

NATO Defies Africa By Intensifying Bombardment Of Libya

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Africa demands fall on deaf ears amid NATO bombardment on Libya

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-As NATO continues with its bombardment on Libya and ignoring the AU's demands, African leaders find themselves stuck with a resolution they cannot enforce.

HARARE: As African leaders recently demanded from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia that NATO stop its bombardment on Libya, the West disregarded the call and was in fact intensifying its war against Muammar Gaddafi.

The African leaders met on May 25-26 to find a solution to Libya's crisis following three months of rebellion that have seen Britain, France and the United States leading a Western onslaught against a stubborn Gaddafi who has vowed to fight to the last drop of blood.

While the leaders have said only a political solution will resolve the country's problems and want NATO to cease its operations, they remain powerless in the face of Western powers which are unfazed and have vowed to see Gaddafi removed from power.

In essence, the leaders' demand for a ceasefire is of no consequence as the western powers have so far simply ignored it, in the same way the French helped remove former Cote d'Ivoire president Laurent Gbagbo, despite African resistance to foreign military intervention.

British Prime Minister David on Thursday authorized the use of helicopters in Libya, in total disregard to the African position.

Sky News reported Friday morning that the British Apache helicopters would be deployed over Libya in the following 24 hours to boost the campaign against Gaddafi.

Cameron also confirmed that French helicopters would also be deployed to Libya, as NATO forces seek to be more accurate in dealing with ground targets.

The NATO presence in Africa, the economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe and the support for new governments in Tunisia and Egypt - to mention a few cases - show that the

West wants to have greater say in African politics.

And with the G8 offering Arab countries “in transition to democracy” at least 12 billion pounds (nearly 20 billion U.S. dollars) in aid, loans and debt relief, the Libyan conflict is likely to continue as rebels are spurred by the prospect of a financial bailout if they win the war.

Britain is so immersed in the conflict and the “fledgling democracies” in the Arab world that it has also pledged to set aside 110 million pounds (about 181 million U.S. dollars) “over the next four years to foster democracy and economic growth in Tunisia and Egypt as part of a wider international package to show support for the Arab spring.”

Speaking Thursday on the opening day of the G8 summit of leading economies in France, Cameron argued that if Britain did not help the fledgling democracies of North Africa, the result would be poisonous extremism and waves of illegal immigration into the United Kingdom.

The group of the world’s most industrialized nations, with the exception of Russia, is generally agreed on the course of action against Gaddafi and is determined to see him leave office while backing Arab “democratic transitions.”

As NATO continues with its bombardment on Libya and ignoring the AU’s demands, African leaders find themselves stuck with a resolution they cannot enforce.

The rebels fighting Gaddafi have rejected the latest overtures for a ceasefire by Libyan Prime Minister Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi, demanding that the only way forward would be Gaddafi’s exit from power.

The AU now pins its hopes on South African President Jacob Zuma, who is scheduled to head other African leaders to Libya in Monday to find a roadmap for a peaceful resolution to the conflict following an earlier unsuccessful trip in April.

What will remain critical, however, is how Zuma and his High Level Panel for the Resolution of the Conflict in Libya will engage NATO following their meeting with Gaddafi in Tripoli.

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