

African Leaders Demand Halt to NATO Bombing Campaign in Libya

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, June 15, 2011

[Bloomberg News](#) 15 June 2011

Region: [Russia and FSU](#), [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

African leaders today demanded an immediate end to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's bombing campaign in Libya and called for the African Union and United Nations to take the lead in reaching a political solution.

"We have not voted for a substitute for bombing of one group by the other," South Africa's Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane told reporters in New York, referring to the UN resolution authorizing military action against Libya leader Muammar Qaddafi's regime, which her government supported. "All forms of military intervention and bombing must stop now."

Nkoana-Mashabane and ministers of Mali, Mauritania, Uganda and the Republic of Congo, which formed the AU's Ad Hoc Committee on Libya, expressed their concern about the NATO bombing campaign to the UN Security Council. Adoption of a draft statement demanding a "complete end to violence and all attacks against and abuses of civilians" was blocked by the U.S. and other Western nations.

"This was a meeting for expressions of frustration," said Ambassador Nestor Osorio of Colombia, a Security Council member. Ambassador Jose Moraes Cabral of Portugal, also a council member, said Uganda's Foreign Minister Ruhakana Rugunda suggested the NATO intervention amounted to "going back to colonialism" in Africa.

Call from Russia, China

The meeting in New York followed a statement today by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security alliance led by China and Russia and including the former Soviet states of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan [and Kazakhstan], urging an end to the NATO campaign. "Domestic conflicts and crises have to be regulated exclusively by peaceful means, through political dialogue," the group said in Astana, Kazakhstan, where it is holding a summit.

South Africa's President Jacob Zuma was more direct yesterday in Cape Town, saying the UN resolution authorizing military action was "being abused for regime change, political assassinations and foreign military occupation."

[Mauritania's Foreign Minister Hamady Ould] Hamady called for an "immediate humanitarian pause" in the fighting and expressed the AU's "surprise and disappointment at the attempts to marginalize the continent in the management of the Libyan conflict."

Britain's Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant said a precondition of a halt to the NATO bombing

was a cessation of attacks on civilians by the Qaddafi regime.

“The ball is in Qaddafi’s court,” Lyall Grant said.

-Editors: Steven Komarow, Terry Atlas

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