

Libya: International Contact Group prepares to meet in Rome Why have we intervened in Libya, and what are the mainstays of our common action?

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(...) We have intervened because when a government not only fails to protect its own people but actively visits violent repression on those selfsame people, it becomes the international community's **"responsibility to protect"**.

The international coalition's intervention has served to contain, although unfortunately still not to put a complete stop to, the massacre of civilians being perpetrated by Colonel Gaddafi using cluster bombs, heavy artillery, mercenaries and snipers, in fact by every possible means, in open breach of humanitarian law. (...)

(...) The international community in its entirety embraced these considerations from the outset.

This unity of intent allowed us to adopt UN Resolutions 1970 and 1973, which provided the basis both for our action and for the establishment of a broad international coalition represented by the International Contact Group, which is meeting in Rome on Thursday for the second time.

Our strategy is clear: We are working to find a political solution to the crisis. The Libyan people alone can decide their country's future, by setting in motion an inclusive internal reconciliation process involving every member of Libyan society.

But it is clear that the start of such a process demands the cessation of violence, a cease-fire which requires Colonel Gaddafi's definitive departure if it is to be credible.

The international community's military pressure through Nato, its diplomatic pressure through the political isolation of the regime in Tripoli, and its economic pressure through the sanctions

adopted by the United Nations, serve this precise purpose.

They serve to foster the conditions for a cease-fire capable of ensuring the people's safety, and for kick-starting a political process independently managed by the Libyans themselves, without Colonel Gaddafi.

Italy and Qatar have both recognized the Transition National Committee as the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people, and as their sole political interlocutor.

(...) The INC must be helped to survive, first and foremost by setting up a financial mechanism designed, in a framework of legality and of transparency, to allow the flow of resources needed for it to function.

It is also necessary to devise a way to ensure that the Committee can have access to part, at least, of the financial assets that have been frozen in the context of the sanctions against the regime in Tripoli: Those assets do not belong to Gaddafi but to the Libyan people, and it would be ironic in the extreme if the Committee were unable to enjoy access to them, in a framework of legality underwritten by the United Nations, in order to meet primary humanitarian needs.

This would help to alleviate the Libyan people's suffering and it would complement the international community's humanitarian intervention, the effectiveness of which would be boosted if the United Nations were to play a stronger coordinating role. (...)

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