

Libya And The UN: Whose Responsibility To Protect?

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As the blood-letting in Libya continues, and the hapless protesters battle a repressive regime that has shown no qualms to slaughter its own people, the eyes of the world are focused on the United Nations. To its credit the Security Council has acted in strong terms. Is this enough? (...)

RtoP on Libya?

But the Libyan case is different. The efforts to bring about 'regime change' here need not be a 'back-door' endeavour. There is a crying need to do it now to end the excruciating human sufferings of the Libyan people. The Security Council has already agreed that war crimes are being committed in Libya by the ruling group. It is obvious that all peaceful means to resolve the crisis have proved futile, and the domestic authorities have manifestly failed in their responsibilities. If there ever was a time for collective action through the Security Council legally, morally, and in practical terms, it is now. If there ever was a situation ripe for the application of the principle of the

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, it is Libya.

In fact by adopting the UNSC resolution on 26 February, the implementation of the

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principle in its "hardcore" form has already begun. Significantly, however, the resolution did not skirt around this but explicitly invoked

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to justify the punitive actions on Gaddafi, his family and his coterie of key supporters. The resolution cited the Libyan regime's "

responsibility to protect

its own population".

What is required now is another back-to-back resolution. This one could include two things. The first is the proclamation of a 'no-fly zone' to prevent Gaddafi's air force from striking at a protesters' march upon Tripoli. The second is the issuance of "arrest warrants" against "war criminals" as the key personalities in the Gaddafi regime have been labeled.

But given the obvious sensitivity of all these punitive moves, especially over military intervention in the air or on the ground, the UN must be mindful of its limits. Nothing must be done to open itself up to accusations that it is taking Libyan sovereignty lightly — notwithstanding

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— or worse, it is promoting a neo-colonialist project.

The UN has rightly taken upon itself the mantle of protector of the helpless, for that body alone represents the aspirations of the entirety of humanity. If the UN fails, it will also signal the failure of the international community. See [full article](#)