

NATO's War and Libya's Migrant Crisis

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The issue of refugees and economic migrants leaving the Middle East and Africa due to conflict and the desire for a better life is one that will be debated for decades. No doubt you will have your own opinion on the matter. However, the unprovoked and illegal attack of Libya by Britain, France and NATO (USA) in 2011 led directly to conflict refugees and economic migrants making the hazardous journey across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

The Chancellor at the time, George Osborne, had his office officially announce:

“It’s right that the United Kingdom is playing a leading role to protect Libyan civilians from the appalling activities of the Libyan government and to take that country, we hope, to a better future.”

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office then announced, somewhat hastily in December 2011 that it wanted to promote and support business to get a foothold in the country. FCO press release: “[Rebuilding Libya: opportunities for British business](#).”

The British government were warned not just by diplomatic efforts but even by the mainstream media that this campaign would lead to disaster. So was Barack [Obama and NATO](#):

“Meanwhile, Barack Obama ignored the advice of top lawyers in the US defence and justice departments when he decided he had the legal authority to continue the US military participation in Libya without the authorisation of Congress, according to officials.”

The Telegraph ran a [piece back in 2010](#) prior to the attack.

“Col. Muammar Gaddafi has warned that Europe runs the risk of turning “black” unless the EU pays Libya at least €5 billion (£4.1 billion) a year to block the arrival of illegal immigrants from Africa.”

[The Week](#) ran a piece some months later

“For more than a decade the booming Libyan economy has been a destination for legal and illegal migrants from Africa and even further afield in Bangladesh and China. The extended Libyan coast has also been a springboard for undocumented migration into Europe. Gaddafi entered into a series of

agreements with the European Union and individual governments, in which Libya effectively became a co-partner in enforcing Europe's 'externalised' border controls. "

After the destruction of Libya MNSBC reported that:

"The largest flow of modern African migration funnels through a single country — Libya. Coming from the south, migrants flee the vestiges of wars that have left entire nations in ruin. From the east, they escape a life of indefinite military servitude and violent conflict. From the west, they evade destitution and governments that arbitrarily jail whomever they please. Some arrive by choice, others by force. But Libya is the purgatory where most migrants prepare to face the deadliest stretch of the Mediterranean Sea. [See this excellent infographic of migrations through Libya.](#)

Far from being a haven for new business for Britain to exploit, as at July 2017 the [advice issued by the FCO](#) is that it

"continues to advise against all travel to Libya as intense fighting continues in a number of areas and local security situations can quickly deteriorate." It goes further: "There remains a high threat throughout the country of terrorist attacks and kidnap against foreigners, including from Daesh-affiliated extremists ISIL and Al Qaeda, as well as armed militias."

Iraq and Afghanistan were clues that destroying the Libyan authorities was not going to end well. And contrary to the Exchequer's deceit, official figures later showed that the eight-month military attack of Libya cost the British taxpayer £320 million whilst efforts to stabilise the country following Gaddafi's brutal death and the collapse of his government had been woeful and amounted to just £25m. No business is being conducted in Libya.

Gaddafi's demand for €5billion euros back in 2010 to keep control of migration was a drop in the bucket in comparison to what came after he was murdered by what many consider an order [directly from the French](#) government by the French [Secret Service](#).



4,600 people plucked to safety from unseaworthy boats off the Libyan coast over just three days, the Italian coastguard said, as migrants took advantage of calmer waters to attempt the perilous journey across the Mediterranean. (Source: [TruePublica](#))

The [OECD](#) reports that

"The financial burden, including the direct cost of supporting the newcomers on arrival would be as much as £20billion, or 0.2 per cent of the EU's total economic output in 2016."

This is a cost per year and increasing.

[Reuters](#) reports that the "German government plans to spend 93.6 billion euros on refugees by end 2020." The change in Merkel's immigration policy is motivated by a rising political challenge as it is [reported](#) that:

“tens of thousands of demonstrators, stirred by anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment, staged protests under the banner of the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West’ via a new right-wing political party which is rapidly gaining popularity.”

In the meantime, below are some excerpts from a report by [wsws.org](http://www.wsws.org) on the continuing attempts by a desperate European Union to stop mass migration into Europe which is now destabilising the entire EU project.

[wsws.org](http://www.wsws.org): European Union and Italy step up pressure on organisations assisting refugees

On July 25, Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti (Democratic Party) ordered representatives of nine non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the rescue of refugees to attend a meeting at his ministry. There they were called upon to sign a “Code of Conduct,” restricting their activities in the Mediterranean Sea.

As the WWSW noted two weeks ago, the new code violates “existing law”: “On the high seas international maritime law prevails, which obligatorily demands the rescue of people in distress ... this is precisely what the ‘Code of Conduct’ is designed to prevent the NGOs and their rescue boats from undertaking.”

Should NGOs fail to sign the sinister, illegal code, Italy has threatened to close its ports to their ships. They want to restrict the NGOs and drive them out of the Mediterranean.

Currently more than 40 percent of refugees rescued at sea owe their lives to organisations such as Sea-Watch, Sea-Eye, MOAS (Migrant Offshore Aid Station), Jugend Rettet (Rescuing Youth), Save the Children, Doctors Without Borders, SOS Méditerranée, Proactiva Open Arms, etc.

“We are just in mid-July,” noted Timon Marszalek, the director of SOS Méditerranée Germany, “and we’ve saved as many people in the Mediterranean as we did last year.”

Ruben Neugebauer of Sea-Watch told Deutschlandfunk (German radio): “What they want to achieve is obvious: they are trying to keep ships out of the danger zone because we undermine the concept of dying on Europe’s borders.”

NGOs are also forbidden to enter Libyan territorial waters. They must look on as people drown, without being able to intervene.

The “Code of Conduct” is not merely the work of the Italian authorities. It was agreed upon at a meeting of EU ministers in Tallinn, Estonia in early July.

This campaign is bound up with unprecedented military deployment taking place in the Mediterranean off the North African coast. Taking part in the operation, which has been ongoing since June 2015 under the innocuous name of “Operation Sophia” (formerly known as EUNAVFOR [European Union Naval Force] Med), are the navies of Germany, Italy, Great Britain and other European countries.

On the same day the NGOs were summoned to the Italian Interior Ministry, the EU decided to extend the “Sophia” mission to the end of 2018. Officially, the remit of the operation is to combat “smuggler criminality on the Mediterranean” and thus prevent deaths at sea. In fact, the combined navies are responsible for just 8 percent of sea rescue operations.

The EU has committed itself to continue financing the Libyan coast guard and equipping it with weapons. The European Union is supporting an organisation notorious for trafficking in human beings, torture and murder. At the request of the EU, the Libyan coast guard forces refugees into Libyan prisons, where around 300,000 people are currently being held under appalling conditions.

In the meantime, it is estimated that 1.3 million migrants entered the EU in 2015, by the end of 2017 another 3 million are expected and according to a report by an [Austrian military intelligence agency](#) as many as 15 million are due to arrive by 2020. Many of these migration reports are distorted for one reason or another, but there is no doubting the scale of migration and the problem is present, not least the hundreds of €billions required in future years to control it.

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