

Russia calls for probe into NATO's "massive bombings" in Libya

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UNITED NATIONS: Russia on Monday called for an investigation into the "massive bombings" by NATO during last year's Libya conflict.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov made the call at a high-level UN Security Council meeting on the current situation in the Middle East.

"The organizations or countries that volunteered to implement Security Council resolutions must give a full account of their actions to the Council. That applies to NATO also, which, as we all know, offered to secure a no-fly zone in Libya, but in reality engaged in massive bombings," Lavrov said.

"It is sad that it is yet to begin any investigation following information about the civilian casualties caused by the massive bombings," he said, adding "We believe that the UN secretary-general should bring clarity to the matter by invoking the 2008 Joint Declaration on UN/NATO Secretariat Cooperation. "

UN chief Ban Ki-moon was present at the council meeting, chaired by UK Foreign Secretary William Hague.

On March 9, a report by the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya, presented to the 19th Human Rights Council in Geneva, called upon NATO to investigate civilian casualties during its Libya operation.

The commission, established last March to investigate "all alleged violations of international human rights law" in Libya, documented five of the 20 NATO air strikes it investigated.

A total of 60 civilians were killed and 55 injured in the five air missions, it said.

The single largest case of civilian casualties took place in the town of Majer on Aug. 8 last year, when 34 civilians died and 38 were injured, according to the report.

Commission head Philippe Kirsch has said that the commission was unable to conclude whether NATO took all necessary precautions to avoid civilian casualties due to a lack of sufficient information.

"We know that NATO has conducted an inquiry, and we asked to be informed with the results of the inquiry, but we are not; we asked to meet with NATO officials, we could not," he said.

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