

Gaddafi's Death: Celebrating Murder While Ushering in Civil War

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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The Media's Deathgasm

It's official: capturing someone alive and quickly executing them, then parading the corpse around on TV 24 hours is "a good thing". It's hard to know who the winner was, but the BBC, ITV, Sky and a number of other channels have gone all out the last few days to prove who's the best at gloating with glee over murder of Gaddafi (after he was dragged through the streets and [sodomized with a knife](#)). After the [alleged "death" of bin Laden](#) and the drone strike which killed Anwar al-Awlaki, and the many other victims of the West's extrajudicial killings (a tactic increasingly in favour as the "War of Terror" rolls into its eleventh year) it should come as little surprise to people when, once again, the nations which claim to be the strictest adherents to the rule of law bend the rules to the point of breaking when it comes to justifying their own killings.

To be fair to those members of the public who are celebrating the death of Gaddafi, many of them have a dire understanding both of the current situation in Libya and the historical context of the Gaddafi regime. Gaddafi - like Saddam, Milosovic, Ahmadinejad and countless others before him - has been overblown as the greatest threat to humanity since (you guessed it) Hitler, a comparison which has become so overworn and debased through constant hyperbole as to become almost meaningless. It's a routine response from those who defend the West for their crimes against humanity - we may well have killed over a million Iraqis since 2003 (not to mention the 100,000s of children who died as a direct consequence of the pre-invasion UN sanctions) but that doesn't require any condemnation. After all, we're the "civilized nations" who are helping to "rebuild" the backwards lands of Africa, the Middle East, and wherever else we see fit to bestow the benefits of "freedom and democracy". Any deaths that come as a consequence of our noble mission is "utterly regrettable"; the wasteland and degradation we leave behind "good intentions gone awry".

Gaddafi's Rule: The Facts They Omit

One of the perennial myths about the 42 year Gaddafi regime is that it was utterly brutal and repressive - all lived in fear of disappearing into his torture dungeons or being executed while poverty and despair were the facts of daily life. Muhammad min Libya (a pseudonym), [writing in the Guardian](#) echoes this, stating, "Many Libyan citizens stood in a long line to take a final look at the man who inflicted harm upon each and every one of us through four decades of his dictatorship." An examination of the facts, however, presents a very different picture.

In 2009, Libya sat at the top of the table for Africa on the Human Development Index.

According to the [United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization](#), Libya "has made strides in public health and, since 1980, child mortality rates have dropped from 70 per thousand live births to 19 in 2009. Life expectancy has risen from 61 to 74 years of age during the same span of years." Here are some [statistics from the World Health Organization](#) in the same year:

Total life expectancy at birth (years)	72.3
Male life expectancy at birth (years)	70.2
Female life expectancy at birth (years)	74.9
Newborns with low birth weight (%)	4.0
Children underweight (%)	4.8
Perinatal mortality rate per 1000 total births	19
Neonatal mortality rate	11.0
Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	14.0
Under five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	20.1
Maternal mortality ratio (per 10000 live births)	23

The WHO has described [Libya's public health care](#) prior to [Operation Odyssey Dawn](#) in the following terms: "Health care is available to all citizens free of charge by the public sector. The country boasts the highest literacy and educational enrollment rates in North Africa. The Government is substantially increasing the development budget for health services..." Similarly, [UNESCO's Institute for Statistics](#) demonstrates a high literacy rate of 89% (99% for the youth), a primary school enrollment rate of 97%, while [according to the World Bank](#), "In a relative short period of time, Libya achieved universal access for primary education, with 98% gross enrollment for secondary, and 46% for tertiary education. In the past decade, girls' enrollment increased by 12% in all levels of education."

None of the above squares with the idea perpetuated by politicians and the media that Gaddafi had no support in Libya. Indeed, footage of a pro-Gaddafi march held after the NATO bombing had already begun suggests the exact opposite - over 1.5 million people - out of a population of approximately 6 million - took to the streets. Their voices were ignored by the Western press:

As for the alleged crimes against humanity, which formed the backbone of the case for "intervention", you can read my exchange with the International Criminal Court and overview of the evidence presented [here](#), since which, further evidence has emerged which appears to confirm that these accusations were [largely fabricated](#).

Destroying The Great Man Made River Project and other NATO War Crimes

It's interesting to note how the [BBC reported](#) on Gaddafi's Great Man Made River Project back in March 2006, a time when he was in favour with the West. Quite rightly, the BBC used phrases such as, "it is impossible not to be impressed with the scale of the project," and "It is hard to fault the Libyans on their commitment. They estimate that when the Great Man-Made River is completed, they will have spent almost \$20bn. So far, that money has bought 5,000km of pipeline that can transport 6.5 million cubic metres of water a day from over 1,000 desert wells. As a result, Libya is now a world leader in hydrological engineering, and it wants to export its expertise to other African and Middle-Eastern countries facing the same problems with their water." It is the world's largest irrigation project.

Or rather, it was. In July of 2011, NATO bombed the pipeline, adding to the expanding list of war crimes committed by the organization whose mission in Libya was based on the “responsibility to protect” civilians. Some estimate that in the region of 30,000 people have been killed since NATO began attacking Libya in March, and there is clear evidence that the destruction of the water supply is far from the only contravention of the laws of war committed by NATO in Libya. None of which should come as a surprise: as with all of NATO’s previous “interventions”, schools, hospitals, electric power stations, basic infrastructure and built up civilian districts have taken heavy losses and often been reduced to rubble, ready for the IMF to enter the fray with reconstruction packages – this is where the real looting begins.

It’s nothing new: back in April 2000, [Michel Chossudovsky observed](#) the similarities between an IMF take over of a country through the use of Structural Readjustment Programs and the take over of a country through the use of NATO forces: “... there’s a good deal of coordination between the IMF and NATO. You saw it in Kosovo. The IMF and the World Bank had set up a postwar economic plan including free market reforms well before the onset of bombing. They work together. If a country refuses IMF intervention, NATO steps in, or NATO and various covert agencies, and they create the proper conditions for IMF programs to be imposed ... Sometimes war creates the conditions, and then the economic institutions come in and pick up the pieces. Or conversely the IMF itself does the destabilizing ...”

Aftermath: Post-Gaddafi Spoils and the Stride Towards Civil War

In Libya the jackals and wolves have performed their task and the country is now open to pillaging by Western corporations – it took no time at all before British businessmen were told: “[pack your bags](#)” and head to the ruined North African nation to squabble over the spoils. It remains to be seen who the major players will be, but if the Iraq war is anything to go by, we can expect to see further soaring profits for the likes of Halliburton, Bechtel, numerous private military contractors such as Xe Corporation, defence contractors such as General Dynamics and Lockheed Martin as well as the ubiquitous presence of the major energy cartels.

As for the Libyans themselves, the track record of other nations destroyed by NATO and “rebuilt” by the IMF and their corporate friends points to an increasingly bleak future. Already, the National Transitional Council has stated that Sharia Law will form the basis of their constitution. In addition to the numerous atrocities carried out by the CIA/SAS-backed “rebels” (many of whom are not Libyans, many more with close associations to al-Qaeda), Human Rights Watch have already called for an investigation into the [massacre of 53 Gaddafi supporters](#) in Sirte, the city where the former leader met his demise. They might add to that call for an investigation the “rebel” beheading of Libyans and murder of blacks. Civil war is likely, given that the tried and tested tactics of “divide and rule” have again been applied – just as the US military [stoked sectarian violence in Iraq](#), so too has NATO’s actions in Libya set the stage for violence and conflict between the many tribal and ethnic factions in the country and the numerous foreign fighters who made up the “rebels”.

Meanwhile, increasing pressure is being applied to Syria and Iran, long-standing targets of the Western powers.

I’ve had a persistent feeling of déjà vu for some time now. Something tells me it isn’t going away any time soon.

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