heavens)

[REFILE-Ammunition shortage hampers attack on Gaddafi bastion | Reuters](#)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/20/libya-sirte-battle-idUSL5E7KK4AD20110920>

- REFILE-Ammunition shortage hampers attack on Gaddafi bastion
- Tue Sep 20, 2011
- By Sherine El Madany

EAST OF SIRTE, Libya, Sept 20 (Reuters) - Libyan troops are unable to defeat forces loyal to deposed leader Muammar Gaddafi in the city of Sirte because the country's new rulers are failing to supply them with enough ammunition, fighters near the front line said on Tuesday.

In the latest reverse in weeks of chaotic fighting over Sirte, Gaddafi's birthplace and one of the last remaining bastions of his support, five anti-Gaddafi fighters were killed on Tuesday after they came under artillery fire.

- More than a month after Gaddafi was swept from power, the interim government has still not stamped out the last pockets of resistance, prompting criticism over its lack of cohesion and raising fresh questions about whether it can run the oil exporting country effectively.

Fighters making their way back from the front line said they were meeting heavy resistance from loyalists at a place called Khamseen, 50 km (31 miles) east of Sirte, and were unable to respond because they lacked the firepower.

"The military base is not supporting us with enough ammunition," said Alnoufy Al-Ferjany, the commander of a military brigade called Martyrs of Alhawry.

He was at the hospital in Ras Lanuf, the nearest big settlement to the east of Sirte, after bringing in four of his comrades who were injured by mortar fire near Khamseen.

"We have presented a request but they have not responded and that is why we have a lot of people injured. We are on the front line and there isn't any ammunition. I experience this problem almost on a daily basis," Al-Ferjany told Reuters.

- A Reuters reporter about 60 km (38 miles) to the east of Sirte, near the village of Harawa, saw ambulances and pick up trucks racing back from the front line, while artillery rounds fired by Gaddafi loyalists slammed into the ground.

In the back of one pick-up truck was a fighter with blood pouring from a head wound.

A small field hospital in Harawa had run out of space so three wounded fighters were being treated for wounds to their heads, legs and shoulders on stretchers outside.

One fighter, his clothes covered in blood and crying, described how he had brought in one of his comrades after he was hit by an artillery strike in Khamseen.

Doctors at the field hospital, and the hospital in Ras Lanuf, said five fighters were killed and a total of 19 wounded in the fighting on Tuesday.

Another fighter outside the field hospital, who declined to give his name, repeated the complaint about supply problems.

"Yesterday we only managed to fire one Grad rocket because we are starting to run out of ammunition and we are saving as much ammunition as possible for Sirte," said the fighter, who was wearing camouflage fatigues.

• STOP-START OFFENSIVES

An NTC military spokesman in the capital Tripoli denied there was any ammunition shortage. "The fighters say there is enough," Ahmed Bani told Reuters on Tuesday.

But the account of supply problems was echoed by an influential Islamist scholar, Ali Al-Sallabi, who told Reuters the NTC's de facto prime minister, Mahmoud Jibril, should quit for failing to provide ammunition for the troops.

The United States and European powers have given Libya's new rulers, the National Transitional Council (NTC), their endorsement after NATO warplanes helped them to end Gaddafi's 42 years in power.

But the stalled fight over Sirte -- and stop-start offensives at the other pro-Gaddafi strongholds of Bani Walid and Sabha -- have underlined doubts about the NTC's organisational ability.

Earlier on Tuesday, an NTC fighter with family inside Sirte described the deteriorating conditions for civilians trapped by the fighting in the city, about 450 km (280 miles) east of Tripoli.

"The city is in a very bad condition. The people are living without water, electricity, or gas or baby milk for about three months now and the people in Sirte are drinking polluted water," said Ayoub Al-Ferzany, who had managed to get out of the city to join the anti-Gaddafi fighters.

"They are surrounded in the middle of the city (by Gaddafi loyalists) and cannot leave because of the shelling and because of snipers. About half of the people in Sirte were able to flee from the west but it is very difficult for them to come towards the east, because resistance there is very strong," he said. (Writing by [Christian Lowe](#))

[Sirte shows rocky path ahead for Libya's new rulers | Reuters](#)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/22/us-libya-sirte-scene-idUSTRE78L2Z920110922>

- Sirte shows rocky path ahead for Libya's new rulers
- By Alexander Dziadosz

SIRTE | Thu Sep 22, 2011

- (Reuters) - Some wave the tricolor revolutionary flag, celebrating what they hope will soon be the liberation of their town. Others shift nervously, fleeing reluctantly from a city where they owed much of their wealth to Muammar Gaddafi.

The battle for Sirte, the former Libyan leader's hometown, is proving to be one of the toughest for the new rulers and if prolonged, threatens to reignite tribal divisions that could hamper any attempt to unify the country.

"The situation isn't good. There's random shelling, rockets falling on people every day, falling on civilians," resident Jamal Makhzoum said from the driver's seat of a sedan heading west from the city.

When a man near the car interrupted, Makhzoum held up his hand and suggested it was not clear to him who was responsible for the shelling that has destroyed dozens of homes and prevented deliveries of much-needed food and medicine.

- "Just a minute. These people say it isn't them," he said, gesturing toward Sirte. "And the revolutionaries here say it isn't them. And every day we bury two or three people."

Thousands of civilians are believed to be trapped inside the coastal city, where former rebels have traded volleys of rocket and machinegun fire with fighters loyal to Gaddafi for almost a month. The situation is hard to gauge as no journalists are inside the city and residents' reports are contradictory.

Fighters for the National Transitional Council say they believe some residents of the city, which Gaddafi transformed from a remote fishing village into a modern city, still support him and a few may have taken up arms to defend him.

The city is home to many members of his small but powerful Gadhdfha tribe and the former leader had once hoped to fashion it as the would-be capital of Africa after persuading leaders to meet there in 1991 to sign into being the African Union.

- The fighters check every vehicle leaving the city and say their main priority is to protect civilians. They say they stopped firing artillery, tanks and heavy rocket launchers and have sent messengers inside the city to ask families to leave.

"Our priority now is the civilians," said a Libyan engineer helping coordinate the assault who gave his name as Saleh.

Cars and trucks loaded with families, mattresses and food rolled past. Fighters handed out water, yogurt and biscuits.

"We will try to attack Sirte when we feel it's empty. Some of the civilians are afraid to leave because Gaddafi gave them a bad picture about us," he said.

Gaddafi's spokesman told Reuters on Thursday, by phone from a location he did not disclose, that a combination of NTC artillery fire and NATO strikes had killed 151 civilians in Sirte over the past 48 hours.

That account could not be independently verified and there was no immediate comment from NATO.

- **TRIBAL DIVISIONS**

Gaddafi exploited tribal divisions to maintain sway over Libya's vast territory, and many Libyans say his tribe benefited -- creating allegiances which still hold firm now.

"All the tribes that were relatives of Gaddafi, they got salaries without working. They had a different life from other Libyans," said Ismail Taweel, a fighter on Sirte's outskirts. "When Gaddafi goes, they think it will all be over."

Like most fighters surrounding Sirte, one of just two major strongholds held by Gaddafi loyalists, the commander Saleh is from Misrata, a city to the west devastated in a siege which killed more than 1,000 residents.

The fighters have advanced slowly into Sirte after being repulsed in a street-by-street battle on Saturday, now patrolling the outskirts, trading sporadic rocket fire with loyalists and ushering hundreds of civilians away from the city.

"We have heavy weapons -- Grad launchers, tanks, rockets -- but we're not using them because of the civilians. We can only use them on military camps outside the city," said El-Tohamy Abuzein, a brigade commander near the frontline.

- The assault on Sirte has appeared better coordinated than in the other main Gaddafi bastion, Bani Walid, where disorderly retreats have been the norm. Fuel tankers fill pickups and volunteers give sandwiches and juice to fighters. Men in army fatigues pace the front, issuing orders through walkie-talkies.

But a lack of training and discipline among some fighters has held up the advance at times. One fighter nearly shot himself when he fired a celebratory round into the side of the barrel of a captured tank, sending the bullet ricocheting.

Another group fired a Grad missile into a lamppost during a battle, knocking off the light and sending the rocket crashing to the ground about a hundred meters away from their position.

It is unclear how much resistance they face inside the city. Saleh, the commander, said he believed Gaddafi's side had around 1,000 fighters, including 120 "professional snipers."

The NTC also coordinates airstrikes with NATO, whose jets frequently roar overhead.

Residents who have fled said they often weren't sure where the rockets were coming from -- Gaddafi loyalists, NTC forces or NATO jets. But for many, it hardly matters.

"People inside are fed up. There are explosions everywhere. We don't know where the bullets will come from next. Houses are destroyed, cars are broken," said a man who gave his name as Abubakr.

"No one is safe in their homes . It's just random fire and that's it."

[Libya Counts Its Martyrs, but the Bodies Don't Add Up - NYTimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/17/world/africa/skirmishes-flare-around-qaddafi-strongholds.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all)

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/17/world/africa/skirmishes-flare-around-qaddafi-strongholds.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all

- Libya Counts More Martyrs Than Bodies

- By [ROD NORDLAND](#)

Published: September 16, 2011

- **TRIPOLI, Libya** — Where are all the dead?
- Officially, according to Libya's new leaders, their martyrs in the struggle against the government of Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#) should number 30,000 to 50,000, not even counting their enemies who have fallen.

Yet in the country's morgues, the war dead registered from both sides in each area so far are mostly in the hundreds, not the thousands. And those who are still missing total as few as 1,000, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Those figures may be incomplete, but even if the missing number proves to be three times as high, and all are dead, the toll would be far short of official casualty totals.

- On Friday, anti-Qaddafi fighters attacked the two remaining strongholds of the loyalist forces, in the seaside city of Surt and the desert town of Bani Walid. Although both assaults were repulsed by determined resistance from the pro-Qaddafi forces, there can be little doubt that the war is in its final phases. And as it winds down, the question of how many died is taking on greater significance.

The death toll from the Libyan uprising is unarguably horrendous, even if it does not fit neatly into the former rebels' narrative of a David-and-Goliath struggle against a bloodthirsty regime that slaughtered tens of thousands of the helpless and the innocent. It has also become a politically delicate issue, with some new government officials refusing

to release hard statistics on casualties and human rights groups cautious about taking a definitive position.

- The new authorities say the confirmed death toll will rise with the discovery of mass graves where the Qaddafi government hid its victims, both during its final months and as it collapsed and fled Tripoli and other population centers.

Mass graves of recent vintage have indeed been found — 13 of them confirmed by the Red Cross, or “about 20” found by the government, according to the Transitional National Council’s humanitarian coordinator, Muattez Aneizi. More are being found “nearly every day,” Mr. Aneizi said.

“Mass” is slightly misleading, however, because the largest actual grave site found so far, in the Nafusah Mountains of western Libya, [had 34 bodies](#). In many of the others, the victims numbered only in the single digits. Many are not even graves, but rather containers or buildings where people were executed and their bodies left to rot.

- The Red Cross counted only 125 dead from the 13 sites it confirmed, with 53 of those found in a hangar near Tripoli’s airport. While the rebels may not have died in the numbers their side has claimed, there is no doubt that [many were killed, often horribly](#), after having been taken prisoner. As the Qaddafi government collapsed and its die-hards fled from Tripoli and other strongholds, such war crimes happened in many well-documented cases. They just did not happen in many thousands of cases, judging from the available evidence.

There has been no explanation of the basis for either the council’s tally of 30,000 to 50,000 dead, or the number preferred by the new government’s minister of health, Naji Barakat, [a more modest 25,000 to 30,000](#).

At the Ministry of Health, Mohammed al-Ghazwi, who leads a newly formed Committee on the Dead, charged with confirming death tolls from the conflict, was reluctant to give any numbers out. “Every day we find another grave, so I can’t give you a specific number,” Mr. Ghazwi said. “But it’s about twenty-five to thirty thousand, like the minister of health said.”

- Asked how many of those were based on documented cases of dead found so far, he said they were many fewer, but he could not give a number. “It’s very hard to tell the real number because during the Qaddafi time they hid all of them,” Mr. Ghazwi said.

In Tripoli, there are two morgues, but most victims who die violent deaths are taken to [one of them, at Tripoli Central Hospital](#). There, according to Ali al-Kerdasi, a member of the hospital’s media committee, the dead since Aug. 25 totaled 700. Mr. Kerdasi said 600 people had been reported missing by relatives who came to the hospital to try to find them; 113 pictures of missing people are posted on the hospital’s emergency ward walls.

The figure of 700 dead may not have included all of those who died in the first days of the final battle for the city, from Aug. 20, when the main hospitals were in the hands of government forces for the first few days, and relatives may have buried some of the dead without taking them to the morgue as required by law.

- At the site of the other morgue, at Tripoli Medical Center, Dr. Hossam Algedar, head of the center’s missing persons team, said he was not allowed to release information on the numbers of dead and missing. On the walls of that hospital, fliers show at least 127 missing people.

Bodies of people who have not yet been identified are shown, with their photos, on the team’s Facebook page; they total 52. Dr. Algedar said that was only a partial list.

Dr. Algedar does not hesitate to confirm the widely quoted figure of dead and missing. “Thirty to fifty thousand is a credible number,” he said. “The destination of the missing is a mystery.”

His view is shared by Dr. Othman el-Zentani, a forensic pathologist who has been put in charge of the National Council of the Missing, joining various ministries and international agencies like the Red Cross in an effort to rationalize the lists of missing.

The group has yet to have its first full meeting, but Dr. Zentani confidently predicted that the dead or missing might surpass 20,000. “Why not?” he said. “It’s a seven-month-long struggle, everywhere by all kinds of weapons, so I don’t doubt that.”

- Everyone agrees that the toll, whatever it may be, would have been much higher if Colonel Qaddafi’s forces had held out in Tripoli for as long as people had feared. Instead, most victims there died from Aug. 20 to Aug. 26. “Tripoli has fallen in a few days; it was not a Beirut or a Gaza,” said Carole Pittet of the Red Cross.

The estimate of 1,000 missing by the Red Cross includes [many migrant workers](#), Ms. Pittet said, and was gathered by field offices in Tripoli; Misurata, scene of the worst fighting; and Benghazi, where the revolution began.

Even in Benghazi, where fighting raged for weeks before NATO intervened to turn the tide against loyalists, casualties may not have been much higher than in Tripoli. According to Omar Babdous, head of tracing for the Red Crescent Society’s Benghazi office, 850 people were confirmed killed during the fighting in Benghazi and the area around it, while 1,350 are listed as missing.

In Misurata, a much smaller city than either Tripoli or Benghazi, [the death toll was worse](#) than anywhere else in Libya. Misurata’s authorities have identified 1,083 dead on all sides, according to Abu Bakr Triebe, the head of the Misurata Medical Bureau, with 2,000 believed missing.

- The missing totals in those three largest places add up to far more (exceeding 3,500) than the Red Cross figure for the whole country, even though Red Cross teams were gathering data in those cities as well. But with no centralized system of reconciling missing reports, it is not possible to know how much duplication there is or how many initially were reported missing but then found. And many Libyans may just have not reported missing people to the Red Cross.

Sidney Kwiram, a representative of Human Rights Watch who has been in Libya for much of the conflict, said it was too early for any conclusions about the toll of missing and dead. Some of the missing may still be held by pro-Qaddafi forces inside Surt, where there is a military police detention center. Many rebels were buried by relatives and friends to avoid risking dangerous contact with the authorities. “In Tripoli, people even stopped taking their loved ones to the hospitals out of fear,” Ms. Kwiram said.

Much of the official death toll is based on the theory that there were 30,000 prisoners before the fall of the Qaddafi

government, when prisons were all opened, and only 9,000 were found alive. The problem is, no one actually knows how many prisoners there were, and no one actually counted how many were released.

"The numbers you're hearing in the press, they're just basically guesses," said Stefan Schmitt, a forensic anthropologist with Physicians for Human Rights, who was in Libya recently to advise the authorities on how to handle mass graves. "It's too early to really know."

Kareem Fahim contributed reporting from outside Bani Walid, Libya.

[Libya danger of Islamic extremists, Nato Secretary General warns - Telegraph](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/8758567/Libya-danger-of-Islamic-extremists-Nato-Secretary-General-warns.html)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/8758567/Libya-danger-of-Islamic-extremists-Nato-Secretary-General-warns.html>

• Libya danger of Islamic extremists, Nato Secretary General warns

Libya could be in danger of falling into the hands of Islamic extremists if a stable government is not rapidly established, the Nato Secretary General has warned

- By [Thomas Harding](#), Defence Correspondent

6:45AM BST 13 Sep 2011

- In an interview with The Daily Telegraph Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Islamic extremists would "try to exploit" any weaknesses as the country tries to rebuild after four decades of Col Muammar Gaddafi's rule.
- Asked if Nato was worried that a delay in setting up government risked extremists taking over Mr Rasmussen said: "I don't think it's a major risk but of course we cannot exclude the possibility that extremists will try to exploit a situation and take advantage of a power vacuum. But based on our talks with the National Transitional Council I do believe they are sincere in their desire for democracy."
- While Nato was not actively targeting Gaddafi "things can move very fast" if he was removed.

"I think that he still inspires resistance in some pockets of Gaddafi loyalists."

- Although pockets of Gaddafi loyalists were still resisting he said Nato would "terminate" the air campaign "as soon as the situation allows".

"I do believe we are in the very final phase of our operation," said the former Danish prime minister. "But there's still a threat to the civilian population and as long as that exists we will continue our operation."

- While the Libya campaign was a great success for the European members of the alliance, particularly Britain and France, the Nato leader said it could not have "carried out this mission successfully without the assets provided by the United States".

He warned that European countries "lacked some capabilities" and urged them to rapidly invest in intelligence and surveillance assets. During the campaign Britain axed the sophisticated Nimrod R1 spy aircraft as part of defence cuts.

- The aerial bombardment has been remarkable for the very low number of civilian casualties despite the thousands of bombs dropped.

Indeed Mr Rasmussen suggested that it might become clear that no civilians were killed by Nato during the campaign although he could not exclude on one occasion the "possibility" that "we might have caused civilian casualties".

- But the campaign had shown the need to invest in accurate weapons such as the RAF's Brimstone and Paveway bombs.

"A very important lesson learnt is that investment in precision is crucial."

He added: "Furthermore we have shown that it is possible to conduct operations like this from the air and at sea without putting Nato forces on the ground."

- "This operation could serve as a model for future operations. But there are limits to how much you can achieve from the air."
- However if the campaign slows after the initial success of taking Tripoli last month then the Nato Council will have to consider whether to extend its mandate beyond the current deadline of 27 Sept.

The decision will be based on the NTC's "ability to protect civilians".

Despite his warnings Mr Rasmussen said he remained optimistic about Libya's future.

"I envisage peaceful transition to democracy. But it will be very difficult with lots of stumbling blocks along the road."

[NATO's Libya generals should be hauled to court, says Dennis Kucinich - Reid J. Epstein - POLITICO.com](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0811/61920.html)

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0811/61920.html>

- NATO's Libya generals should be hauled to court, says Dennis Kucinich
- NATO commanders who authorized the Libya bombing campaign should be "held accountable" to international law and hauled before the world court for civilian deaths, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) said Tuesday.
- "NATO's top commanders may have acted under color of international law, but they are not exempt from international law," Kucinich said in [a statement released by his office](#). "If members of the Qadhafi regime are to be held accountable, NATO's top commanders must also be held accountable through the International Criminal Court for all civilian deaths resulting from bombing. Otherwise, we will have witnessed the triumph of a new international gangsterism."
- Kucinich, who in March suggested President Barack Obama's authorizing of airstrikes on Libya were "[an impeachable offense](#)" and sponsored [a July measure](#) to defund the military effort there, criticized what he called an evolving rationale for the NATO offensive.
- The seven-term Cleveland congressman released his statement just as forces loyal to Qadhafi appeared to have abandoned their defense of his heavily fortified Tripoli compound. [It was not clear where Qadhafi is](#), though a Russian chess official said he spoke with the dictator and reported he remains in the capital.
- "The reasons for the U.S./NATO intervention in Libya keep changing," he said. "First, it was about the potential for a massacre in Benghazi. When the massacre did not materialize and once the war against Libya was under way, the reasons for intervention changed."

And Kucinich questioned the motivation behind U.S. intervention in Libya.

- "Was the United States, through participation in the overthrow of the regime, furthering the aims of international oil corporations in pursuit of control over one of the world's largest oil resources?" he asked. "Did the United States at the inception of the war against Libya align itself with elements of Al Qaeda, while elsewhere continuing to use the threat of Al Qaeda as a reason for U.S. military intervention, presence and occupation?"

[Black Libya City Said to Fall to Rebel Siege | Black Agenda Report](http://blackagenda.com/content/black-libya-city-said-fall-rebel-siege)

<http://blackagenda.com/content/black-libya-city-said-fall-rebel-siege>

• Black Libya City Said to Fall to Rebel Siege

Wed, 08/17/2011

• by **BAR executive editor Glen Ford**

Western-backed rebels have made good their vow to "purge slaves, black skin," with their reported capture of Tawurgha, a black Libyan city, after a long siege. Elsewhere, just 30 miles from the capital city of Tripoli, NATO bombed 85 civilians to oblivion. Facing a September 27 United Nations deadline on its "humanitarian" mission, "NATO has resorted to terror bombing to clear the way for the rebel advance."

- Black Libya City Said to Fall to Rebel Siege
- The mostly black town of [Tawurgha has fallen](#) to NATO-backed rebels after a long siege, according to al-Jazeera, the Qatar-based media mouthpiece for the rebels. It is an event only racists could celebrate, a triumph of hate and Euro-American arms and money over an enclave of dark-skinned Libyans descended from Africans once sold in the town's slave market. As the *Wall Street Journal* [reported on June 21](#), the road to Tawurgha (sometimes spelled Ta-wer-gha), 25 miles from the port of Misurata, is punctuated by rebel graffiti vowing to "purge slaves, black skin." Previously, Benghazi-based rebels methodically cleansed Misurata's black neighborhoods, warning residents never to return to their jobs or classrooms.
- Rebels claimed Tawurgha's defenders used civilians as "human shields" during the final assault – the stock phrase deployed to justify massacres of non-combatants. President Obama has, in effect, been arming a racist lynch mob and calling them freedom fighters.
- Government forces earlier claimed to have recaptured Misurata, itself, along with other battlefield victories, reports that are mirrored by rebel boasts of progress in encircling the capital city, Tripoli, and its 1.5 million people. The pace of military activity has quickened, dramatically, with the September 27 expiration of the Euro-American "mandate" in Libya approaching. NATO has stepped up bombing of pro-government towns along a wide front, throwing every available unit of feuding rebel forces into the fray in hopes of achieving regime change before the deadline. Rebel claims to have

- captured the town of Brega are in dispute. According to the rebel high command, the oil port was once defended by a brigade of "Chadian" soldiers – another "black African" threat that Amnesty International and other outside observers found to be totally fictional. The rebellion appears to run on Africanophobia.
- Should Moammar Gaddafi still be standing on September 27, NATO will be compelled to apply for an extension of its UN fig-leaf – a request that is likely to be opposed by Russia and/or China, most of the African Union and other regional powers – unless NATO, as the Israelis like to say, has already established its desired "facts on the ground."
 - NATO has resorted to terror bombing to clear the way for the rebel advance. Foreign journalists [witnessed the funeral](#) of 28 of the 33 children, 20 men and 32 women who were killed in a NATO attack on the town of Majer, only about 30 miles from the capital, last week, according to a government spokesman. Unable to deny the carnage, western media gave cursory coverage, and quickly resumed their p.r. work for the rebels. NATO's top commander in Libya, Canadian Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard, [feigned innocence](#). "I cannot believe that 85 civilians were present when we struck in the wee hours of the morning, and given our intelligence," he told the press. "I can assure you that there (were not) 85 civilians present, but I cannot assure you that there were none at all."
 - At times, it seems the western media, standing death watch in Tripoli, could not recognize a huge demonstration of pro-government sentiment if it materialized right in front of their eyes – as has occurred! But NATO military planners are not so deaf and dumb as their media servants. Although Libya's government may not have the 85 percent approval Gaddafi claims, it could not have withstood the NATO onslaught without the active support of millions. NATO understands that it must bring to bear its full range of terror tactics if it is to break Tripoli's resistance by September 27, in order to present the UN with a fait accompli.
 - The "no-fly" ban that morphed into a Euro-American blitzkrieg was justified to prevent a non-existent "massacre" in Benghazi – a city where human rights workers later concluded that only 110 people died prior to the intervention, many of them pro-government. Now, 30 miles from Tripoli, almost as many civilians have been wiped out by NATO in one night, and no one will ever know how many black Libyans were lynched in the fall of Tawurgha.
 - **A Dissonance in Harlem**

The Harlem Millions March, August 20, organized by New York's December 12th Movement (D-12) and billed as a protest against NATO bombing of Libya and western sanctions against Zimbabwe, wound up shutting out Cynthia McKinney, the most prominent African American "eyewitness" to the bombing. McKinney, who traveled from Atlanta for the well-publicized appearance at the event, and whose presence was announced to the crowd by D-12's Viola Plumber, was never called to speak, despite long and sometimes undisciplined presentations by many others leading up to final remarks from the Nation of Islam's Min. Louis Farrakhan. This "clannish" behavior by D-12, as one disappointed visitor described it, is, to say the least, unhelpful to movement-building.

- **Black Is Back Coalition**

On August 20, as part of an "International Day of Action" in opposition to the "Other Wars" the U.S. wages against Africans around the world, the Black Is Back Coalition for Social Justice, Peace and Reparations has scheduled events in:

[AFP: US launches anti-Kadhafi offensive in Africa](#)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iEHOMgf54GFGdViCxL-nLS3pr4og?docid=CNG.c23568239de2d2c9560efb10644f622c.651>

- US launches anti-Kadhafi offensive in Africa

By Herve Bar (AFP) – Aug 9, 2011

- BENGHAZI, Libya — The United States has launched a diplomatic offensive against Libya among African nations as Tripoli accused NATO of a "massacre" of 85 villagers in air strikes in support of rebels.

American diplomats are visiting several African countries as part of efforts to urge leaders to press Libyan strongman Moamer Kadhafi to leave power immediately, officials in Washington said on Tuesday.

Several African states, having benefited financially from Kadhafi's policies, have been reluctant to call for him to step down, and have criticised the NATO-led military campaign in Libya.

Gene Cretz, the US ambassador recalled from Libya shortly before Kadhafi launched his bloody crackdown on the opposition in February, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Donald Yamamoto arrived Monday in Addis Ababa, headquarters of the African Union, State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner said.

They "are in Africa to meet with African Union members to discuss the crisis in Libya and the need for Kadhafi to relinquish power now," he told AFP.

They also met Mahmud Jibril, leader of Libya's opposition National Transitional Council (NTC) who was visiting Ethiopia.

Kadhafi, meanwhile, said world powers would be held responsible for the "ugly massacre committed by NATO" on the village of Majer where 85 people were killed, Libya's official JANA news agency reported.

- Majer, 10 kilometres (six miles) south of Zliten 120 kilometres east of Tripoli, was attacked late on Monday to try to help rebel fighters enter the government-held city from the south, government spokesman Mussa Ibrahim said.

"After the first three bombs dropped at around 11:00 pm (2100 GMT) on Monday, many residents of the area ran to the bombed houses to try to save their loved ones. Three more bombs struck," he told reporters on an organised visit.

Thirty-three children, 32 women and 20 men from 12 families were killed in the "massacre," Mussa said.

Reporters attended the funerals of victims and saw 28 bodies buried at the local cemetery where hundreds of people vented their anger against NATO, "the spies and the traitors," an AFP correspondent said.

In the hospital morgue, 30 bodies -- including two children and one woman -- were shown along with other bodies which had been torn apart.

NATO, which launched its air campaign at the end of March under UN resolutions to protect civilians against Kadhafi's

forces, insisted the raids were "legitimate" and said it had no evidence of civilian deaths.

- "We do not have evidence of civilian casualties at this stage," the NATO spokesman for the alliance's Libya campaign, Colonel Roland Lavoie, said from his Naples headquarters.

NATO raids south of Zliten were against two former farms used for military purposes by Kadhafi forces, he said. "This was a military facility clearly... NATO takes extreme precaution not to harm innocent civilians living or working nearby."

JANA said Kadhafi sent a message to the heads of state of UN Security Council members saying "they should bear responsibility for the ugly massacre carried out by NATO in Majer."

He was quoted as saying "there has never been such a massacre throughout the history of wars."

Rebels fighting around Zliten said on Monday they were running low on ammunition as they struggled to hold off an assault by loyalists.

The rebels, advancing from the nearby port city of Misrata, punched into the centre of Zliten a week ago. But they later pulled back to the edge of the city of 200,000 inhabitants.

- Elsewhere on the battlefield, at least two rebels were killed in fighting on Tuesday around the oil town of Brega in eastern Libya, a rebel spokesman said.

NATO said it had hit nine targets in the Brega area on Tuesday, listing them as a military facility, one tank, four armed vehicles and three multiple rocket launchers.

The alliance also said it hit nine anti-aircraft systems and eight surface-to-air missile systems in Tripoli.

On the diplomatic front, France said new EU sanctions were imposed on Kadhafi's regime. Canada and Denmark, which have both recognised the NTC, also expelled pro-Kadhafi diplomats, officials said.

And the United States said it has transferred the Libyan embassy in Washington to the NTC, which it has recognised as Libya's de facto government.

On Wednesday, JANA quoted Libyan Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Kaaim as saying British Prime Minister David Cameron should step down as he had "lost all legitimacy" because of the riots shaking Britain since Saturday.

[BBC News - What really happened in Libya's Zlitan?](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14486170?print=true)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14486170?print=true>

- 11 August 2011 Last updated at 00:39 ET

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- What really happened in Libya's Zlitan
- The Libyan government has taken correspondents to Zlitan, to see the aftermath of a Nato strike that it says killed 85 civilians. Nato says it hit a military staging base. The BBC's Matthew Price went along to weigh the competing claims.

A photocopied version of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* lay in the rubble. Next to it were school books, their pages fluttering in the light breeze.

A policeman picked through the remains of the house. He slid the door of a refrigerator lying on its back to one side. Inside was a melon, and some bags of beans.

Nearby a sofa and a bed lay broken and covered in dust. There were other signs of normal life: a teddy bear, a football.

Just around the broken, mangled corner of the building, Libyan Prime Minister Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi was speaking.

"You all saw that 85 Libyan civilians, from several families, were massacred in this location," he said, standing outside the remains of what was once perhaps a living room.

"Thirty-three of them were children of a very young age," he continued. "This is 'Western democracy'."

- Salwa's story



Salwa, aged 15, says her mother and two sisters were killed in the strike

For Libya's government, what happened south of Zlitan in the village of Majar is proof that Nato, contrary to its mandate, is not protecting civilians. Officials believe the alliance is engaged in regime change, at whatever cost.

Almost 48 hours after the first strike hit the cluster of buildings in the countryside to the south of Zlitan, Nato said it had completed its assessment of what happened.

It confirmed it had hit the area, targeting four buildings and nine vehicles at the site between 23.33 on Monday and 02.34 on Tuesday.

The times for the strikes correspond with those given by people in the area.

Nato went on: "We monitored this military compound very carefully before striking."

- "Our assessment, based on the level of destruction of the buildings, confirms the likelihood of military and mercenary casualties. The allegation of civilian casualties made by the Gaddafi regime was not corroborated by available factual information at the site."

Try telling that however to 15 year-old Salwa Jawoo. Her name was on some of the school books at the scene - I found her in Zlitan hospital.

Her face was scarred - she had a broken shoulder.

She said she was sitting outside her home when the first missile struck. It was the second one that injured her.

- "There was no military camp. We were just living there. Why did they attack us?" she asked.



"My mother died, and my two sisters," she added, with a sigh. A tear ran down her cheek as she spoke. Her grief was genuine.

So, too, was the sorrow of Ali Mufta Hamed Gavez. His wife - also in the hospital - had her leg amputated after being wounded.

Next door in the mortuary the stench was overwhelming - body bags laid strewn across the floor.

There were about 30. The officials who took international journalists there unzipped perhaps half of them. Inside most were the bodies of young men.

The was little left of some. A foot lay on top of a mess of bloody body parts in one bag. In another, the intestines of the man spilled out.

Shrapnel wounds had lacerated the skin. Many were blackened and covered in dust.

Among the bodies of the men, were also those of two children, and two women.

One child, a two-year-old, bore no visible scars. Its skin was clean.

- Important moment

Since the strike, and during the three days of mourning announced for the victims, Libya's state television has broadcast footage - clearly from the same place - that shows the body of a young child being pulled out of the rubble.

We will likely never know precisely how many died at Majar or who they were.

The front line is not far away. From the site plumes of white smoke can be seen rising from where the fighting is taking place. It would make sense that soldiers would need somewhere to rest in the area.

Most of the bodies in the mortuary were men of fighting age.

The government itself also indicated that the area is a strategic one - it said Nato's only reason for hitting the site was to "open the southern gate" to the town of Zliten so the rebels could advance and then from there attack Tripoli.

Civilians were injured - and it seems killed. The government says 33 of them were children. But they showed international journalists the bodies of just two.

The Libyan leadership clearly believes this is an important moment.

State television's reporting of a large-scale loss of life at the hands of Nato will harden the resolve of those who support Col Gaddafi.

There will also be a belief, that global coverage of the Libyan government figures, might perhaps heighten the unease among some Nato member states about where the campaign is going, and how effective it is proving to be.

[Libyan Deaths, Media Silence](#)

<http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=4379>

- Libyan Deaths, Media Silence
Were Dozens Killed in Majer NATO Airstrikes?

8/18/11

Allegations of Libyan civilian deaths as a result of NATO bombing have often been covered in the corporate media as an opportunity to scoff at the Gadhafi regime's unconvincing propaganda (**FAIR Blog**, [6/9/11](#)).

But dramatic new allegations that dozens of civilians were killed in Majer after NATO airstrikes on August 8 have been met with near-total media silence.

- According to Libyan officials, 85 civilians were killed in Majer-- a town south of Zliten, a site of frequent clashes and NATO airstrikes. There is no reason journalists should take this claim at face value. But reports from the scene suggest that something significant happened. According to **Agence France Presse** ([8/9/11](#)), "Reporters attended the funerals of victims and saw 28 bodies buried at the local cemetery.... In the hospital morgue, 30 bodies -- including two children and one woman -- were shown along with other bodies which had been torn apart."

The **AFP** report included NATO denials, with a spokesman claiming that the target "was a military facility clearly."

A **Reuters** correspondent ([8/9/11](#)) "counted 20 body bags in one room, some of them stacked one on top of the other.... In total, reporters saw about 30 bodies at the Zlitan hospital." The **New York Times** (8/10/11) ran a 170-word version of a **Reuters** dispatch which noted: "There was no evidence of weapons at the farmhouses, but there were no bodies there, either. Nor was there blood."

- Amnesty International has called for an investigation, which led to this mention from **CNN** anchor John King (8/11/11):

Amnesty International is demanding that NATO investigate whether a Monday strike on Moammar Gadhafi's forces

killed 85 Libyan civilians including 33 children. NATO says it has no evidence of civilian casualties at this point.

A Nexis database search yields very little coverage in U.S. outlets beyond that brief comment. But that is not because no reporters were present. **CNN** correspondent Ivan Watson covered a mass funeral after the strikes. But his report aired only on **CNN International** (8/10/11). Watson reported a visit to "three or four houses that had been demolished by some kind of missiles from the sky."

- He added:

We were also shown a morgue where there were the bodies of at least 25 people. Many of them appeared to be men. There were some women and children included among those corpses.

Watson noted that it was "impossible for us, from this perspective, to confirm whether or not 85 people were in fact killed, but it does appear that at least some women and were among those hurt in this deadly strike." (You can watch Watson's report [here](#)).

Watson's **CNN.com** report (8/10/11) included an interview with a Libyan who claimed that nine members of his family were killed in the attack, including his two-year old daughter. Watson also interviewed a man who was burying his daughter.

It is curious that Watson's reporting was shared with **CNN's** international audience, but not broadcast to its domestic audience.

- But Watson did appear on **CNN** a few days earlier from the scene of another NATO strike in Zliten. The point of that report (8/5/11) was to suggest that official claims of civilian deaths were suspicious. In that segment, Watson noted that on a visit to a law school that had been attacked by NATO forces, he found what "appear to be uniforms over here, these olive green pants. And then we have got boxes here that look an awful lot like they could have been holding ammunition."

Reporting that undermines Libyan claims of civilian casualties has been a staple of the war so far-- as evidenced by headlines like "Libya Government Fails to Prove Claims of NATO Casualties" (**Washington Post**, 6/6/11) and "Libya Stokes Its Machine Generating Propaganda" (**New York Times**, 6/7/11).

Is Majer being ignored by the media because it is just more clumsy Libyan propaganda? Or is it because the story might conflict with the media's overriding message that Libyan civilians aren't dying in NATO's airstrikes? In any event, corporate media outlets that have so diligently sought to debunk Libyan claims of civilian deaths should investigate what happened in Majer. On the **BBC** website, reporter Matthew Price published one such effort (8/11/11), headlined "What really happened in Libya's Zlitan?" There should be more like it.

[LIBYAN REFUGEES: 'THE REBELS ARE POWER HUNGRY TERRORISTS'. « LIBYA 360°](http://libya360.wordpress.com/2011/06/22/libyan-refugees-the-rebels-are-power-hungry-terrorists)

<http://libya360.wordpress.com/2011/06/22/libyan-refugees-the-rebels-are-power-hungry-terrorists>

- LIBYAN REFUGEES: 'THE REBELS ARE POWER HUNGRY TERRORISTS'.
- **NATO & rebel atrocity claims break through barricades of civil war**
Throughout the course of the four month long revolution against Colonel Gaddafi's regime, Libyans have found themselves surrounded by threats. NATO forces have killed hundreds of civilians during their bombardments, according to government claims. And rebels have been accused of committing atrocities against their own people.

[RT](#)

- Civilian casualties have raised serious misgivings about NATO intervention in Libya, even among supporters of the ongoing aerial campaign. And while the international community is taking sides in the conflict, it is the Libyan people who suffer most.

Salma and her family escaped from the Libyan rebel stronghold of Benghazi to hide in a refugee camp in the west of the country when life in their native city turned into a nightmare.

"It's not safe there anymore. It's become dangerous. And that's not only because of explosions and gunshots. One day, people from the government in Benghazi – you call them rebels, we call them terrorists – came to me and told me, 'we have to arrest your daughter, because we know that she supports Gaddafi,'" Salma told RT.

- The escape has been long and hard for the women and their family, says Moona, another refugee.

"I had to hide for some time from them, as they've been searching for me. Then we knew that there was a bus coming from Benghazi to Tunisia, the bus with the rebels, for their purposes. We took that bus, with our faces covered, and everybody was against Gaddafi there. We told them that we are also against and they let us in. We kept silent till we went to Egypt and from there via Tunisia we were sent here," she recalled.

Salma's brother Sabri, a surgeon, has also fled the city. He says they have made three attempts on his life, but he only left when he saw a killing.

"They took him from the ICU and killed him in front of the ICU and hanged his body on the wall of the hospital," he said, describing what happened to one of the patients.

The doctor says the people from the National Transitional Council were behind it – the rebels' official political body formed after the revolution in Libya started in mid-February. Its members are recognized by many countries throughout the world as the only legitimate representatives of Libya.

- "There is no opinion other than their opinion. You are either with them or against them. They talk about freedom and democracy but there is no freedom and democracy. They just want the power," doctor Sabri explains.

The refugees in the camp say they now finally feel safe. But it is not that safe from this side of the frontline either.

People gathered at a cemetery in Sabratha, the western region of Tripoli, to bury those killed in what the Libyan government says was a NATO airstrike. A bomb apparently landed on a private compound, flattened it and killed 15 people, including three kids.

"We have been calling for peace and negotiation for months and no one wants to listen to us. Now we have to pay a very heavy price of civilian casualties and also military casualties. I think the time has come for the world to understand that this conflict has to come to an end immediately," says Moussa Ibrahim, a spokesman for the Libyan government.

But it is very unlikely to happen anytime soon. The newly dug ground in the cemetery is still fresh, while NATO has already claimed that the operation to "protect civilians" must go on.

[AFP: Libya slams UN chief over civilian deaths comments](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hKpomyAdd4B-pnAriRgoZnOb_CvA?docId=CNG.884081aef56acf1a58718197b01abfb5.11)

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hKpomyAdd4B-pnAriRgoZnOb_CvA?docId=CNG.884081aef56acf1a58718197b01abfb5.11

- Libya slams UN chief over civilian deaths comments

By Imed Lamloum (AFP) – 22 hours ago

- TRIPOLI — Libya on Saturday accused UN chief Ban Ki-moon of playing with words after he acknowledged NATO efforts to avoid civilian casualties a day after urging restraint over "unacceptably" high deaths.

"The secretary general has consistently called for restraint and caution to avoid civilian casualties. He of course recognises and appreciates NATO's efforts to avoid civilian casualties," UN spokesman Farhan Haq told reporters on Friday.

In a statement released by his office on Thursday, Ban had sounded the alarm over civilian deaths and called for new efforts to find a political solution between Libya's long-time strongman Moamer Kadhafi and opposition rebels.

Without specifically naming any side, Ban called on "all parties" to use "extreme caution" in the battle.

- "The secretary general is deeply concerned by reports of the unacceptably large number of civilian casualties as a result of the conflict in Libya," said a statement.

Ban "calls on all parties to exercise extreme caution in their actions, in order to minimise any further loss of civilian life."

But Libya's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Kaa'im told reporters early on Saturday Ban's statement was "unacceptable" for not singling out NATO for "being responsible for civilian deaths in Libya."

"The only party that must be blamed for the loss of civilian lives is NATO," he said.

Kaa'im on Saturday also denied that the rebels had entered the eastern oil hub of Brega almost six months after rising up against Kadhafi's forces, inspired by revolts in Egypt and Tunisia.

They vowed on Friday that in "a few days" they plan to retake Brega on the Gulf of Sirte.

- Rebels, backed by NATO helicopters, have tried for the past three weeks to seize the vital port 240 kilometres (140 miles) southwest of their eastern stronghold of Benghazi.

By late Thursday, after a day of fighting, the rebels said they had taken control of one of three residential zones in Brega.

"Every day, we are gaining ground," said Fawzi Bukatif, a civil engineer and a top commander of the insurrection.

In Benghazi on Friday, the rebels buried five "martyrs," including the commander of a brigade of volunteer civilians, killed the day before on the front line at Brega, an AFP journalist said.

"Today we are in mourning. Tomorrow we take revenge," said a lieutenant at the funeral before heading back to the front.

- Meanwhile, rebels from Misrata pushed against Kadhafi's troops in Tuarga in an effort to end the barrage of missiles hitting the western town almost daily.

Rebels controlled much of Tuarga on Friday, an AFP correspondent witnessed.

They searched the town door-to-door for remnants of Kadhafi's forces, after clearing residential areas in the north and centre.

In a symbolic show of victory, fighters tore down green flags hoisted by Kadhafi supporters who just hours earlier had occupied the area.

The two sides exchanged artillery fire that doctors said left at least three rebels dead and as many as 30 wounded.

NATO was authorised in March by UN Security Council resolution 1973 to defend Libya's civilian population from attacks by Kadhafi's regime.

The alliance's top Libya commander, Canada's Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard, told AFP the air strikes had affected Kadhafi's military capabilities.

- "The Kadhafi regime's forces continue to be weakened, both in strength and their will to fight," he said from his Italian headquarters.

"They are no longer able to launch a credible offensive."

Bouchard reported "activity" on three fronts -- in Brega, Misrata and the Nafusa mountains -- adding that Kadhafi's forces are "shooting blindly on civilians."

"On the three fronts, we're seeing changes as anti-Kadhafi forces march forward to stop the attacks on the population," he said.

Tripoli last week accused NATO of killing 85 people, including women and children, with air strikes on the village of Majer, south of the disputed city of Zliten -- charges Bouchard denied.

"I can assure you that the target was a legitimate one that contained mercenaries, a command centre and 4x4 vehicles modified with automatic weapons, rocket launchers or mortars," Bouchard said.

"I cannot believe that 85 civilians were present when we struck in the wee hours of the morning, and given our intelligence" on the target.

"I can assure you that there (were not) 85 civilians present, but I cannot assure you that there were none at all."

[U.N. chief alarmed over civilian casualties in Libya](http://news.yahoo.com/u-n-chief-alarmed-over-civilian-casualties-libya-222943578.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/u-n-chief-alarmed-over-civilian-casualties-libya-222943578.html>

• U.N. chief alarmed over civilian casualties in Libya



By Louis Charbonneau | Reuters

- UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon voiced alarm on Thursday over recent reports of civilians killed in Libya's civil war and called on all sides to do as much as possible to avoid killing innocent people.

"The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by reports of the unacceptably large number of civilian casualties as a result of the conflict in Libya," Ban's press office said in a statement.

"The Secretary-General calls on all parties to exercise extreme caution in their actions, in order to minimize any further loss of civilian life," the statement said.

Earlier, the U.N. said Ban had spoken with Libyan Prime Minister Baghdadi al-Mahmudi on Wednesday, expressing his concerns about civilian casualties and the "absolute lack of progress in the efforts to find a politically negotiated solution to the crisis in Libya."

In his latest statement, Ban said "there can be no military solution to the Libyan crisis." He called on both sides to respond to ideas for a settlement put to them by his envoy for Libya, Abdel Elah al-Khatib.

- Earlier this week, Russia, India, Brazil and other U.N. Security Council delegations voiced concerns about NATO strikes on Libyan state television last month and other attacks that have allegedly killed civilians.

Irina Bokova, head of the U.N. cultural agency UNESCO, sharply rebuked NATO on Monday for the attack on Libyan television, which she said killed several people and wounded nearly a dozen.

"I deplore the NATO strike on Al-Jamahiriyah and its installations," Bokova said in a statement. "Media outlets should not be targeted in military actions."

NATO said last month it had bombed three ground-based satellite transmission dishes in Tripoli to silence "terror broadcasts" on state television by Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi during the uprising against his rule.

NATO defended the strikes and said it had no evidence anyone had been killed as a result of them.

[x | Home | Sky News](#)

<http://news.sky.com/home/article/16047372>

- Libya make NATO bomb claims
- Wednesday August 10, 2011

• **Dozens of women and children are among 85 people killed by a NATO airstrike near Tripoli, Libyan officials have claimed.**

A spokesman for Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime said missiles struck a cluster of farm buildings in the village of Majar.

Among the dead were 33 children, 32 women and 20 men, he added.

However, NATO has said the airstrike hit a legitimate military target.

Reporters have been taken to the scene, where they were told by Libyan government spokesman Moussa Ibrahim: "This is a crime beyond imagination. Everything about this place is civilian."

Footage was provided that apparently showed people searching through the rubble to retrieve human remains, including the bodies of two children.

A Reuters journalist has reported counting 20 body bags at the hospital in Zlitan, some stacked on top of each other - and the Gaddafi regime claims this is where the victims were taken.

- Although most of the dead at the hospital appeared to be men, some were children.

There was condemnation of NATO at a burial in Majar attended by hundreds of people.

Abdulkader al-Hawali, a medical student at Zlitan hospital, said: "They (NATO) do not differentiate between soldiers, children and old people."

But a NATO military spokesman said the airstrike hit a "legitimate target" and has "reduced the pro-Gaddafi forces' ability to threaten and attack civilians".

Colonel Roland Lavoie added: "We do not have evidence of civilian casualties at this stage, although casualties among military personnel, including mercenaries, are very likely due to the nature of the target."

NATO forces have been carrying out regular attacks, from both air and sea, on targets around Zlitan, where it says pro-Gaddafi forces are killing civilians trying to end his 41-year rule.

Gaddafi has denied those claims and insists the bombing campaign is an act of colonial aggression aimed at stealing Libya's oil.

[AFP: US, EU up pressure on Libya as new fighting hits Brega](#)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5huc4sNLpqDdFX2Nlvc3r-NvEunEQ?docId=CNG.8c552b16960439c4d35947018cdb7b48.701>

- US, EU up pressure on Libya as new fighting hits Brega

By Herve Bar (AFP) – 11 hours ago

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BENGHAZI, Libya — The United States and European Union turned up the heat on Libya, as fresh fighting erupted Wednesday along rebel lines at the oil town of Brega and state television showed footage of a son of Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi, days after rebels reported him dead.

US diplomats are visiting several African countries to urge leaders to press Kadhafi to leave power immediately, officials in Washington said, while the EU slapped new economic sanctions on Kadhafi's regime.

Libyan television showed footage of Kadhafi's youngest son, Khamis, supposedly visiting victims of NATO raids on Tuesday. But a rebel spokesman insisted that the 28-year-old, a feared military commander, was dead.

The date of the recording could not be confirmed. If genuine, it would be the first time Khamis had been seen in public since Friday, when rebels said a NATO strike on the western town of Zliten killed 32 people, including Khamis.

Kadhafi spokesman Mussa Ibrahim said at the time the claim was untrue, claiming it was "dirty lies to cover the murder of civilians" in Zliten.

- Khamis trained at a Russian military academy and commands the eponymous and much-feared Khamis Brigade, one of the regime's toughest fighting units.

Reacting to the television report, rebel spokesman Abudulah Kabir said in the city of Misrata that the insurgents were sure Khamis was dead.

"The military council has confirmed he has died; we are sure," he said.

Fresh fighting erupted Wednesday at the strategic oil town of Brega, an AFP correspondent said.

Mortar rounds and rockets struck intermittently on both sides of the front at Brega, one of the three main focuses in the Libyan conflict, with the other two at the enclave of Misrata to the east and the Nafusa mountains to the west.

Brega is home mainly to oil facilities, refineries, ports and a residential area.

The United States and EU ratcheted up the pressure on Kadhafi, with Washington lobbying African states to give up support of the Libyan strongman, while the EU imposed new economic sanctions.

Several African states, having benefited financially from Kadhafi's policies, have been reluctant to call for him to step down, and have criticised the NATO-led military campaign in Libya.

- Gene Cretz, the US ambassador who left Tripoli before Kadhafi launched his bloody crackdown on the opposition in February, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Donald Yamamoto arrived Monday in Addis Ababa, headquarters of the African Union, State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner said.

They "are in Africa to meet with African Union members to discuss the crisis in Libya and the need for Kadhafi to relinquish power now," he told AFP.

They also met Mahmud Jibril, leader of Libya's opposition National Transitional Council (NTC), who was visiting Ethiopia.

In Brussels, the European Union slapped new sanctions on the Kadhafi regime, targeting two "economic entities" linked to human rights abuse, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said.

An asset freeze and visa ban were extended to "two further entities closely linked to the perpetrators of the serious human rights abuses in Libya, given the gravity of the situation," Ashton said in a statement.

She gave no further details but a French official said on Tuesday the restrictions would target Al-Sharara, which operates in the oil sector, and an administrative organisation linked to Kadhafi.

Six port authorities, 49 entities and 39 people are now subject to a freeze of their funds and financial resources in the EU, Ashton said.

- In addition, the same 39 persons, which include Kadhafi and several family members, are banned from entering the EU.

With Britain being one of the key powers engaged in efforts to get Kadhafi to step down, the Libya regime lashed out at Prime Minister David Cameron, calling him to resign over the riots that have hit England over the past few days.

"Cameron and his government must leave after the popular uprising against them and the violent repression of peaceful demonstrations by police," Libya's JANA quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Kaaim as saying.

He called on the "UN Security Council and the international community not to stay with its arms crossed in the face of the flagrant violation of the rights of the British people."

Nightly riots which began in London and quickly spread to other major cities have gripped Britain since Saturday when an angry crowd marched to demand justice after a 29-year-old man was shot dead by police.

On Tuesday, the Libyan regime also said world powers would be held responsible for the "ugly massacre committed by NATO" on the village of Majer, where 85 people were killed, Libya's official JANA news agency reported.

Thirty-three children, 32 women and 20 men from 12 families were killed in the "massacre," spokesman Mussa said.

NATO insisted the raids were "legitimate" and said it had no evidence of civilian deaths.

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[Major Libyan Rebel Group Seeks Shake-Up in Ranks - NYTimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/05/world/africa/05libya.html?_r=1)

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/05/world/africa/05libya.html?_r=1

• Major Libyan Rebel Group Seeks Shake-Up in Ranks

By [KAREEM FAHIM](#) and [DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK](#)

Published: August 4, 2011

- BENGHAZI, Libya — Rebel leaders, still reeling from the [assassination of their top military commander](#) last week, braced for a reshuffling in their ranks on Thursday, while law enforcement officials said a full-fledged investigation into the murder of the rebel general had gotten under way.
- An influential group of lawyers and judges, the Coalition for the Revolution of the 17th of February, called for the resignations of several top officials, including the defense minister and a prominent judge. The group released a statement on Wednesday night calling for the resignations of the vice chairman of the rebel executive branch, Ali al-Essawi; the judge, Jumaah al-Jazwi al-Obeidy; and the defense minister, Jalal el-Digheily, and a deputy, Fawzi Bukatef, who also leads a coalition of armed rebel brigades separate from the army.
- The group, which includes many people who helped start the Libyan uprising, said Mr. Essawi and Judge Obeidy should be investigated for their roles in ordering the arrest of the murdered general, Abdul Fattah Younes. According to the [murky timeline](#) that has emerged about his last hours, General Younes was escorted by a large group of rebel fighters to Benghazi for questioning shortly before unknown gunmen killed him last week.

Mr. Digheily and Mr. Bukatef should resign, the statement said, because they were out of the country in Egypt while Mr. Younes was being arrested. The group, named for a date symbolically marking the uprising's birth, also demanded the disbanding of the dozens of militias that operate in the rebel areas, saying, "There is no legitimacy to any other armed force but the national army."

- Jamal Benour, the justice coordinator for Benghazi, who is helping to oversee the investigation, conceded that despite orders by the rebel leadership for militias to gather under a single leadership, 10 percent of the groups were still holding out.

It was unclear how much weight the Feb. 17 coalition's recommendations would carry. On Thursday, a rebel spokesman said, "There is a reshuffle possibly pending."

But Mr. Essawi, reached on Thursday evening, said, "I'm planning on staying in my job."

Law enforcement officials in Benghazi said a committee formed to investigate the killing of General Younes and two of his aides had already started its work. Three prosecutors and four detectives will be responsible for sorting through a mystery that has exposed raw divisions in the rebel movement, raised fears about score-settling by militant Islamists and distracted a leadership struggling with battles on three fronts.

"I know the time is critical," Mr. Benour said.

- A spokesman for NATO said Thursday that it was looking into accusations that its planes had hit a civilian home, killing a mother and two children, in an early morning airstrike on the town of Zlitan, near a front line in the rebels' fight to oust Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi.

The Qaddafi government bused foreign journalists to the site of a destroyed house, which neighbors said had been hit by a bomb about 6:30 a.m., killing a mother and two children and wounding their father as he returned from morning prayers.

At a funeral at a nearby mosque, journalists saw an injured man who appeared to be the father as well as three coffins. Two were uncovered to reveal the bloody bodies of two small children. "Martyrs, martyrs for you, Libya," a crowd chanted.

Moussa Ibrahim, a Qaddafi government spokesman, cited the bombing as evidence that NATO was killing civilians, not protecting them, as called for in the United Nations resolution authorizing military action in Libya. "Who gave NATO the mandate to ask the Libyan leader to step down?" Mr. Ibrahim asked. "When did the campaign become the changing of the regime?"

The town, perhaps the rebels' biggest obstacle on the road to Colonel Qaddafi's stronghold in Tripoli, appeared largely deserted, and residents said many had fled. Colonel Qaddafi's forces seemed to be in firm control of the town's center.

Kareem Fahim reported from Benghazi, and David D. Kirkpatrick from Zlitan, Libya.

[Italy demands NATO probe over Libya boat migrants - Yahoo! News](#)

<http://news.yahoo.com/italy-demands-nato-probe-over-libya-boat-migrants-170944071.html>

• Italy demands NATO probe over Libya boat migrants

AP Associated Press

By [VICTOR L. SIMPSON](#) - Associated Press

- ROME (AP) — Italy called for a NATO investigation Friday into whether one of the alliance's warships ignored a migrant boat's distress call amid unconfirmed reports that dozens died during the journey from Libya.

On Thursday, Italy's coast guard rescued hundreds of people packed aboard a boat stranded between Libya and the southern Italian island of Lampedusa, which is near Africa's coast.

The relief organization Medecins Sans Frontieres said migrants arriving at Lampedusa's dock told the group's staff that they had witnessed "dozens of people die" because of the harsh conditions.

Describing the survivors, Dr. Marco Testa said: "Most of these people were dehydrated or suffering from hypothermia," according to a statement from the organization — also called Doctors Without Borders.

Italian media, without citing sources, said some migrants told their Italian rescuers that the bodies of those who died were tossed overboard by survivors. Coast guard officials have said that there has been no independent confirmation, and searches had failed to find any bodies in the sea.

- The Italian reports, again without citing sources, said the boat had sent an SOS to a nearby NATO warship, but received neither help nor a response while being stranded for six days.

Foreign Minister Franco Frattini requested that NATO conduct a formal investigation and said he also instructed Italy's NATO ambassador to ask the alliance to consider the care of civilians fleeing Libya on rickety boats as part of the U.N. resolution that allows military action to protect civilians in Libya itself.

NATO launched its bombing campaign to protect civilians from attacks by the regime of Moammar Gadhafi on the basis of that resolution. About 24,000 migrants have reached Italy by sea since the bombing campaign began in March.

NATO acknowledged in a statement Friday afternoon from its command in Naples that Italian authorities had informed the alliance's maritime command about "a distress call of a ship." It said NATO then confirmed with the Italian authorities that Italy was responding with three ships and helicopter support.

- "Facts of the incident are still emerging and we are working closely with Italian authorities to fully clarify the matter," the statement said. "NATO has a long-standing commitment to render assistance in emergency situations at sea."

NATO cited recent examples of that assistance, including an incident on July 10, when a NATO ship helped a vessel in distress about 75 miles (120 kilometers) off the Libya coast, providing "medical support, food and mechanical assistance to the distressed migrants." It added that the migrants were taken aboard the NATO ship because of a "deterioration of the humanitarian situation on board."

In a separate case, police in Sicily have detained six alleged human traffickers as suspects in the deaths of 25 African migrants aboard another overcrowded boat trying to reach Italy from Libya. The men taken into custody Friday were identified as citizens of Somalia, Morocco and Syria.

Authorities said they were operating the boat that was boarded Monday by the coast guard off the Italian island of Lampedusa, which has been the destination of scores of rickety and overcrowded boats carrying would-be immigrants.

The coast guard said the 50-foot (15-meter) boat carried 296 people, many packed in the hold.

[Media group urges UN probe of strike on Libya TV - Yahoo! News](http://news.yahoo.com/media-group-urges-un-probe-strike-libya-tv-172337644.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/media-group-urges-un-probe-strike-libya-tv-172337644.html>

- Media group urges UN probe of strike on Libya TV
- LONDON (AP) — An international media safety group has joined calls Friday for the United Nations to investigate NATO's bombing of Libyan television, which reportedly killed 3 people and injured 15.

The International News Safety Institute (INSI) asked U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to determine whether last week's airstrike amounted to a breach of a 2006 Security Council resolution that bans attacks on journalists.

Libyan officials said Saturday's airstrikes on the state television's satellite transmitters killed three journalists and injured 15 other people.

On Wednesday, the International Federation of Journalists also condemned the bombing and called for a probe.

NATO has said the bombing was in line with its U.N. mandate authorizing airstrikes to protect the civilian population.

But INSI director Rodent Pincer said such attacks could not be excused "on the basis that you disagree with the point of view of the news organizations."

"NATO forces in Libya are acting under a Security Counsel mandate to protect civilians and journalists are civilians," he said.

[Franklin Lamb: Countdown to Invasion](http://www.counterpunch.org/lamb07012011.html)

<http://www.counterpunch.org/lamb07012011.html>

- Weekend Edition
July 1 - 3, 2011
- *Libya's Neighbors Prepare for NATO's Boots*

Countdown to Invasion

By FRANKLIN LAMB

Tripoli, Libya

- At ten a.m. Tripoli time on 6/28/11 the Libyan Ministry of Health made available to this observer its compilation entitled "Current Statistics Of Civilian Victims Of Nato Bombardments On Libya, (3/19/11-6/27/11).

Before releasing their data, which will be made public this afternoon, it was confirmed by the findings of the Libyan Red Crescent Society and also by civil defense workers in the neighborhoods bombed, and then vetted by researchers at Tripoli's Nassar University.

As of July 1, 2011, military casualties have not been officially released by the Libyan armed forces.

In summary, the MOH compilation documents that during the first 100 days of NATO targeting of civilians, 6121 were killed or injured. The statistical breakdown is as follows: 3093 Men were injured and 668 were killed. Women killed number 260 and 1318 injured. Children killed number 141 and 641 injured.

- Of those seriously injured 655 are still under medical care in hospitals while 4,397 have been released to their families for outpatient care.

NATO claims that private apartments and homes, schools, shops, factories, crops, and warehouses storing sacks of flour were legitimate military targets are not believed by anyone here in Libya and to date NATO has failed to provide a scintilla of evidence that the 15 civilians, mainly children and their aunts and mothers, who were torn to pieces by 8 NATO rockets in the Salman neighborhood last week were legitimate military targets.

Tripoli's 3,200 neighborhoods, independently of the Libyan Armed Forces, are intensively preparing for the possibility that NATO forces or those they are seen as increasingly arming and directing, might invade the cosmopolitan greater Tripoli area during the coming weeks or months.

- This observer has had the opportunity to visit some of these neighborhoods the past couple of nights and will continue to do so. As noted earlier, contrary to some media reports by the BBC, CNN and CBS Tripoli's neighborhoods during the cool evenings with wafting sea breezes, are not tense, "dangerous for foreigners and in control of trigger happy soldiers or militias." The latter assessment is nonsense. Americans and others are welcomed and their presence appreciated. Libyans are anxious to explain their points of views, a common one of which is that they are not all about Qaddafi but about protecting the family, homes, and neighborhoods from foreign invaders. A majority does support the Qaddafi leadership which is what they received with their mother's milk, but nearly all emphasize that for them and their friends it is very much about defending their revolution and country first. They appear to this observer to be very well informed about the motives of NATO and those countries that are intensively targeting their leader and their officials without regard to civilians being killed. It's about oil and reshaping African and the Middle East.

Sitting and chatting with neighborhood watch teams is actually an extremely enjoyable way to learn about and to get to know the Libyan people and how they view events unfolding in their country. It certainly beats hanging out at the bar at the hotel where the western press crowd often gather their journalistic insights and pontificate about what "the real deal is" as one told me the other day. I could not figure out much that he was talking about.

- On the evening of 7/1/11 as many as one million, five hundred thousand Libyan citizens are expected to gather at Tripoli's Green Square to register their resistance to NATO's intensifying civilian targeting blitz. Some western journalists will not attend this news event because they are afraid of potential danger or their stateside bureaus are suggesting they stay away "so as not legitimize the gathering" What has become of orientalist journalism?

The neighborhoods in Libya are preparing for a ground invasion and to confront directly the invaders with a plan that one imagines would not be unfamiliar to a General Giap of Vietnam or a Chinese General Lin Peio, being a massive peoples defense. It has been organized with a house by house, street by street defense plan for every neighborhood and will include all available weaponry.

The defenders are not military although many of the older ones had done one year compulsory service following high school. Their ranks include every able bodied woman and man from age 18 to 65. Younger or older will not be refused.

- They are organized into 5 person squads once they complete their training. It works like this: Anyone over 18 years of age can report to his neighborhood "Tent". Knowing virtually everyone in the area, the person will make application and will be vetted on an AK-47, M-16 or other light arm.

Depending on her/his skill level he will be accepted and given a photo ID that lists the weapons the applicant qualified on. If he needs more training or is a novice it is provided at the location which includes a training area, tent with mattresses for sleeping, a make shift latrine and canteen.

The basic training for those with no arms experience, including women, is 45 days. Past that, the commitment is four months. Each accepted individual is issued a rifle (normally an AK-47 "Klash" along with 120 rounds of ammo.) Each

individual is asked to return in one week to discuss their training and show that they did not waste their bullets which cost around one dollar each. If approved, they will be issued more.

- Those who begin their duty work one eight hour shift. Women tend to work during the day when kids are in school but I have seen many women also on the night shift. Most men have regular jobs and proudly explain that they volunteer one work shift daily for their country. They appear to be admired by their neighbors.

I agreed not to describe other weapons that will be used if NATO appears besides rifles, grenades, booby-traps, rocket propelled grenades (RPG's) but they appear formidable.

But besides preparing for armed defense of their families and homes and neighbors, these neighborhood volunteer civil defense teams explained to me what their main work involves. When an area is bombed, they quickly help the residents exit their bombed building, get medical help on the scene for those who need it, help the families assure the frightened children that things are OK, make notes of needed repairs, provided temporary shelter nearby if needed, and countless tasks the reader can imagine would be required.

- Each check point becomes a neighborhood watch security center for the community. Cars are cursorily checked, usually just the trunk. Often the drivers are known to the security forces, many of whom are university students, because they are also from the area. Occasionally a car will stop and a citizen will exit and deliver a tray of fruit or pastries or a pot of Libyan soup etc. A very congenial social atmosphere.

Because NATO has been increasing its bombing of these civilian manned checkpoints, about 50 of which are along the road from the Tunisian border to Tripoli, the neighborhood watch teams are now operating without lights at night. Those on night duty have each been issued one of those small heavy duty five inch mini flashlights with has a powerful beam. This observer was presented one as a souvenir and can attest to its fine quality.

They are civilian because they are volunteers and the regular policemen and women have in large numbers joined an army unit hidden elsewhere toward the east.

In addition to its current problems, NATO will face another major one if they decide to invade Western Libya.

[NATO airstrike kills 8 civilians in W Libyan town](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-06/29/c_13956124.htm)

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-06/29/c_13956124.htm

NATO airstrike kills 8 civilians in W Libyan town

English.news.cn 2011-06-29

- TRIPOLI, June 28 (Xinhua) -- A NATO airstrike killed eight civilians and injured some others Tuesday at a market in the town of Tawragha, 300 km east of the Libyan capital Tripoli, said Libya's official news agency.

While confirming the eight victims were all civilians, the Libyan Jana news agency quoted a military source as saying that some of the injured are in critical condition.

Also on Tuesday, a Xinhua reporter saw NATO fighter jets were hovering over Tajura, a town 20 km east of Tripoli, and heard six huge explosions.

The Tajura town has been attacked for the third consecutive day. According to a military source, these attacks caused huge damage to local infrastructure, yet it gave no details of the destruction.

[Libyan state media says NATO airstrike kills 15 - Yahoo! News](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110625/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_libya)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110625/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_libya

- Libyan state media says NATO airstrike kills 15
- [By ADAM SCHRECK, Associated Press Adam Schreck, Associated Press](#) - 55 mins ago

TRIPOLI, Libya – Libyan authorities on Saturday accused NATO of killing 15 people in an airstrike that hit a restaurant and bakery in the east, though the alliance denied the report.

It was the latest outcry from Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's government blaming NATO for killing civilians amid a four-month uprising that has sparked a civil war. NATO insists it does all it can to avoid such casualties.

Meanwhile, rebel representatives said their fighters were coordinating around the country for the "zero hour" when their forces would reach the capital of Tripoli.

The rebels said they have been working to cut fuel supplies from the Tunisian border in an attempt to paralyze Gadhafi's forces. Rebels also are making homemade bombs and trying to ferry other weapons to their comrades in Tripoli, a spokesman for an underground guerrilla group there said.

Libya's state news agency quoted a military official in Gadhafi's forces as saying that NATO warplanes hit a number of civilian sites Saturday in the oil town of Brega, including a restaurant and a bakery.

- The official said 15 civilians were killed and 20 wounded in the strike. The JANA news agency also claimed five civilians were killed Friday in Brega as well.

NATO said it did not carry out any strikes in the area on Saturday.

A NATO official said alliance warplanes did hit several targets in the vicinity of Brega on Friday but that there was no evidence civilians had been killed or wounded.

"We have no indications of any civilian casualties in connection with these strikes," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media on the record. "What we know is that the buildings we hit were occupied and used by pro-Gadhafi forces to direct attacks against civilians around Ajdabiya."

Ajdabiya is a city between Brega and the rebel stronghold of Benghazi to the northeast.

NATO said it hit multiple military command sites Friday near Brega, which has been a frequent flashpoint between rebels and Gadhafi's forces.

- The alliance said government forces had moved into buildings in an abandoned area of Brega and started using them as military compounds to launch strikes on civilians, putting rebel-held cities such as Ajdabiya and Benghazi at risk.

Reports of civilian casualties in NATO strikes have provoked intense anger among many Libyans in the west of the country under Gadhafi's control.

Images of dead civilians, including young children, described by the government as "martyrs," can be seen frequently at pro-government rallies and on state-controlled television.

NATO is investigating whether one of its airstrikes may have slammed into a civilian neighborhood in Tripoli on June 19, killing several civilians.

A day later, alliance warplanes struck a family compound belonging to a close Gadhafi aide, killing what the Libyan government says was 19 people, including at least three children. NATO called the site was a "command and control" center, and said it regrets any civilian deaths that resulted from the strike.

Rebel spokesman Abdel-Hafidh Ghoga in Benghazi said Gadhafi was to blame for civilian casualties in the fighting because "he keeps his weapons in highly populated civilian areas."

At least two explosions could be heard in the capital of Tripoli on Saturday, though it was not immediately clear what the NATO airstrikes may have hit.

The Libyan rebels began their uprising in February against Gadhafi, who has been in power since 1969. The conflict has turned into a civil war, and Gadhafi's forces are accused of orchestrating deadly attacks on civilians.

The rebels have taken over much of the eastern half of Libya. They also control pockets in the west, including the vital port city of Misrata, about 125 miles (200 kilometers) from the capital.

- A coalition including France, Britain and the United States began striking Gadhafi's forces under a United Nations resolution to protect civilians on March 19. NATO assumed control of the air campaign over Libya on March 31 and is

joined by a number of Arab allies.

In Benghazi, Ghoga, the spokesman for the rebels' National Transitional Council, said 38 of Gadhafi's military officers — six of them high-ranking — defected to the rebel side and fled to Tunisia Friday.

"This will lead to the further isolation of the Gadhafi regime," he said.

Ghoga said the rebels have been informed that Gadhafi is in contact with leaders in South Africa and France in an attempt to find a possible home in exile. Such claims have been filtering out for weeks, but there is no evidence that the Libyan leader is seeking a way out.

On Saturday, a spokesman for the rebels' western mountain military council confirmed that rebels are coordinating with individual cells and with an underground rebel guerrilla group known as the Tripoli Council. The main goals are to cut the fuel from Gadhafi forces, Gomaa Ibrahim said.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Tripoli Council said that their fighters have been carrying out selective attacks on Gadhafi forces in the capital.

The spokesman, who requested anonymity for fear of reprisals, said that the rebels are coordinating for "the zero hour, when rebels from liberated cities enter Tripoli."

"It will be a tremendous mission. The city is now besieged by 13 different security brigades, well armed and well equipped. Gadhafi has always said that his loyalists will sabotage the city if he falls. So this will be our mission: to mob it and clean it of mercenaries."

In Benghazi, Ghoga said there are constant contacts between rebels in different parts of the country, but he did not elaborate.

Associated Press

http://hosted2.ap.org/APDEFAULT/cae69a7523db45408eeb2b3a98c0c9c5/Article_2011-06-23-ML-Libya/id-724d0db798d7446e80140b1ce5f10241?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=newsinlibya

- Jun. 23, 2011
- Cries of support at pro-Gadhafi rally in Tripoli
- TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — Supporters of Moammar Gadhafi rallied Thursday in Tripoli after the Libyan leader lashed out at NATO over civilian casualties, calling the alliance "murderers" following an airstrike on the family home of a close associate.

A few hundred supporters, most of them women, gathered in the capital's Green Square hours after the late-night speech, vowing to defend the Libyan leader against rebels seeking to oust him and NATO forces giving them air support.

Gadhafi also warned the alliance that its more than three-month mission in Libya is a "crusader's campaign" that could come back to haunt the West.

"What you are doing will rebound against you and against the world with destruction, desolation and terrorism. You are launching a second crusader war that might extend to Africa, Europe and America," he said in an audio address first aired on Libyan state television late Wednesday.

"Go on and attack us for two years, three years or even 10 years. But in the end, the aggressor is the one who will lose. One day we will be able to retaliate in the same way, and your houses will be legitimate targets for us," Gadhafi added.

- The defiant address was the first from the Libyan leader since NATO targeted a compound Monday owned by Khoweildi al-Hamidi, a longtime regime insider whose daughter is married to one of Gadhafi's sons.

Gadhafi blasted the alliance for that strike, calling NATO "criminals" and "savages" and asking rhetorically: "Is this house a military target?"

Libya says 19 people, including at least three children and other civilians, were killed in that strike near the town of Surman, some 40 miles (60 kilometers) west of Tripoli. NATO has called the compound a "command and control" center and says it regrets any civilian deaths.

That bombing came a day after NATO acknowledged that one of its airstrikes may have slammed into a civilian neighborhood in Tripoli. Libyan officials said nine civilians were killed in that strike, though a family member told The Associated Press at the scene that five people died.

NATO is investigating what happened in the Tripoli neighborhood strike and insists it goes to great lengths not to harm civilians.

- A coalition including France, Britain and the United States began striking Gadhafi's forces under a United Nations resolution to protect civilians on March 19. NATO assumed control of the air campaign over Libya on March 31. It's joined by a number of Arab allies.

Meanwhile, judges at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, said they will rule Monday on whether to order the arrest of Gadhafi for allegedly orchestrating deadly attacks on civilians.

A warrant would turn Gadhafi into an internationally wanted war crimes suspect at risk of detention if he ever ventured outside Libya.

A judicial panel will also announce whether it will issue arrest warrants for Gadhafi's son Seif al-Islam and intelligence chief Abdullah al-Sanoussi.

Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo alleges Gadhafi's forces attacked civilians in their homes, shot at demonstrators, shelled funeral processions and deployed snipers to kill people leaving mosques during the violent crackdown on rebels.

- Italy, which is participating in the NATO campaign, expressed concern Wednesday about the accidental killing of civilians in alliance airstrikes and called for a suspension in hostilities to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid.

But NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said in a video message on the NATO website the alliance would press on with its mission in Libya because stopping would mean more civilians could lose their lives.

"Remember, the Gadhafi regime began this conflict by attacking its own people with sustained and systematic violence — not

NATO," Rasmussen said.

- In the Czech capital, Prague, British Prime Minister David Cameron told reporters the coalition needs to be patient and persistent in the Libya mission, countering growing skepticism in the West over the military campaign.

"Time is on our side. Time is not on the side of Col. Gadhafi, who is losing his leading military commanders, who has lost his foreign minister, who has lost his oil minister, who's lost most of his country, who is losing in the west of the country where the rebellion is growing," Cameron said.

Reports of civilian deaths in NATO strikes have provoked intense anger among Gadhafi supporters.

Pro-Gadhafi protesters rallying in Tripoli on Thursday railed against NATO for striking civilians. Some women at the demonstration came armed, vowing to fight to defend their country and its leader.

"Everyone is training (to fight) since high school for a day like today," said dentist Hanin Khalil, 30, an aging Beretta submachine gun slung over her shoulder. "Not only (I) have a weapon. All people have their weapons to protect themselves from NATO."

Despite the heavy security presence, not everyone in the iconic central square was behind the longtime Libyan leader.

One young man in a white compact car driving around the square spotted two Western journalists and yelled in English from the passenger seat.

"Gadhafi, he go down," he said while pointing his thumb toward the ground as the car sped away.

[SteveLendmanBlog: US-Led Terror Bombings Target Civilians](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com/2011/06/us-led-terror-bombings-target-civilians.html)

<http://sjlendman.blogspot.com/2011/06/us-led-terror-bombings-target-civilians.html>

• Thursday, June 23, 2011

US-Led Terror Bombings Target Civilians

- US-Led Terror Bombings Target Civilians - by Stephen Lendman

US air and ground operations strategically target civilians, Pentagon (and NATO) denials notwithstanding. They lie despite clear evidence refuting them. Their latest crime claimed 19 Libyans, all civilians, including women and eight children, apologies not forthcoming and deceitful when they do.

NATO (code for the Pentagon) duplicitously called it a "precision strike on a legitimate military target - a command-and-control node which was directly involved in coordinating systematic attacks on the Libyan people."

False! It targeted Gaddafi ally Khweildy al-Hamidy's private estate, murdering civilians inside beneath the rubble, government spokesman Moussa Ibrahim saying:

- "This is very twisted logic. So you kill children. You kill mothers. You kill fathers, aunts and uncles, and then you try to explain it by twisted political military logic."

Since NATO terror bombings began March 19, an average of nearly nine daily civilian deaths followed, besides unknown hundreds killed by rebel cutthroats in their controlled areas, murdering any suspected pro-Gaddafi supporters - what Western media reports and governments won't explain.

Numerous reports confirm it, including TeleSUR on June 3 saying:

"British activists have verified the consequences of NATO attacks against civilians in Libya. A spokesman for British Civilians for Peace (BCP)" there with French, German, Italian and regional activists confirmed noncombatant deaths. They also "found no evidence of the Libyan army shelling civilians," but observed NATO terror bombing atrocities firsthand.

- BCP spokesman Dale Roberts said in two Libyan visits:

"I have seen and witnessed the effects of bombing on civilians. This has included schools, hospitals, infrastructure and civilian areas," unrelated to military sites.

Roberts added that UK and Western media suppress truths because:

"European public opinion is against a war that was not debated in Parliament, even in my country, Great Britain," adding:

"One of the main reasons why" UN Resolution 1973 passed was because "Libya was being blamed and made responsible for attacks on unarmed civilians. They are false. We visited the areas in Tripoli (the UN Resolution) cited....and it is clear that these areas were not attacked."

Like all US-led wars, lies facilitate terror bombing Libya. They include baseless allegations, claiming despots massacre civilians or threaten neighboring states with WMDs to stoke fear and enlist popular support.

- In his book "War is a Lie," David Swanson explains "common themes in the war lying business, lies that keep coming back like zombies that just won't die." And no matter how often they're later exposed, they're used again effectively because major media managed news repeat them, knowing they're spurious but do it anyway complicit with state crimes.

Except in self-defense, wars aren't ever justified, legitimate or legal, especially America's, the only global superpower facing no external threats, so manufactured ones assure more conflict for imperial expansion and unchallenged dominance, no matter the body count to achieve it.

As a result, the same pattern repeats, segueing from one aggression to another or multiple ones simultaneously, illegally, and disastrously, heading America for tyranny, ruin, and eventual bankruptcy. Morally it's had that status for

generations, notably since WW II.

"In a world with so many uncertainties and unpredictable actors," says Immanuel Wallerstein, "the most dangerous 'loose gun' is....the United States."

- For example, so-called Pentagon "Kill Teams" murder with impunity. Some collect body parts as souvenirs or trophies the way US military personnel did in WW II, mutilating dead Japanese, as well as later in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, exhibiting depravity inculcated in young recruits during training.

US death squads have also been used in US wars since WW II. During the Korean War, tens of thousands were murdered, and in Vietnam, Counterspy magazine called Operation Phoenix "the most indiscriminate and massive program of political murder since the Nazi death camps," perhaps exceeded post-9/11 in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, and numerous proxy wars, taking a horrendous human toll from combat operations alone.

Moreover, since WW II, US terror bombings killed millions of noncombatants to cow enemies into submission, what's now commonplace in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Libya, as well as earlier in Iraq and could be resumed if ordered.

- Sociologist Emile Durkheim once said, "The immorality of war depends entirely on the leaders who willed it." In America, of course, it's top administration and Pentagon officials. In his opening Nuremberg address, Justice Robert Jackson denounced the:

"men who possess themselves of great power and make deliberative and concerted use of it to set in motion evils which leave no home in the world untouched."

He called them "men of station and rank (who don't) soil (their) hands with blood," but use "lesser folk" to do it, committing crimes of war and against humanity to enhance their status and privilege.

As a result, in Iraq and Afghanistan, US forces still order troops to kill every military-aged man on sight. Moreover, during training, enemies are dehumanized to make it easy, programming recruits to feel guiltless about horrific crimes.

- Yet international and US laws are clear and unequivocal, including US Army Field Manual (FM) 27-10 standards that incorporate Nuremberg Principles, Judgment and the Charter and The Law of Land Warfare (1956):

-- FM's paragraph 498 states that any person, military or civilian, who commits a crime under international law is responsible for it and may be punished;

-- paragraph 499 defines a war crime;

-- paragraph 500 refers to a conspiracy, attempts to commit it and complicity with respect to international crimes;

-- paragraph 509 denies the defense of superior orders in the commission of a crime; and

-- paragraph 510 denies the defense of an "act of state" to absolve them.

- Two points are key:

-- these provisions apply to all US military and civilian personnel, including top commanders, the Secretary of Defense, his subordinates, and the President and Vice President of the United States; and

-- under the Constitution's Supremacy Clause (Article VI, paragraph 2), all international laws and treaties are the "supreme Law of the Land."

Nonetheless, US forces commit regular atrocities, in Afghanistan for nearly a decade, Pentagon commanders dismissively saying operations will continue to achieve goals that include killing civilians, no matter how many alienated Afghans become willing Taliban recruits against a hated occupier.

Why not when terror bombings kill entire families, including young children. When thuggish troops conduct middle-of-the-night home intrusions, intimidating, arresting, and at times killing gratuitously. When remote control droning kills like sport. When people are homeless, hungry, unemployed and deprived because America came, occupied and doesn't give a damn about human need.

- After terrorizing Iraqis, in June 2009, Stanley McChrystal took charge of US/NATO Afghanistan forces to do it there. Earlier, he headed the Pentagon's infamous Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), de facto death squad operations to kill with impunity.

After his sacking a year later, David Petraeus (CIA director designate) doubled NATO air strikes and increased Special Forces terror raids to inflict more death and destruction against people who won't stop resisting until America's occupation ends.

Of course, mostly civilians suffer, what major media reports won't explain, regurgitating Pentagon lies about successful militant strikes, suppressing truths to let imperial wars rage, bogusly called liberating ones.

In fact, when Washington wants war, nothing deters officials from waging it or several simultaneously, inventing reasons to justify what only naive masses and co-conspirators believe.

So when Obama says "we" have moral authority to liberate Iraqis, Afghans, Pakistanis, Libyans or other nations he attacks, Nobel laureate Harold Pinter once reflected in January 2000 on then lawless 1999 Serbia/Kosovo operations, saying:

- "When they said '(w)e had to do something,' I said: Who is this 'we' exactly that you're talking about?....Under what heading do 'we' act, under what law? And also, the notion that this 'we' has the right to act,' I said, presupposes a moral authority of which this 'we' possesses not a jot! It doesn't exist!"

In fact, it's as immoral, unethical and illegal as for serial killers, motivated by whatever drives them, including a passion for violence, real or delusional rewards.

When they're nations, not sociopaths, Orwellian doublespeak disguises real motives deceptively. For example, Obama calls Libyan attacks a "time-limited, scope-limited military action," not war, no matter how much death and destruction is inflicted.

So claiming constitutional Article 2, Section 2 authority as armed forces commander in chief, in fact, violates Article 51 of the UN Charter, prohibiting attacks against other nations except in self-defense, and only until the Security Council acts.

Moreover, the Constitution's Article 1, Section 8 is violated, granting Congress sole power to declare war, never the executive unilaterally, for any reason or with doublespeak mumbo jumbo disguising it.

- War is war. It's also hell on the receiving end, harmful to combatants, and detrimental domestically when popular needs go unmet.

As chief executive, Obama is responsible for mass murder and destruction. If rule of law standards mattered, he'd be impeached, convicted and jailed for high crimes - in fact, the supreme international one against peace and others related to it.

Instead, he'll finish his current term, likely be reelected, and leave office rewarded with multi-million dollar book deals and six-figure lecture offers to extol a record demanding condemnation in a court of law, holding him fully accountable for high crimes, demanding harsh punishment. In fact, only victims face that fate.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

Also visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening.

<http://www.progressiveradionetwork.com/the-progressive-news-hour/>.

[Libya says NATO airstrike kills 15 west of capital - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110620/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_libya)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110620/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_libya

- Libya says NATO airstrike kills 15 west of capital
- By ADAM SCHRECK, Associated Press
- SURMAN, Libya – Libya's government said a NATO airstrike west of Tripoli early Monday destroyed a large family compound belonging to a close associate of Moammar Gadhafi, killing at least 15 people, including three children. It was the second claim of civilian deaths at a home in as many days.

The alliance said the strike Monday hit a "command and control" center.

Gadhafi's regime has repeatedly accused NATO of targeting civilians in an attempt to rally support against international intervention into Libya's civil war. The alliance insists it tries to avoid killing civilians.

Libyan government spokesman Moussa Ibrahim said NATO bombs struck the compound belonging to Khweildi al-Hamidi outside the city of Surman, some 40 miles (60 kilometers) west of Tripoli, around 4 a.m. local time Monday.

NATO initially said it had not hit any targets in the Surman area overnight. But the alliance later released a statement saying it conducted a "precision strike" near the town early Monday "on a legitimate military target — a command and control node which was directly involved in coordinating systematic attacks" on Libyan citizens.

- The commander of NATO's Libya operation, Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, said the "strike will greatly degrade the Gadhafi regime's forces' ability to carry out their barbaric assaults on the Libyan people."

"Wherever Gadhafi tries to hide his command and control centers, we will find them," he said.

NATO officials have repeatedly said the alliance does not target individuals. It could not confirm reports of casualties in Monday's strike but said it regrets any loss of civilian life.

Al-Hamidi is a longtime regime insider who took part in the 1969 coup that brought Gadhafi to power. He reportedly commanded a battalion that crushed rebels in the nearby western city of Zawiya in March, and his daughter is married to one of Gadhafi's sons, Saadi.

Ibrahim said al-Hamidi escaped the airstrikes unharmed but that three children, two of them al-Hamidi's grandchildren, were among the 15 people killed. Officials said he was inside a still-intact building at the time of the strike.

- "They (NATO) are targeting civilians. ... The logic is intimidation," Ibrahim said. "They want Libyans to give up the fight ... they want to break our spirit."

He warned that killing civilians risked creating a "hateful generation" of young Libyans who "will make the world a very dangerous place."

Foreign journalists based in the Libyan capital were taken by government officials to the walled compound, where at least two buildings had been blasted to rubble. A pair of massive craters could be seen in the dusty ground, and rescue workers with sniffer dogs were scouring the rubble in search of people. The smell of smoke was still in the air.

Bombs also ripped holes through the top of a large tent sheltering cars, smashing the floor and mangling vehicles inside. The windows were shattered in a circular sitting room containing old framed photos said to be of al-Hamidi, and a deer kept in an enclosure with other animals had a broken antler and was bleeding from the mouth.

- While there were no signs of heavy weapons at the site, armed guards in military-style uniforms patrolled the grounds as numerous security cameras watched over the sprawling complex. Hundreds of cases of bottled water, cooking oil, pasta and other supplies were stockpiled in one of the destroyed buildings.
- Another building outside the compound, next to a communications tower, was also flattened, and walls were blown out of an adjacent house. A mosque across the street and a school next door were not damaged.

Journalists were later taken to a hospital in the nearby city of Sabratha, where medical workers showed them the bodies of about eight to 10 people, including at least two children, said to have been killed in the strike. Some of the bodies appeared charred, while others were in pieces. Portraits of Gadhafi hung on the hospital walls as armed men in military fatigues roamed the hallways.

NATO, which has a mandate to protect Libyan civilians, has rejected government allegations that it targets civilians. However, mistakes have occurred.

- On Sunday, the alliance acknowledged that one of its airstrikes accidentally struck a residential neighborhood in the capital, killing civilians. Like on Monday, journalists were taken to the scene of that bomb site and then shown bodies of those said to have been killed.
- A coalition including France, Britain and the United States launched the first strikes against Gadhafi's forces under a United Nations resolution to protect civilians on March 19. NATO, which is joined by a number of Arab allies, assumed control of the air campaign over Libya on March 31.

From their de facto capital of Benghazi, the rebels have taken over much of the eastern half of the country. They also control pockets in the west, mainly around the port city of Misrata and in the Nafusa mountains south of Tripoli.

In Luxembourg, European Union foreign ministers condemned the Libyan regime, saying in a statement that "time is not on Gadhafi's side," and that the Libyan leader "has lost all legitimacy to remain in power."

The 27 foreign ministers also toughened the bloc's sanctions against the regime by adding six port authorities controlled by Gadhafi's forces to its asset-freeze list. The ports were not named.

In a similar move, the central bank of the United Arab Emirates ordered a freeze on the accounts of 19 Libyan individuals and institutions while an investigation of the funds is under way into possible links to Gadhafi's regime, according to local media.

The reports gave no further details, and officials at the UAE's central bank were not immediately available for comment.

[Libya says NATO airstrike hits residential area - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110619/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_libya)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110619/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_libya

- Libya says NATO airstrike hits residential area
- [By ADAM SCHRECK and HADEEL AL-SHALCHI, Associated Press Adam Schreck And Hadeel Al-shalchi, Associated Press](#) - 17 mins ago

TRIPOLI, Libya – The Libyan government said at least four civilians were killed Sunday in a NATO airstrike that hit a residential neighborhood in the capital, adding to charges that the alliance is striking nonmilitary targets.

Journalists based in the Libyan capital were taken by government officials to a neighborhood where rescue efforts were under way at a destroyed building that appeared to have been partially under construction.

Government spokesman Moussa Ibrahim said the damage was caused by NATO rockets and bombs. He wasn't immediately able to provide the number of casualties, but said there were no military facilities anywhere near the damaged building.

"There was intentional and deliberate targeting of the civilian houses," said deputy foreign minister Khaled Kaim during a visit to the site shortly after reporters arrived. "This is another sign of the brutality of the West."

- NATO, which has a mandate to protect Libyan civilians, rejects allegations it targets civilians.

"We are conducting operations with utmost care and precision to avoid civilian casualties. Civilian casualties figures mentioned by the Libyan regime are pure propaganda," NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu said Saturday.

Journalists who were taken to a hospital were shown at least four people said to be killed in the strike, including two young children. It was not possible to independently verify the government's account of what happened. Foreign journalists in Tripoli are not allowed to travel and report freely and are almost always shadowed by government minders.

On Friday, Prime Minister al-Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi accused NATO of a "new level of aggression," and claimed that the military alliance intentionally targeted civilian buildings, including a hotel and a university. He has called on the United Nations to take action to stop NATO's daily bombing runs.

Libya's Health Ministry says 856 civilians have been killed in NATO airstrikes since they began in March. The figure could not be independently confirmed. Previous government tolls from individual strikes have proven to be exaggerated.

- Late on Saturday, NATO announced that it had mistakenly struck a column of Libyan rebel vehicles in an airstrike near an eastern oil town two days earlier and expressed regret for any casualties that might have resulted.

The alliance has accidentally hit rebel forces before in its air campaign to protect civilians in the civil war between Gadhafi's military and the fighters trying to end his more than four decades in power.

The rebels also have complained that NATO's strikes have not helped them gain decisive momentum against the Libyan leader's better trained and equipped military, which still has firm control over most of western Libya. The rebels control much of the east.

- The alliance statement gave no figures on casualties from Thursday's airstrike, but said it regretted "any possible loss of life or injuries caused by this unfortunate incident."

NATO said its forces spotted a column of military vehicles near the frequent flashpoint town of Brega where forces loyal to Gadhafi had recently been operating and hit them because they believed they posed a threat to civilians.

International military forces have had some trouble in hitting government troops because of their proximity to civilians. Gadhafi's troops have also used civilian vehicles, making them difficult to distinguish from rebel forces.

- A doctor in the nearby city of Ajdabiya said the bodies of four rebel fighters were brought to his hospital around the time of Thursday's strike, but it was not possible to confirm whether they were killed in the bombardment.

A rebel military spokesman, Abdel-Rahman Abu-Sin, said Saturday that they appreciated NATO's efforts and understood the difficulty in differentiating between the two sides along shifting front lines.

Thursday's airstrike was similar to one in April during which NATO hit a convoy of rebel tanks, killing at least five fighters. NATO officials said at the time they did not know the rebels had any tanks, a statement that raised eyebrows as footage of the fighters with tanks had been on YouTube for weeks.

A coalition including France, Britain and the United States launched the first strikes against Gadhafi's forces under a United Nations resolution to protect civilians on March 19. NATO, which is joined by a number of Arab allies, assumed control of the air campaign over Libya on March 31.

- Senior delegates from the Arab League, the European Union and the African Union along with envoys from the U.N. and the Organization of the Islamic Conference met in Cairo to review the developments in Libya.

Arab League chief Amr Moussa said the NATO mandate is not about bringing down Gadhafi's regime and a political solution is urgently needed.

"The situation has gone beyond what was expected. It is only natural that we speed up the search for a political solution and achieving a cease-fire," he said.

[NATO - News: Comments by NATO Secretary General on incident in Brega to NATO TV, 08-Apr.-2011](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_72169.htm?selectedLocale=en)

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_72169.htm?selectedLocale=en

- 08 Apr. 2011

Comments by NATO Secretary General on incident in Brega to NATO TV

This is a very unfortunate incident. I strongly regret the loss of life. The situation on the ground is very fluid. We have seen in the past that tanks have been used by the Gaddafi regime to attack civilians.

We are conducting operations in Libya in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution with the aim to protect civilians. This is also the reason why our aircrafts target military equipment that could be used to attack civilians, but I can assure you that we do our utmost to avoid civilian casualties.

[Gaddafi regime starts talks with the west to end conflict | World news | The Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/01/gaddafi-talks-west)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/01/gaddafi-talks-west>

. Gaddafi regime starts talks with the west to end conflict

Rebels offer ceasefire as doctor says seven civilians have been killed in an air strike

- [Peter Beaumont](#), [Chris McGreal](#) in Benghazi and [Nicholas Watt](#) [guardian.co.uk](#), Friday 1 April 2011

- The regime of [Muammar Gaddafi](#) has initiated a concerted effort to open lines of communication with western governments in an attempt to bring the conflict in the country to an end.

[Libya](#)'s former prime minister, Abdul Ati al-Obeidi, told Channel 4: "We are trying to talk to the British, the French and the Americans to stop the killing of people. We are trying to find a mutual solution."

Although the regime last night rejected a rebel offer of a ceasefire if Gaddafi withdraws his military from Libya's cities and permits peaceful protests, senior British sources said the Gaddafi government was open to dialogue.

"If people on the Gaddafi side want to have a conversation, we are happy to talk," one said. "But we will deliver a clear and consistent message: Gaddafi has to go, and there has to be a better future for Libya."

The regime rejected the rebels' ceasefire conditions, saying government troops would not leave cities as demanded.

- However, signs that the regime was looking to reach out to the west came after the Guardian reported that a meeting had taken place between Mohammed Ismail, a senior aide to Gaddafi's influential son Saif al-Islam, and British officials on Wednesday in London. Ismail is a fixer who has been used by the Gaddafi family to negotiate arms deals and has considerable contacts in the west.

Ismail and Moussa Koussa, the Libyan foreign minister who defected to Britain on Wednesday night, are not the only current and former supporters of the regime to have been in contact with Britain.

British officials have been in contact with a number of Libyan officials in recent weeks in behind-the-scenes diplomacy, according to a spokesman for David Cameron. He stressed that Britain had not been negotiating any possible trade-offs aimed at sealing Gaddafi's exit from power. "There are no deals."

The disclosure of the dialogue came as the revolutionary leadership in the east laid down conditions for a ceasefire, after a visit by the UN's special envoy Abdelilah al-Khatib to the rebel capital, Benghazi.

"We agree on a ceasefire on the condition that our brothers in the western cities have freedom of expression and also that the forces that are besieging the cities withdraw," said one of the leadership, Mustafa Abdul Jalil. "Our aim is to liberate and have sovereignty over all of Libya."

- The rebels' initiatives were announced as the first credible report of civilian casualties from the western air campaign emerged. Suleiman Refadi, a doctor who has worked with the rebels, told reporters that seven civilians, including three girls from the same family aged 12 to 16, were killed on Wednesday in an air strike.

Refadi said three youths and a fourth girl were also killed when missiles hit a government ammunition lorry and destroyed two houses about nine miles from Brega and what is now the frontline. About 25 people were injured. The report was not independently confirmed.

- In Tripoli, gunfire was heard near Gaddafi's compound. Reuters reported that residents said they saw snipers on rooftops and pools of blood on the streets.
- The rebels made it clear their offer of a ceasefire should not be seen as a sign of weakness. In an attempt to finally bring order to its chaotic military campaign, the leadership deployed the first of its newly trained troops in the move on Brega, which was seized by the government earlier this week, and hauled up rocket launchers.
- They were also seen to have communications equipment, which the rebels have asked foreign governments to provide.

The newly uniformed soldiers included officers who, the rebels said, would establish lines of command to end shambolic confrontations in which revolutionaries have only been able to move forward under the cover of western air strikes and have been unable to hold ground because they lack plans for defence.

- While the rebels prepared for a new offensive in the east, Gaddafi's forces meanwhile launched a fresh assault on Misrata, the last enclave in the west still under the revolutionaries' control. Libya's third largest city was hit with tank and artillery fire.

"It was random and very intense bombardment," a spokesman, called Sami, told Reuters by telephone. "We no longer recognise the place. They are targeting everyone, including civilians' homes."

• Libya rebels say hit by coalition air strike

Sat Apr 2, 2011

• By Alexander Dziadosz

- BREGA, Libya (Reuters) - At least 10 rebels were killed by a coalition air strike on Friday, fighters at the scene said on Saturday, in an increasingly chaotic battle with Muammar Gaddafi's forces over the oil town of Brega.

With the more experienced and better organised rebel army locked in combat with Gaddafi's forces, hundreds of young, inexperienced volunteers could be seen fleeing east towards Ajdabiyah, after coming under heavy mortar and machinegun fire.

A Reuters correspondent at the scene of the air strike saw the burnt out husks of at least four vehicles including an ambulance by the side of the road near the eastern entrance to the town. Men prayed at freshly dug graves covered by the rebel red, black and green flag nearby

- "Some of Gaddafi's forces sneaked in among the rebels and fired anti-aircraft guns in the air," said rebel fighter Mustafa Ali Omar. "After that the NATO forces came and bombed them."
- Rebel fighters at the scene said as many as 14 people may have died in the bombing, which they said happened around 10 p.m. local time (2000 GMT) on Friday
- Officials from Britain and France, which led a drive for military intervention in Libya, had no immediate comment
- Most rebels blamed a Gaddafi agent for deliberately drawing the friendly fire but some said other rebels had shot into the air by accident.

"The rebels shot up in the air and the alliance came and bombed them. We are the ones who made the mistake," said one fighter who did not give his name

- Another, Mohammed Abdallah, said the rebels still needed air strikes to face Gaddafi's better armed forces. Pointing to his assault rifle, he said: "We cannot fight him with just these."
- Gaddafi's forces fired rockets on Brega overnight and fighting continued further west around the town's university early on Saturday, rebels said.

But at the eastern gate of the town, dust rose from the road as young volunteers streamed away in cars after coming under heavy fire from Gaddafi's forces.

The young volunteers have frequently fled under fire, raising questions about whether the rebels will be able to make any headway against Gaddafi's better-equipped and better-trained forces without great western military involvement

- CEASE-FIRE REJECTED

On Friday, a rebel leader, speaking after talks with a U.N. envoy in the eastern rebel stronghold Benghazi, offered a truce on condition that Gaddafi left Libya and his forces quit cities now under government control.

The Libyan government dismissed the cease-fire call.

"They are asking us to withdraw from our own cities If this is not mad then I don't know what this is. We will not leave our cities," government spokesman Mussa Ibrahim told reporters.

Brega is one of a string of oil towns along the coast that have been taken and retaken by each side in recent weeks after a U.N. mandated intervention which was intended to protect civilians in Libya.

Rebels have been trying to marshal their ragtag units into a more disciplined force after a rebel advance along about 200 km (125 miles) of coast west from Brega was repulsed and turned into a rapid retreat this week.

Two weeks ago, Gaddafi's forces were at the gates of Benghazi and the Libyan leader pledged "No mercy, no pity" for rebels who would be flushed out "house by house, room by room."

- While Western action has failed to bring any end to fighting or a quick collapse of Gaddafi's administration

- there have been reports of contacts between Tripoli and Western capitals
- Foreign minister Moussa Koussa defected in London this week and a Gaddafi appointee declined to take up his post as U.N. ambassador, condemning the "spilling of blood" in Libya. Other reports of defections are unconfirmed.

A British government source said Mohammed Ismail, an aide to Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam, had visited family members in London, and Britain had "taken the opportunity to send some very strong messages about the Gaddafi regime."

[Libya government rejects rebel ceasefire - Africa - Al Jazeera English](http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2011/04/201141134110527219.html)

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2011/04/201141134110527219.html>

- Libya government rejects rebel ceasefire

Opposition offers ceasefire if Gaddafi halts attacks against rebel-held cities, but government terms conditions 'mad'.

Last Modified: 01 Apr 2011

- A Libyan government spokesman has termed the conditions set by the opposition for a ceasefire "mad", and asserted that troops loyal to Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, will remain stationed where they are.

"They are asking us to withdraw from our own cities. If this is not mad then I don't know what this is. We will not leave our cities," Mussa Ibrahim, the government spokesman, said on Friday.

Fighting raged on Friday near the key oil town of Brega, in the country's east, and the towns of Misurata and Az Zintan in the west.

Earlier, the opposition had said it would agree to a ceasefire as long as Gaddafi pulled his military out of opposition-held cities and allowed peaceful protests against his government.

Mustafa Abdul-Jalil, head of the opposition's interim governing council based in Benghazi, spoke during a joint press conference on Friday with Abdelilah Al-Khatib, the UN envoy. Al-Khatib is visiting the rebels' de facto stronghold of Benghazi in hopes of reaching a political solution to the crisis embroiling the North African nation.

Abdul-Jalil said the rebels' condition for a ceasefire is "that the Gaddafi brigades and forces withdraw from inside and outside Libyan cities to give freedom to the Libyan people to choose and the world will see that they will choose freedom".

The UN resolution that authorised international air strikes against Libya called for Gaddafi and the rebels to end hostilities. Gaddafi announced a ceasefire immediately but has shown no sign of heeding it. His forces continue to attack rebels in the east, where the opposition is strongest, and have besieged the only major rebel-held city in the west, Misurata.

Abdul-Jalil said the regime must withdraw its forces and lift all sieges. He stressed the ultimate goal was still to oust Gaddafi.

"Our aim is to liberate and have sovereignty over all of Libya with its capital in Tripoli," he said.

- Al Jazeera's Laurence Lee, reporting from Benghazi, played down the significance of the statements, noting that this is not the first time the rebels have said they are open to negotiation.
- "You have to remember that Mr Abdel Jalil was saying it in the presence of the United Nations special envoy to Libya, and the UN is calling repeatedly for a ceasefire, and so he had to acknowledge that to some degree," Lee said.

"But the other thing you have to remember that he said, was that if there is no ceasefire then the rebels will press on to try to liberate all the Western towns."

Despite the continued bravado, the protracted stalemate and shortage of arms is clearly causing unease in the opposition stronghold, he said.

"As time goes by, the military solution to this looks far less likely, and I think the political solution, if not inevitable, looks far more likely," he reported.

Forces loyal to Libya's leader of nearly 42 years spent much of this week pushing the rebels back about 160km along the coast. Attempting to regroup, the rebels hit back with mortars on Friday - weapons they previously appeared to have lacked. The previous night, they drove in a convoy with at least eight rocket launchers - more artillery than usual.

- The rebels also appeared to have more communication equipment such as radios and satellite phones, and were working in more organised units, in which military defectors were each leading six or seven volunteers.

On Friday, they appointed Abdel Fatah Yunis, the former interior minister who resigned to join the opposition, as the commander of the opposition military forces combatting pro-Gaddafi brigades.

Fighting rages

The rebels' losses this week, and others before airstrikes began March 19, underlined the reality that their equipment, training and organisation were far inferior to those of Gaddafi's forces. The recent changes appear to be an attempt to correct, or at least ease, the imbalance.

Residents of Misurata, meanwhile, said they came under heavy bombardment throughout the day from pro-Gaddafi forces.

"They used tanks, rocket-propelled grenades, mortar rounds and other projectiles to hit the city today. It was a random and very intense bombardment," Sami, a rebel spokesman, told Reuters by telephone. "We no longer recognise the place. The destruction cannot be described."

- Opposition fighters say government forces are targetting both the city's port and residential areas.

Heavy fighting also took place near the key oil port of Brega, where doctors told the AFP news agency that 11 people had been killed.

Meanwhile, in the village of Argkuk, near Ajdabiya, Al Jazeera's Sue Turton reported that what appeared to be a NATO-led coalition airstrike on a pro-Gaddafi vehicle killed seven civilians and injured 25 others when ammunition in the vehicle exploded.

- Ibrahim, the government's spokesman, termed the strike a "crime against humanity".

It was unclear where the frontline was Friday. Rebels were holding journalists back at the western gate of Ajdabiya, far from the fighting. On Thursday the opposition had moved into Brega before Gaddafi's forces pushed them out.

A Libyan opposition official, meanwhile, said rebels would be able to buy more arms thanks to an oil deal they reached with the Arab nation of Qatar.

Ali Tarhouni, who handles finances for the opposition's National Transitional Council, said Qatar has agreed to market oil currently in storage in rebel-controlled areas of southeastern Libya.

Tarhouni said one sticking point is how to truck the oil out of the country. The money from oil sales will be put into an account which the opposition will use to pay for weapons, food, medicine, fuel and other needs.

Defections take toll

Gaddafi's greatest losses this week were not military but political. Two members of his inner circle, including [his foreign minister](#), abandoned him this week, setting off speculation about other officials who may be next.

The defections could sway people who have stuck with Gaddafi despite the uprising that began February 15 and the international airstrikes aimed at keeping the Libyan leader from attacking his own people.

Gaddafi struck a defiant stance in a statement Thursday, accusing the leaders of the countries attacking his forces of being "affected by power madness".

- "The solution for this problem is that they resign immediately and their peoples find alternatives to them," he said.

Yet Gaddafi's message was undercut by its delivery - a scroll across the bottom of state TV as he remained out of sight.

Meanwhile, nations behind the campaign of international airstrikes that have hobbled Libya's military hailed the resignation and flight to the UK of Gaddafi's foreign minister, Moussa Koussa, as a sign of weakness in Gaddafi's reign.

Koussa has been privy to all the inner workings of the regime, so his departure could open the door for some hard intelligence, though Britain refused to offer him immunity from prosecution.

Ali Abdessalam Treki, a former foreign minister and UN General Assembly president, announced his departure on several opposition websites the next day, saying "It is our nation's right to live in freedom and democracy and enjoy a

good life".

Treki's defection comes after [Al Jazeera uncovered](#) what was supposed to be a secret visit to Tunis in mid-March.

The rebels say they have taken heart from the departures in Gaddafi's inner circle.

"We believe that the regime is crumbling from within," opposition spokesman Mustafa Gheriani said in Benghazi, the rebels' de facto capital.

[More Civilians, Including Children, Slain in NATO's Libya Strikes -- News from Antiwar.com](#)

<http://news.antiwar.com/2011/04/01/more-civilians-including-children-slain-in-natos-libya-strikes>

- [More Civilians, Including Children, Slain in NATO's Libya Strikes](#)

NATO Launches 74 Air Strikes in First 24 Hours After Taking Command

by Jason Ditz, April 01, 2011

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NATO announced on Friday that the first 24 hours of their command over the Libyan War has [resulted in 178 sorties and 74 air strikes](#). NATO warships also stopped two ships in the Mediterranean Sea near Libya, but did not board them.

- At least some of the strikes [hit a small village called](#) Zawia el Argobe, near Brega. The village doctor said the strike hit a truck carrying ammunition, and the subsequent explosion killed seven civilians and wounded 25 others. Among the dead were children as young as 12.
- Though NATO and the US have been shrugging off most reports of civilian killings in their strikes, they have come under renewed scrutiny [since a top Catholic official](#) in Tripoli said that his city alone lost 40 civilians in the bombing campaigns.
- The US was keen to push for a NATO takeover of the Libyan War, and much is being made of the "16 NATO members" participating in the war. The reality, however, [is that](#) the US and France are still contributing a large majority of the attack force.

[40 civilians dead in Tripoli strikes: Vatican official - Reuters](#)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20110331/wl_nm/us_libya_civilians_vatican

- 40 civilians dead in Tripoli strikes: Vatican official
- [By Silvia Aloisi Silvia Aloisi](#) - Thu Mar 31, 10:55 am ET

ROME (Reuters) – At least 40 civilians have been killed in air strikes by Western forces on Tripoli, the top Vatican official in the Libyan capital said Thursday, citing what he called reliable sources in close contact with residents.

"The air strikes are meant to protect civilians, but they are killing dozens of civilians," Bishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli, the apostolic vicar of Tripoli, told Reuters by phone.

"In the Tajoura neighborhood, around 40 civilians were killed, and a house with a family inside collapsed," he said.

"In the Buslim neighborhood, due to the bombardments, a civilian building came down, although it is not clear how many people were inside."

NATO said it was investigating Martinelli's report but had no confirmation of civilian casualties in Tripoli.

- Martinelli earlier told Catholic news agency Fides that the 40 civilians were killed in Buslim, but he later corrected the district to Tajoura, saying he had confused the names of the two neighborhoods.

He said his information on the killings came from "people who work with us, who have many contacts with residents, who are on the ground and know the situation very well.

"I rule out that they could be giving me the official line on this," he said. "I have not seen it myself but these are people that I know well."

- INCONCLUSIVE

Libyan officials have taken foreign reporters to the sites of what they say were Western air strikes on Tripoli, but evidence of civilian casualties has been inconclusive.

Western powers say they have no confirmed evidence of civilian casualties from air strikes, which they have carried out under a U.N. mandate to protect civilians caught in conflict between Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's forces and rebels.

Canadian Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard, the commander of NATO operations in Libya, told reporters in Naples:

"I am aware of this report. It is a news report and I appreciate the source of this report but it is worth noting that I take every one of those issues seriously.

- "We are very careful in the prosecution of any of the possible targets that we have," Bouchard said. "We have very strict rules of engagement provided to us and we are operating within the legal mandate of our United Nations mandate."

Martinelli said Western bombardments had also struck near some hospitals, mentioning one in Mizdah, a town about 145 km (90 miles) southwest of the capital, citing Filipino nurses who he said had to be evacuated.

- Fides, the news agency of the Vatican missionary arm, said Martinelli had been in Libya for 10 years and had a very good network of contacts in the country.

There are about 100,000 Catholics living in Libya -- foreign nationals who mostly work in hospitals as nurses, it said.

"Bombs can never solve problems. Military targets are often in the middle of civilian areas, and even when they are not, you never know what's inside," Martinelli said, referring to arms depots.

He said living conditions in Tripoli were getting worse by the day, with food shortages. Residents had to queue for hours to buy bread and fuel.

He also said there seemed to be a military stalemate.

"That is why I say that a diplomatic solution is the principal way to put an end to the spilling of blood among Libyans, offering Gaddafi a dignified exit," he said.

[Libyans Offer Credible Case of Death by Airstrike - NYTimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/31/world/africa/31casualty.html)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/31/world/africa/31casualty.html>

• Libyans Offer Credible Case of Death by Airstrike

By [DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK](#)

Published: March 30, 2011

- GHARYAN, Libya — Standing at the grave of an 18-month-old baby on Wednesday, officials of the Qaddafi government presented the first specific and credible case of a civilian death caused by Western airstrikes.
- But relatives speaking a few yards away said they blamed Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#) and welcomed the bombs.
- "No, no, no, this is not from [NATO](#)," one relative said, speaking quietly and on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation. The Western planes had struck an ammunition depot at a military base nearby, he said, and the explosion had sent a tank shell flying into the bedroom of the baby, a boy, in a civilian's home. "What NATO is doing is good," he said, referring to the Western military alliance that is enforcing a no-fly zone in [Libya](#).
- The testimony of the boy's parents, a hole in the wall, damage to the house, quietly grieving family members, and a baby-sized and freshly covered grave appeared to confirm the relative's account of the death.

That made the baby, Siraj Najib Mohamed Suessi, the first specific and credible civilian death from the airstrikes that the Qaddafi government has presented in 10 days of official statements decrying what they say are widespread casualties.

- The town presented none of the theatrical displays of support for Colonel Qaddafi that usually greet official tours. There were no green flags, Qaddafi posters or chanting crowds, and residents were notably cool to the official tour escorts.

The difference might have reflected the character of the town, which was once a center of resistance to the Italian occupation. It might also have reflected the emboldened mood of those critical of Colonel Qaddafi as the airstrikes cut into his military strength.

- The Qaddafi government's press office drove journalists 70 miles to this mountain town south of Tripoli to get to it. But as government minders directed journalists to the house and the grave, several residents approached foreign correspondents to tell them surreptitiously of their hatred of Colonel Qaddafi.

"He is not a man. He is Dracula," one said. "For 42 years, it has been dark. Anyone who speaks, he kills. But everyone here wants Qaddafi to go."

- An earlier visit to the funeral of a 21-year-old soldier, Mondher el-Mahdi el-Daas, in the town of Azizea near Tripoli, unfolded differently as well. On most official trips, a warning honk from a government bus cues a prepared crowd of Qaddafi supporters to start waving green flags and chanting "God, Muammar, Libya, and that's it."

In Azizea, the sounds of Kalashnikovs firing into the air greeted the bus even before the honk. The small crowd was unusually well armed, with many in civilian clothes carrying machine guns and one man carrying two — the latest evidence of the Qaddafi government's distribution of weapons throughout parts of the civilian population.

And instead of chanting only for Qaddafi, the crowd in Azizea began chanting for the local tribal group, the Warshafana, and repeatedly reverted back to it. "Warshafana, Warshafana, we will punch the nose of our enemy," one chant declared.

- Speaking through official translators, several said they were proud of their neighbor, saying he had died fighting rebels near the Qaddafi stronghold of Surt. No unmonitored conversations could be arranged.

In Gharyan, however, some said they were sure that Colonel Qaddafi's four decades in power would soon end. One man gave a journalist a phone number for use only after the colonel's ouster, when his secret police would not be tapping phones.

But no one could explain how they envisioned forcing Colonel Qaddafi from power, given that the rebels appear incapable of defeating his militia and the Western powers have said they would not use military power to oust him directly.

[West targets Libyan forces in bid to end stalemate](#)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20110326/wl_nm/us_libya;_ylt=Ahe_6LeBFCvdxc0AhKHBCxvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTI5OGozbmdoBGFzc2VC

- West targets Libyan forces in bid to end stalemate
- [By Mohammed Abbas Mohammed Abbas](#) - Fri Mar 25,
- BENGHAZI, Libya (Reuters) - Western warplanes bombed Muammar Gaddafi's tanks and artillery in eastern Libya to try to break a battlefield stalemate and help rebels take the strategic town of Ajdabiyah.

Rebels said they had entered Ajdabiyah from the east on Friday, Al Jazeera reported, while Gaddafi's forces held on in the west of the town, which commands the coastal road toward Tripoli.

The African Union said it was planning to facilitate talks to help end the war, but NATO said its operation could last three months, and France said the conflict would not end soon.

- In Washington, a U.S. military spokeswoman said the coalition fired 16 Tomahawk cruise missiles and flew 153 air sorties in the past 24 hours targeting Gaddafi's artillery, mechanized forces and command and control infrastructure.

Western governments hope the raids, launched a week ago with the aim of protecting civilians, will shift the balance of power in favor of the Arab world's most violent popular revolt.

In Tripoli, explosions were heard early on Saturday, signaling possible new strikes by warplanes or missiles.

As the United States said Gaddafi's ability to command and sustain his forces was diminishing, Libyan state TV said the "brother leader" had promoted all members of his armed forces and police "for their heroic and courageous fight against the crusader, colonialist assault," without giving further details.

Rebels massing for an attack on Ajdabiyah earlier exchanged artillery fire with Gaddafi's forces.

Opposition forces on the road there seemed more organized than in recent days, when their disarray stirred doubts about their ability to challenge Gaddafi.

They had set up road blocks at regular intervals and Reuters counted at least four truck-based rocket launchers -- heavier weaponry than had been seen earlier this week.

Winning back Ajdabiyah would be the biggest victory for the eastern rebels since Western military intervention halted a counter-offensive by the better equipped Gaddafi forces which had driven them back toward the rebel stronghold of Benghazi.

It would also signal that allied airstrikes may be capable of helping rebel fighters to eventually topple Gaddafi.

- AFRICAN INITIATIVE

At African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, AU commission chairman Jean Ping said the organization was planning to facilitate peace talks in a process that should end with democratic elections.

It was the first statement by the AU, which had rejected any form of foreign intervention in the Libya crisis, since the U.N. Security Council imposed a no-fly zone last week and air strikes began on Libyan military targets.

But in Brussels, a NATO official said planning for NATO's operation assumed a mission lasting 90 days, although this could be extended or shortened as required.

France said the mission could go on for weeks.

"I doubt that it will be days," Admiral Edouard Guillaud, the head of French armed forces, told France Info radio. "I think it will be weeks. I hope it will not take months."

Guillaud said a French plane destroyed an army artillery battery near Ajdabiyah, while in London, the Defense Ministry said British Tornado aircraft had also been active there.

- A Reuters correspondent who traveled close to Ajdabiyah on Friday saw large plumes of black smoke rising above the eastern entrance to the town.

A rocket apparently fired from rebel positions then hit the eastern gate, sending a fireball into the sky. "The eastern gate has fallen and we are sending a team to check before moving forward," rebel Colonel Hamad al-Hasi told Reuters.

In Benghazi, rebel spokesman Mustafa Gheriani said he expected Ajdabiyah to fall following the Western strikes.

"(The strikes) will weaken their forces and more importantly their morale," he said, adding the level of Western strikes was "sufficient. We feel safe under their protection."

Simon Brooks, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross operations in eastern Libya, reported big population movements from the Ajdabiyah area because of the fighting.

Officials and rebels said aid organizations were able to deliver some supplies to the western city of Misrata but were concerned because of government snipers in the city center.

Gaddafi's forces shelled an area on the outskirts of the city, killing six people including three children, a rebel said.

Misrata has experienced some of the heaviest fighting between rebels and Gaddafi's forces since an uprising began on February 16.

[NATO Strike Kills Two Children in Afghanistan's Kunar Province -- News from Antiwar.com](http://news.antiwar.com/2011/03/15/nato-strike-kills-two-children-in-afghanistans-kunar-province)

<http://news.antiwar.com/2011/03/15/nato-strike-kills-two-children-in-afghanistans-kunar-province>

- [NATO Strike Kills Two Children in Afghanistan's Kunar Province](#)

Kids Were Watering Crops During Attack

by Jason Ditz, March 15, 2011

- Adding to the already embarrassingly long list of recent civilian killings in the Kunar Province, Afghan officials [confirmed that](#) a NATO air strike on Monday night killed two children who were working on irrigation channels for their family's farm.
- NATO initially confirmed the strike, saying it killed two "suspected insurgents," [but the insurgents](#) were later revealed to be a 9-year-old and a 15-year-old. NATO has yet to reverse its claim that the two were "placing an IED," despite the Afghan reports to the contrary.
- The incident comes just two weeks after a NATO strike in Kunar [that killed nine](#) children who were collecting firewood, and who also were initially described as suspects. This was itself just weeks after an offensive by NATO killed 65 civilians in the province, including large numbers of women and children.

The killings sparked an angry rebuke by President Hamid Karzai, [who insisted that](#) US "apologies" for the killings were no longer sufficient, and demanded that the attacks stop taking place.

