

Libya's Transition

The Current State of Play

Despite localized violence and continuing resistance to militia disbandment, Libya's democratic transition is moving forward largely as planned. Elections for the 200-member General National Congress (GNC), Libya's [first free election](#) in six decades, took place on July 7, 2012. The National Forces Alliances won thirty-nine of the eighty seats reserved for political parties, followed by the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Justice and Development Party in a distant second with seventeen seats. Turnout was estimated at around 65 percent; roughly 1.8 million registered voters casted their ballots.

On August 9, 2012 the National Transitional Council (NTC) formally [transferred](#) power to the new General National Congress (GNC). The following day the GNC named [Mohamed Yousef el-Magariaf](#), leader of the National Front Party, as interim president. On September 13, 2012, [Mustafa Abushagur](#), who served as deputy prime minister under the NTC, won the election for the post of prime minister. Abushagur missed the September 27, 2012 deadline for submitting his cabinet proposal to the GNC and requested a ten day extension. The GNC threatened to [dismiss](#) him if he did not meet the absolute deadline of October 7. Abushagur [announced](#) his selections for the new government on October 3, 2012, after presenting a list of ministerial posts that dissatisfied many members of the Congress who argued that the list was not the one agreed upon during consultations between Abushagur, political parties, and independents. The GNC subsequently motioned for a vote of no confidence. After a second attempt to submit a list on October 7, 2012 the GNC motioned for a vote of no confidence and [dismissed](#) Abushagur. The post of prime minister was filled on October 14, 2012 when the Congress elected an independent, [Ali Zidan](#), to lead Libya. The GNC voted overwhelmingly to approve Zidan's [government](#) on October 31 despite a disruption caused by protestors who stormed the congress to protest the proposed government line-up. Six of the newly proposed ministers were [referred](#) to the Integrity Commission, a body that investigates candidates' ties to the previous regime, and four were found unsuitable for office. The Commission is also currently reviewing an additional four ministers. Despite this, Zidan's cabinet [was sworn](#) in on November 15, 2012.

The US consulate in Benghazi was attacked on September 11, 2012, leaving the American ambassador and three other Americans dead. The security situation in Libya is troubling and needs serious reevaluation by the Libyan government, the United States, and the international community. Increasingly vocal and violent Salafi movements are also a cause for concern and a threat to the transition.

In the aftermath of the consulate attack and continuing violence, Libyan officials have reaffirmed their commitment to democracy and Libya's partnership with the United States. Shortly after the Benghazi attack, popular rallies were held calling for an end to militias; the government followed up by calling for militias to [disband](#) or be absorbed into the government. Following these incidents weapons drives were held and thousands of weapons were successfully collected from militias and private citizens. A few notable militias were formally disbanded during this time, including [Ansar al-Sharia](#).

(Photo Source: Perry-Castañeda Map Collection – UT Austin)



The Political Process

The National Transitional Council

The [National Transitional Council](#) (NTC) was [formed](#) on February 24, 2011 shortly after the start of the Libyan uprising. The council was formed in the rebel stronghold of Benghazi [under](#) the leadership of then-recently defected Justice Minister **Mustafa Abdul Jalil** (President of the now-dissolved NTC). The council had its first [meeting](#) on March 5, 2011 and quickly [declared](#) itself the “sole representative over all Libya.” On March 23, 2011 the council declared itself an interim government with both executive and legislative powers, [reiterating](#) calls for Libyan national unity and declaring its intent to move to Tripoli once liberated. On August 3, 2011 the council released its interim Constitutional Declaration [[Arabic](#) - official, [English](#) – unofficial translation] to guide the transition process.

In late January of this year, the NTC passed a controversial electoral law intended to create the framework for upcoming elections for the constituent assembly. Activists and emerging political parties heavily criticized the law, saying that it was drafted without public consultation or oversight. The NTC [scrapped](#) a 10 percent quota for including women in the proposed General National Congress (GNC), the body being tasked with writing the new constitution. Tribal and militia leaders in eastern Libya also [assailed](#) the election law, stating that the breakdown of seats in the upcoming constituent assembly heavily favors western Libya, centered on Tripoli, over Benghazi and eastern Libya, the birthplace of the uprising. Amazigh Berbers have also [called](#) for their own specific constituency in the assembly, which would require changes to the current law as well.

A number of other laws passed by the Council in the run-up to the GNC election also worried democracy and civil society activists:

Law 15 - Restrictions on media have been enacted to prevent journalists or newspapers from [discussing](#) or reporting on fatwas issued by the National Council of Islamic Jurisprudence (Dar al-Iftaa).

Law 36 - The NTC has sought to further regulate NGO activity and financing in the country. The law on civil society [bans](#) domestic NGOs from receiving any foreign funding while requiring foreign NGO workers to officially register with the Ministry of Culture and Civil Society before being allowed to travel outside the capital. Some European NGOs have complained that their application paperwork for registration, which would allow them travel access throughout the country, routinely goes “missing.”

Law 37 (struck down) - Recently the Council [issued](#) a declaration making it illegal to “glorify” Qaddafi or spread “propaganda” that insults or endangers the state or the revolution. Activists point out that the vague wording of the law could allow the NTC to imprison people up to 15 years for criticizing the Council, a legal environment eerily reminiscent of the Qaddafi era. That law was [challenged](#) at Libya’s Supreme Court by rights groups who argued that the law violates the NTC’s interim constitutional declaration that guarantees freedom of speech. The Supreme Court [struck down](#) the law on June 14, 2012.

Law 38 – This recently issued edict provides full immunity to rebels who fought on the side of the NTC, “promoting or protecting the revolution,” against Qaddafi. Several international human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch, have called for the law to be amended, [accusing](#) rebel groups of committing severe human rights violations and/or war crimes both during and after the uprising.

The NTC witnessed opposition to its handling of Libya’s transition from Libyans in country and expatriates abroad. One activist, a Tripoli-based human rights lawyer, accused the NTC of [ignoring](#) its own bylaws on electing its leaders, criticizing the Council’s lack of transparency, dialogue, participation, and professionalism. Others likened the NTC to a “revolving door” with an ever-changing cast of unelected and self-appointed members with little tolerance for, or knowledge of, democratic behavior.

On February 13, 2012 the NTC [swore in](#) members of the country's new Higher National Electoral Commission (HNEC) charged with overseeing the electoral process. The Council also [outlined](#) an initial regional seat allocation for the assembly: 102 seats for western Libya, including Tripoli and the Nafusa Mountains region; 60 seats for the east, including Benghazi; 29 seats for the southern region of Fezzan, and 9 seats for the central region and Qaddafi's former stronghold of Sirte. The allotment of just over half the 200 planned seats to western Libya sparked outcry among eastern Libyans in Cyrenaica, some of whom gathered in the city of Brega in March to declare the region an autonomous zone within Libya and called for a federal form of governance, a move rejected by the NTC and western Libyans. An amended seating plan was later released that allocated fewer seats to the west, such that a disproportionate number of seats—given the size of their population share—was given to the southern and eastern regions.

The General National Congress

The role of the **General National Congress** and the timeline for its election was established by the NTC in August 2011 in the Constitutional Declaration's Article 30. Article 30 stated that after the announcement of liberation the NTC would promulgate law on the election of the General National Congress, appoint the National Supreme Commission for elections, and set the date for elections. This timeline has been followed fairly closely, and as stipulated in the declaration, the interim NTC was dissolved upon the first meeting of the GNC in August 2012. Now that the General National Congress has assumed power, it has the democratic legitimacy as an elected body to keep the transition process moving.

In order to appease federalists and others who were fearful of a Tripoli-dominated government, the NTC reallocated seats in the Congress from the western region to the south. The final seat distribution of the GNC is as follows:

- The west, including Tripoli and the Nafusa Mountains region – **100 seats**
- The east, including Benghazi – **60 seats**
- The south – **31 seats**
- The central region, including Sirte – **9 seats**

The table below shows the constituency breakdown for the assembly:

Region	Constituency	No. of seats for Independent Candidates	No. of seats for Party Lists	Total Seats
EAST	Tobruk	6	5	11
EAST	Bayda	6	5	11
EAST	Benghazi	15	11	26
EAST	Ajdabiya	9	3	12
CENTER	Sirte	5	4	9
SOUTH	Sabha	7	9	16
SOUTH	Ubari	8	7	15
WEST	Ghervan	17		17
WEST	Misrata	9	7	16
WEST	Khoms	8	3	11
WEST	Tripoli	14	16	30
WEST	Azizya	6	3	9
WEST	Zawiya	10	7	17
TOTAL		120	80	200

Political Parties

The NTC amended laws regulating political parties, abolishing many Qaddafi-era restrictions, and [legalizing](#) political parties with Law No. 2. After political party formation was legalized, parties from across the ideological spectrum began to form.

The **National Forces Alliance** (NFA) is on the liberal end of the political spectrum and is led by **Mahmoud Jibril**. It is a coalition of political parties, over 200 non-governmental organizations, and nearly 300 individual figures. The NFA platform states that the principle source of justice and governance will be guided by Sharia, but the platform also asserts freedom, gender equality, and minority rights. NFA holds thirty nine seats in the Congress.

The **Justice and Development Party** (JDP, also translated as the Justice and Construction Party) is an Islamist party and the political wing of Libya's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite the Islamist victories in Tunisia and Egypt, JDP only won seventeen seats in the GNC. The party is led by **Mohammad Sawan**, a long-time member of the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood who was imprisoned during the Qaddafi era for his affiliation with the party.

Nineteen additional political parties received seats in the [Council](#), including fifteen that hold just one seat. The **National Front** won three seats and Wadi-al-Hiya Alliance, Union for the Homeland and the National Centrist Party emerged from elections have two seats a piece.

Drafting the Constitution

The GNC is responsible for forming the constitutional drafting committee. It was originally intended that this sixty-member body would be split evenly between Libya's three regions and members would be appointed by the Congress. However, on June 28, 2012 a government spokesman [announced](#) that committee members would be elected, not appointed. This was a controversial decision, announced only a week ahead of the elections for the assembly. It is likely this measure will be overruled since the GNC has the authority to overrule any decisions made earlier by the NTC.

During this time the NTC also announced that the deadline for drafting the constitution would be extended to 120—rather than 60—days after the drafting committee's first meeting. The constitution is to be submitted to a referendum within 30 days of its drafting. Two-thirds of the Libyan people must endorse the constitution in order for the GNC to ratify it. The new constitution will have to address key issues including human rights, the separation of church and state, freedom of expression, and the distribution of political and economic power. The drafting process must be transparent and inclusive if it is to be seen as a legitimate political document by Libyan civil society.

It is generally agreed upon that Libya will be a constitutional democracy respecting human rights and political pluralism, but there are several complex constitutional issues the committee will have to consider. An initial decision will be whether to base the new constitution off of the 1951 [constitution](#). This earlier constitution was drafted with help from the UN and includes substantial human rights protections and establishes strong national institutions; conversely, the process may start from scratch. The protection of human rights is a top priority. Women's groups and minority populations are pushing for equal rights guarantees. A more controversial topic is the relationship between state and religion. All major political parties agree that Sharia should be mentioned as one source of law for the constitution, but the application of Islamic judicial practice to other areas in the constitution is still undecided.

Issues of Concern

- Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

Gun battles between rival militias are a [constant](#) threat, normally [erupting](#) over turf wars. Tribal and militia violence has [spread](#) to the areas of southern Libya, including Kufra and Sabha, igniting conflict between Arab groups and non-Arab groups like the Tebu. **Khalifa Belqasim Hafter**, a senior Libyan military commander, said that it could take the country three to five years to establish the requisite capacities to ensure both internal and external border security. In January 2012, the NTC began a campaign to [recruit](#) former rebel fighters into the country's new official security forces along with Jordanian help. Jordan, as well as Turkey, offered to [help train](#) some of these former rebels, though early training sessions were largely unsuccessful, with 100 trainees in Jordan ending a July training abruptly [after lighting](#) a sports arena on fire.

The NTC lacked the capacity and funds necessary to consolidate a monopoly of force which has left numerous militias with significant small arms and weapons caches. The NTC attempted to bring the militias under state-control by [creating](#) the Supreme Security Committee (SSC) and the Libyan Shield Force (LSF) nominally under the auspices of the ministry of interior and defense respectively. The members of the SSC and the LSF were paid a wage in return for maintaining order. However, both groups have eluded oversight and continue to operate independently from the state.

The democratically elected GNC has the legitimacy to demand that militias disarm. A disarmament initiative was planned in collaboration with the armed forces, the government, and various civil society organizations to sponsor an [event](#) to collect weapons still in the hands of private citizens and militias. The event was planned for September 16, 2012, but postponed due to the announcement of Martyr's Day, a holiday commemorating those who lost their lives fighting for the Libyan revolution. In light of the deadly attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, Libyan citizens organized a protest demanding the government to take action against Libya's lawlessness. The "[Save Benghazi](#)" initiative was held September 21, 2012. Angry protestors [stormed](#) the offices of several Benghazi militias, driving them out of the city. The Libyan government capitalized on the popular sentiment and declared on September 22, 2012 that all the country's militias must come under government authority or will be disbanded.

- Transitional Justice, Human Rights & Internally Displaced Persons

The country's current capacity to mount trials for former regime members is under scrutiny. Various human rights groups have voiced concerns that Libya's underdeveloped justice system does not have the capacity or the necessary transparency to have free and fair trials, especially concerning several high profile cases. The [capture and killing](#) of **Muammar Qaddafi** in late October 2011 also sparked heavy criticism, with the ICC labeling the killing as a potential war crime.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) maintains that Libya has an obligation to surrender **Seif al-Islam al-Qaddafi**, currently in detention in Libya. In July 2012, an ICC delegation appointed to represent Seif al-Islam was arrested and [detained](#) for allegedly trying to pass "dangerous" documents to their client, further provoking criticism that trials for former regime members will be neither free nor fair. The ICC and Libya's government have continually challenged one another over which court should try Seif. Libya has insisted that he should be tried in Libya, despite protests by the ICC and several other human rights groups that questioned the country's ability to hold a fair trial and uphold Seif's rights in prison. On August 20, 2012 the Libyan representative to The Hague stated that Libya will try Seif, in defiance with the ICC demands.

Seif al-Islam's trial was ultimately delayed, as authorities believed new information may be obtained through the interrogation of recently extradited former Qaddafi spy chief, **Abdullah al-Senussi**. Libya is also in conflict with the ICC and France over [competing extradition requests](#) for the former Qaddafi

intelligence chief, who was arrested in Mauritania in March. Senussi was [extradited](#) to Libya on September 5, 2012 and is being held in Hadba prison. Libya charged him with crimes committed before and during the Libyan revolution, including his role in the [massacre](#) at the Abu Salim prison in 1996.

The Tunisian government, though initially concerned over issues of torture and due process, extradited former Qaddafi Prime Minister **Al Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmoudi** in June. Al-Mahmoudi's trial has [been delayed](#) and is scheduled for December 10.

On June 05, 2012, Libya [opened its first trial](#) of a former regime member, **Buzeid Dorda**, a Qaddafi intelligence chief. Dorda was charged with six counts including: conspiring to kill civilians, providing weapons for the purpose of killing civilians, conspiring to provoke civil war, denying people their right to protest, unlawful detention and abuse of authority. The judge then adjourned the trial until June 26 at the request of Dorda's defense lawyer. The trial was delayed a second time and third time during July and August, and then [adjourned](#) a fourth time until September 11 after pleas that the defense did not have enough time to study the case. A Libyan judge suspended the trial indefinitely on September 11, 2012 after the defense lawyer appealed to the court that the [proceedings](#) were unconstitutional.

Reports indicate there are between **4,000 and 7,000 prisoners** in makeshift prisons, mostly run by individual militias. International media and human rights groups have reported widespread abuses, including fatal torture, to be taking place inside these prisons. An Amnesty International [report](#) documents numerous cases of abuse, torture, and death in detention centers visited in Tripoli, Misrata, Sirte, and others. Most prisoners are said to be suspected Qaddafi loyalists and are being held without official charges. In October 2012 Human Rights Watch released a [report](#) detailing systematic executions of loyalist fighters when Sirte was captured with a detailed description of war crimes committed by militias.

These detention centers also hold a large number of detainees who are internally-displaced black African migrants and black Libyans (i.e. the Tawarga). Such prisoners are routinely accused by rebel militias of being paid mercenaries for Qaddafi's army or having sheltered such mercenaries in their respective towns. Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontiers halted all work in the country in February 2012, accusing rebel groups of using the organization to keep torture victims alive for continued abuse. There are also a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Libya. Black Libyans, such as the Tawarga, in refugee camps have been [subjected](#) to harassment and reprisal killings. Migrants from sub-Saharan African states like Chad, Niger, and Sudan among others, are also being held in camps around the country as well. As of September 20, 2012 the UN [reported](#) over 90,000 internally displaced persons in Libya.

- [Local Elections and Regional Autonomy/Federalism](#)

Federalists are motivated by strong historical resentments of political and economic neglect by Tripoli during the Qaddafi era. Most of the issues surrounding the debate on federalism were rooted in the NTC's lack of legitimate democratic capital. On February 20, 2012 Misrata [held](#) the first local council elections in Libya. Local organizers reportedly registered some 100,000 voters to help elect the 28 members of the Misrata city council. The success of the election prompted calls for replication in other cities. Benghazi [held its own](#) successful council elections in mid-May, with no reported militia violence. How future local council elections will fit into the broader electoral process is unknown as these elections are independent undertakings separate from the NTC's electoral framework. Calls were made for locally elected council representatives to officially represent their respective cities on the NTC to make the council more reflectively democratic, but were never realized.

In early March, a number of Cyrenaican tribal and militia leaders gathered at the Brega Conference [to declare](#) eastern Libya as an autonomous region within Libya and demanded a return to federalism; the system of government that had existed in the early days of the state. The conference appointed **Ahmed Zubair al-Senussi** as its head. In initial statements, the **Barqa Council's** main grievances included rejecting

the legitimacy of the NTC and disdain for the number of seats the NTC allocated to the east. The Barqa Council used armed groups and violence to set up roadblocks and checkpoints into eastern Libya and called for the [boycott](#) of the congressional elections.

Despite these earlier warnings, federalist impact on the transition has been limited. Despite sporadic violence and rumors of a boycott, the GNC elections went surprisingly smoothly. The chairman of the electoral commission said that threats and sabotage only [closed](#) six percent of polling stations, and later amended that number to two percent. The federalism movement lost its momentum when the National Forces Alliance won the majority of seats in the GNC, defying predictions of an Islamist victory based on strong eastern support.

- Weapons Proliferation and Regional Destabilization

One of the most severe outcomes of Libyan weapons proliferation has been the military coup in Mali. Malian military officers upset over the government's poor handling of the Tuareg insurrection in the country stormed the presidential palace in March and ousted the president. Armed Tuareg mercenaries from Qaddafi's army fled Libya after the country's liberation and joined a nascent Tuareg separatist movement in northern Mali, bringing weapons and vehicles with them. Even before the military coup, top Malian security officials had stated they believed AQIM leaders were already in Libya [purchasing](#) weapons. Chadian authorities [prophetically warned](#) in late January that the entire Sahel region could face a "descent into hell." The proliferation of conventional weapon stockpiles of MANPADS (man-portable air defense systems), most of which are still [unaccounted](#) for, along with other heavy weaponry from the Qaddafi regime, remains a concern. Libyan weapons are also being smuggled into the Sinai Peninsula. Libya's porous borders have allowed anything from small arms to anti-aircraft guns to end up in Egypt. The Egyptian security forces continue to [clash](#) with Islamists who are the recipients of these weapons.

The US is [leading](#) a UN-backed effort in an attempt to prevent these weapons from being smuggled out of the country. Former interim Prime Minister el-Keib [called](#) for a regional security conference to tackle the issue, culminating in the [Tripoli Plan](#), an agreement between nine northern African countries, including Algeria, Libya, as well as Egypt. The UN has [extended](#) UNSMIL's (UN Support Mission in Libya) mandate by one year to help with this issue. Libya has further [asked](#) the EU for help in implementing the plan. The EU is [conducting](#) a small assessment mission for Libya's border management needs.

Key People to Watch

Mohammed Magarief, a moderate Islamist, is the [President](#) of the newly elected GNC. He was a leading opposition figure during the Qaddafi era. Magarief was head of the National Front for the Salvation of Libya and lived in exile since the 80s. Magarief returned to Libya after Qaddafi's downfall as the leader of the National Front Party which holds three seats in the General National Congress.

Ali Zidan is the new prime minister-elect and assumed responsibilities for his post just twenty five days after his predecessor was dismissed in a vote of no confidence. Zidan is a trained human rights lawyer and former diplomat, having served in India during the Qaddafi regime before defecting in 1980 and joining opposition group the National Front for Salvation.

Abdulahakim Belhadj was a prominent Libyan rebel commander who is a rising star in Libyan politics and favored for a position in the new government. [Belhadj](#) has been an ardent anti-Qaddafi fighter who commanded the [Libyan Islamic Fighting Group](#)(LIFG) which fought to overthrow Qaddafi during the 90s and has been accused of attempted assassination of Qaddafi three times. He was imprisoned in the infamous Abu Salim prison until the LIFG renounced ties with al Qaeda in 2010. During the Arab Spring, Beladj commanded Tripoli's military council and orchestrated the attack on Gaddafi's compound at [Bab al Aziziya](#) in August 2011. After the liberation of Libya,

Belhadj co-founded the Islamist Homeland Party (Hizb al Watan) in April 2012, but did not win any seats in the GNC elections.

Yousef al-Manqoush, a retired general from the city of Misrata who fought in the insurgency against Qaddafi, was appointed as Chief of Staff of the Libyan armed forces January 3, 2012. Prior to assuming this position, Manqoush served as deputy defense minister under the interim Prime Minister Abdurrahim el Keib. Mustafa Abdel Jalil, then-NTC chairman, appointed Manqoush as part of the transition government's initiative to [integrate](#) former fighters into the military, police force, and other civilian jobs. His appointment was controversial. Two prominent rebel groups, the Coalition of Libyan Thwars (revolutionaries) and the Cyrenaica Military Council declared days after Manqoush's appointment that they would not [accept](#) him as chief of staff because he was not among the list of six candidates that had been proposed by the militia groups to the NTC. However, the Benghazi Revolutionary Brigades declared their [support](#) for Mangoush.

Dr. Mustafa Abushagur won the election for [prime minister](#) and was scheduled to take over in late September. [Abushagur](#) left Libya for the United States in 1975 where he studied at the California Institute of Technology to become an optical engineer. He returned to Benghazi in May 2011 to become an advisor to the NTC before his appointment to deputy prime minister. The election for prime minister was held September 13, 2012, only a few days after the death of [Ambassador Chris Stevens](#). Abushagur won in the run-off against Mahmoud Jibril, ninety six votes to ninety four. Abushagur was dismissed in a vote of no confidence when his choices for the cabinet were met with dissatisfaction and protest.

Economic Situation

Libya's economic recovery is largely dependent on its vast oil reserves. The aura of continued instability, coupled with the country's already tenuous security situation, could potentially scare off international companies looking to invest in the country.

Libya's economy has traditionally [relied](#) almost exclusively on hydrocarbons, or specifically, exports of light low sulfur crude oil and some natural gas exports. These exports [account](#) for 95 percent of Libya's export earnings, 65 percent of GDP, and 80 percent of government revenue. Coupled with the country's relatively low population of roughly 6.5 million people, the country's oil revenues provided it with one of Africa's highest GDP per capita ratios before the uprising, estimated at just above \$14,000 USD. Libya's 2009 GDP [was estimated](#) at \$62.3 trillion USD. However, in January 2012, the IMF [estimated](#) that Libya's GDP had contracted by 60 percent for the 2011 year while consumer prices increased by 14 percent. With renewed oil production, however, the country's growth has bounced back; the IMF [currently predicts](#) an incredible 120 percent GDP growth rate for 2012 and a 17 percent growth rate for 2013, before the country is expected to fall into a more normal pattern of approximately 7 percent annual growth.

Libya is now [producing](#) close to 1.6 million barrels a day of crude, roughly its pre-war output levels. The Libyan National Oil Company is targeting 1.8 million barrels a day for 2013. Revenues from oil production are desperately needed to help fund infrastructure projects that would increase internal stability. Royal Dutch Shell [announced](#) in May that it would postpone its operations in Libya primarily as a result of such insecurity while BP [announced](#) it was going to resume operations stating that security was "sufficiently manageable," though drilling is not expected to begin until 2013. Indonesia's Medco [unveiled](#) plans to begin exploration after postponing plans following the outbreak of violence last year. The loss of oil revenues greatly decreased Libya's account balance surplus from 21 percent of GDP to just 4.5 percent of GDP in just one year.

In the aftermath of the revolution, Libya must rebuild infrastructure and develop its economic institutions in order to grow the economy. Over-reliance on the government's oil revenues to hold up economic growth has continued

to hamper Libya's economic recovery. Recent [calculations](#) indicate that Libya needs the price of oil to remain at \$100 USD/barrel in order to cover its government expenditures. In addition to its dependence on oil, the poor security situation has kept investors and international corporations away.

The World Bank had [projected](#) Libya's economic activity to recover in 2012 in concurrence with an improvement in the security situation. The IMF reported that Libya can sustain high government spending levels in the short term as its oil production levels reach and surpass prewar production. But in the long term the institutional development, infrastructure, and diversification are necessary. Libya's weak private sector and history of corruption [place](#) additional restraints on any potential recovery. Most frozen US assets have been returned, to the tune of some \$30 billion USD, yet Libyan banks still have large liquidity problems, [causing](#) long lines at bank ATMs and limits on withdrawals. The IMF has urged Libya to eliminate universal subsidies, particularly on fuel, for more efficient targeted subsidies.

International Response

United Nations: On February 26, 2011 the Security Council passed Resolution 1970 (UNSCR 1970) [authorizing](#) an arms embargo, sanctions, and asset freezes against Libya. The resolution passed unanimously. On March 17, the Council [passed](#) Resolution 1973 (UNSCR 1973) authorizing a no-fly zone and all necessary measures to protect civilians under threat of harm from the Qaddafi regime. Ten members voted for the resolution and five abstained (Brazil, India, China, Russia, and Germany). On September 16, 2011 the Security Council [passed](#) Resolution 2009 (UNSCR 2009) establishing the **United Nations Support Mission in Libya** (UNSMIL). In March of this year, the Security Council extended UNSMIL's mandate for an additional 12 months after the [adoption](#) of Resolution 2040 (UNSCR 2040). UNSMIL provides support in the areas of rule of law, security, political dialogue and national reconciliation, elections monitoring and support, and constitution drafting.

On August 25 2011, the Security Council was able to [unfreeze](#) \$1.5 billion USD in assets to the NTC. In December 2011, the UN again unfroze addition assets, [belonging](#) to the Libyan Central Bank, totaling \$40 billion USD. "

United States: In response to Qaddafi's violent crackdown on protesters beginning in mid-February, the US initially responded by [freezing](#) \$30 billion USD in Libyan assets and imposed unilateral sanctions against Qaddafi and his family on February 25, 2011. Helping enforce UNSCR 1973, the US [began](#) military operations in Libya on March 19, under Operation Odyssey Dawn with coalition partners, including France and the UK. US Navy ships began [attacking](#) Qaddafi's air defenses and anti-aircraft systems with cruise missiles. NATO [took](#) full command over all military operations directed at Libya on March 31 under Operation Unified Protector. The US later recognized the NTC as the legitimate representative of Libya on July 15 and [further asked](#) the UN to unfreeze \$1.5 billion USD in late August to help fund the NTC. In December 2011, the US unfroze assets of the Libyan Central Bank and its subsidiary, the Libyan Arab Foreign Bank, [freeing](#) \$30 billion USD. Since the declaration of liberation in Libya, the US has primarily been [focused](#) on issues of weapons proliferation; tracking down missing and unaccounted for MANPADS (shoulder fired anti-aircraft missiles) to prevent extremist groups in North Africa, such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), from obtaining such weapons.

After the attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to the democratic transition in Libya. At first the United States claimed that the attack was a spontaneous protest that turned violent, but more recent evidence points to a planned terrorist [attack](#). Several members of the United States Congress called for aid to be cut to Libya to send a [message](#) that aid will not be received unless the country proves itself an unwavering ally. The United States supplies foreign aid to encourage the growth of freedom and democracy, and has spent over \$50 million on humanitarian assistance since the conflict began. The US has resorted to flying surveillance drones over eastern Libya to search for possible extremist and militant camps. The Libyan government has promised to [cooperate](#) in this matter, but oppose a US airstrike or military raid.

European Union: After the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1970, the EU [imposed](#) an arms embargo and targeted sanctions (including an asset freeze) against Libya on February 28, 2011 and then [further](#) extended sanctions to include a ban on Libyan planes in EU airspace and sanctions against Libya's National Oil Corporation and five of its subsidiaries. EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid, and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, [announced](#) on March 3 that the EU would be tripling its humanitarian aid response from 10 million EUR to 30 million EUR, mostly aimed at providing tents, blankets, food, and medical attention to Libyan refugees massing on the Libya-Tunisia border. On April 1, the EU decided to [legalize](#) a military operation in support of the humanitarian assistance effort dubbed EUFOR Libya. However, due to the US/NATO intervention, the EUFOR mission was never operationalized. High Representative Ashton visited liberated Benghazi in May and officially [opened](#) an EU office there and later [opened](#) an EU Delegation office in Tripoli in November. According to the EU, as of October 2011, it has provided 156.5 million EUR in humanitarian assistance to Libya. In December 2011, the EU [unfroze](#) the assets of the Libyan Central Bank and its subsidiary, the Libyan Arab Foreign Bank. More recently, the EU has focused on peaceful and credible elections of the GNC. The EU is engaged in [administering](#) a 30 million EUR program in Libya to address: reconciliation, elections and respect for human rights; public administrative capacity; media and civil society; promoting the involvement of women in public life; migration; health and education.

United Kingdom: The UK [passed](#) its own sanctions against Libya with the enactment of the Libya (Financial Sanctions) Order 2011 on February 27 and an asset freeze on March 3. On March 19, the UK [launched](#) Operation Ellamy in cooperation with the US and coalition allies, initiating a coordinated strike against Qaddafi's air defense systems. The UK also [sent in](#) special forces to aid the NTC and Libyan rebel forces outside the scope of the NATO intervention. The role of British special forces in helping the rebels defeat Qaddafi's military is considered vital. The UK however did not [recognize](#) the NTC as the legitimate representative of Libya until July 27, after the US and several NATO allies.

Britain has also provided aid to Libya, funding Red Cross activities, supported the World Health Organization to meet medical needs, provided support for mine clearance and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) detection and [disposal](#), and other humanitarian aid.

France: France became the first nation [to recognize](#) the NTC on March 10, 2011. In the earliest days of the violence, President Nicolas Sarkozy [led](#) calls for UN-imposed sanctions and was the first international leader to call for a NATO-imposed no-fly zone. On March 19, 2011, France [joined](#) the US and UK in military operations against the Qaddafi regime, implementing UN Security Council 1973, under Operation Harmattan until NATO took command of the no-fly zone enforcement. Under the NATO operation, the French air force [flew](#) over 2,000 strike sorties, comprising roughly 33% of all aerial strikes on Qaddafi targets. France also [sent](#) special forces into Libya to help aid rebel forces and combat weapons smuggling. Since the liberation of Libya, France has [released](#) 230 million euros that were frozen by the Security Council to help rebuild the country.

Russia: The Russian Federation abstained from UN Security Council Resolution 1973 authorizing a no-fly zone and was heavily critical of NATO operations in Libya, instead [maintaining](#) its stance that Qaddafi's departure from Libya should be negotiated. Russia [accused](#) NATO of exceeding the mandate of Resolution 1973 in attempting to force regime change. Russia further [condemned](#) NATO when it stepped up its campaign over the summer months of 2011, leading to a worsening of relations between Russia and Western governments. After Qaddafi was captured and killed by rebel forces in October 2011, Russia accused the rebels of [violating](#) the Geneva Conventions. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has [publicly blamed](#) the US for Qaddafi's killing, accusing the country of having a direct role in helping rebels capture and kill him. Russia is estimated to have lost \$10 billion USD worth of contracts with the Qaddafi regime, and previously [maintained](#) close political, military, and business relations with Libya even under Western sanctions. The government recognized the NTC on September 1, 2011 but has [been critical](#) of Libyan rebel militias' treatment of former Qaddafi supporters.

Turkey: Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan initially [opposed](#) NATO intervention in Libya. The government initially [blocked](#) NATO from taking over operational control of the military intervention from the US and demanded a Western cease-fire with Libya to prevent possible civilian deaths. Turkey later [consented](#) to the NATO mission after agreement with France over mission particulars.

Arab League: The Libyan regime's brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protests led to a strong [condemnation](#) by the Arab League, and Libyan delegates were banned from the League until Libyan authorities responded to the Libyan people's calls for reform and democratic changes. Arab League [backing](#) of UNSCR Resolution 1973 was considered crucial to its passing. However, after originally calling for a no-fly zone, then league Secretary-General Amr Moussa [criticized](#) the military intervention stating: "What is happening in Libya differs from the aim of imposing a no-fly zone, and what we want is the protection of civilians and not the bombardment of more civilians." Moussa [reversed](#) his statement a day later reiterating his support for the UN mandate. Individual Arab League members were also actively part of the NATO intervention.

Gulf Cooperation Council: The GCC [supported](#) Resolution 1973 and the subsequent military intervention. [Qatar](#) was an enthusiastic supporter of the intervention, [helping](#) to train Libyan rebels and providing five fighter jets for no-fly zone enforcement. The UAE also [participated](#) in the intervention as well, even [calling](#) for increased strikes from NATO allies to help defeat Qaddafi.