

Sham Elections in Libya. Rising Social Tensions

US, British interests attacked as ICC staff is detained

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Since the beginning of the U.S.-NATO war of regime-change against the Libyan government of Col. Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, tensions have escalated both inside the North African state and throughout the region. During the months of May and June, fighting among various sectors within Libya has erupted while the much talked about elections have been put off until July 7.

These elections have been subject to the political designs of the imperialist-backed National Transitional Council (NTC) regime which was installed as a result of the bombing, naval blockade and intelligence coordinated military assault on Libya between February and October. Since the seizure of Tripoli in late August 2011 and the bombings and assassinations in Sirte, Libya has been in turmoil with decentralized and undisciplined militias vying for control of the situation on the ground.

Members and supporters of the Jamahiriya, the system of governance instituted during the revolutionary period between 1969 and 2011, are banned from participating in the elections. A recent law prohibiting through threats of prosecution any "praising" of Gaddafi and the political system that prevailed in the country for over four decades has been purportedly repealed, however, Libyans know that thousands of people remain in prison and exiled as a direct result of their political beliefs.

Laws, militia checkpoints and the excesses of the putative newly-constructed national army are designed to suppress popular opposition to the NTC regime. Discontent among the people- even those who were swept up into the war against the government-is at an all-time high.

Since last October, the NTC and other anti-Gaddafi forces have been blamed for the inefficiency in the public sector, the widespread corruption which has resulted in billions of dollars being stolen from both private industry and the fragile government, and the general lawlessness prevailing throughout the country. Libya has descended from having the highest standard of living on the African continent to burgeoning poverty and social discord.



Seif al-Islam Denied Justice

The capture, torture and indefinite detention of [Seif al-Islam](#), the son and heir apparent to Muammar Gaddafi, has drawn the attention of Libyan solidarity activists around the world. Captured in late 2011 by rebels, Seif is being held reportedly by the Zintan militia that functions independently of the NTC leaders in Tripoli.

In early June [four members of an International Criminal Court \(ICC\) delegation visited Seif](#) to interview him in relationship to the outstanding warrants issued by the Netherlands-based entity early on in the war of 2011. The ICC has never really objected to Seif being put on trial by the NTC, but their intervention in Seif's case has resulted in a diplomatic embarrassment for the imperialist camp.

Although the U.S. nor Libya are signatories to the Rome Statute that established the ICC, [the imperialists utilized the indictments against Muammar Gaddafi and other Libyan leaders including Seif](#), in their attempt to isolate the government and create a stronger rationale for the overthrow of the former system. The continued detention of the ICC delegation brought about the visit of Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr on June 18 in an attempt to win the release of the two women and two men being held by the Zintan militia.

Carr met with NTC Prime Minister Abdurrahim El-Keib where the Australian offered to facilitate the dispute between the western-backed regime and the Netherlands court representatives. "I made strong representations for the immediate release of the Australian Melinda Taylor," the diplomat said.

"But I now have a deeper understanding of Libyan (NTC) perspectives and concerns with the way the ICC has responded, Carr continued.

The ICC, along with the United Nations Security Council as well as the titular head of NATO, has called on the rebels to release the delegation. The two women in the delegation were accused by the militia, who were said to have been present during their discussions with Seif al-Islam, to have leaked sensitive documents.

The detentions of [Seif al-Islam](#) and the ICC delegation are reflective of the lack of a political or legal system within the country. Nonetheless, the diplomatic response to these provocations has no resemblance to the attacks leveled against the Gaddafi government during 2011 when thousands were killed and millions displaced and driven into exile for their refusal to bow to the dictates of the U.S.-NATO alliance that devastated the oil-rich nation.

Security Situation Deteriorates

Over the last few weeks the violence in Libya has escalated in Benghazi with the attempted assassination of the British ambassador on June 11 when his vehicle was attacked by rocket-propelled grenades. The following day the International Committee of the Red Cross had their offices bombed in Misrata resulting in one death and several injuries.

The U.S. Consulate was also attacked on June 12 when a bomb was placed outside its building. This attack was claimed by an Islamic resistance group supposedly in retaliation for the drone assassinations of al-Qaeda members in Pakistan.

On the same day as the bombing outside the U.S. Consulate, a militia group at odds with the NTC regime in Tripoli was able to take control temporarily of the airport saying that one of their commanders had been detained by the western-backed leadership. The NTC was able to regain control of the airport within a few hours.

In the South of the country fighting is continuing as a result of attempts by the Zintan militia to take charge of the region which did not support the U.S.-NATO war. It was reported that 14 people were killed over a three day period starting June 11 when members of the El-

Mashasia ethnic group resisted the forces from Zintan.

The current situation in Libya and other states throughout the region, including Mali and Niger, illustrates clearly that the military and political intervention by the western imperialists only brought about mass killings, poverty and forced removals. Those who supported and cheered-on the war against Libya starting in February 2011 are silent today in relationship to the horrors taking place inside this once prosperous and stable country.

These events point to the necessity of maintaining an anti-imperialist perspective in relationship to U.S. and NATO foreign policy. These imperialist states operate exclusively based upon their own material interests which are aimed at securing maximum profit for the exploitation of African resources, labor and national assets.

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