

We must not allow Gadhafi to inflict further crimes against humanity

March 17, 2011
Montreal Gazette

KYLE MATTHEWS and FRANK CHALK,

Kyle Matthews is the lead researcher at the Will to Intervene Project at the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies at Concordia University. Frank Chalk is the director of the institute.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper should be applauded for taking a strong stance against the violence engulfing Libya.

Following a decision by the United Nations Security Council to impose a range of sanctions on the regime of Moammar Gadhafi, the prime minister demonstrated international leadership by unveiling a broad range of measures to apply Canada's muscle to enforce the international community's promise of "never again."

With evidence that, in violation of international law, Gadhafi used foreign mercenaries and military aircraft to murder civilians who were peacefully exercising their democratic right to advocate for political change in Libya, Canada responded swiftly to show that it is on the side of human rights and stands firmly against tyranny. Ottawa imposed a travel ban and asset freeze against Gadhafi, his family and his cronies, barred Canadian firms from conducting financial transactions with the Libyan government, and championed the decision to suspend Libya from the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Recognizing that without a credible show of force these policies might not suffice to stop the mass-atrocity crimes being committed within Libya's borders, the prime minister deployed HMCS Charlottetown to the region. Given the speed at which atrocities are being committed by the Libyan military as it marches toward the city of Benghazi, it is imperative that Canada pre-position sufficient military and diplomatic force in the region to ensure respect for the international effort to implement the **Responsibility to protect**. (...)

(...)The elephant in the room is what Canada and like-minded nations should do now that it has become clear that Gadhafi has no intention of finding a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The obvious next step is to enforce a no-fly zone over Libya, preventing Gadhafi's from using fighter aircraft and helicopter gunships to wage war in urban settings. The Arab League called on the UN Security Council to authorize the use of force to shut down Libya's airspace to protect civilians. France and the United Kingdom agree that a no-fly zone needs to be implemented, while the U.S. has not ruled out this policy option. President Barack Obama has made it clear that positioning U.S. military assets close to Libya ensures that the international community shows it possesses the will and the "full capacity to act" if the situation deteriorates. Countries should also consider jamming Libyan military communications and providing better broadcast facilities to Libyan opposition groups from bases outside Libya or inside liberated territory. Canada should contribute to these efforts.

The October 2009 Will to Intervene Project briefing on Parliament Hill and the Will to Intervene book published in September 2010 provided 10 strategic recommendations to the government of Canada aimed at building its capacity to halt future mass-atrocity crimes by implementing the pillars of the **Responsibility to protect** report. It is not too late for Ottawa to begin to implement these 10 practical steps, starting with designation by the Prime Minister of a focal point person within the Government of Canada to implement and supervise

Responsibility to protect

measures aimed at mass atrocity prevention. The senior person designated as the focal point should have direct access to the prime minister and the capacity to coordinate and sometimes direct policy across the full range of relevant government departments and agencies.(...)

See full [article](#)