

ICC prosecutor clarifies purpose behind charges against Libya's Gaddafi

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Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), spelt out on Tuesday the predatory motives behind the war crimes arrest warrants that the court has issued against Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, his son Seif al-Islam Gaddafi, and the regime's intelligence chief, Abjullah al-Sanoussi.

Ocampo used a press conference to send a blunt message to other senior figures in Gaddafi's regime. "They can be part of the problem and be prosecuted," he declared, "or they can be part of the solution, working together with other Libyans to stop the crimes."

Ocampo's statement amounts to a mafia-style ultimatum to those in the Libyan political elite who continue to stand behind Gaddafi in the face of protracted US and NATO bombardment. Hand him over to the US and European powers that are bombing the country, and they will be included in a new regime and taken care of. Refuse, and they will suffer the same fate as Gaddafi—death or life imprisonment. The only way they could avoid being hauled before a war crimes tribunal themselves, Ocampo stated, was to "complement the arrest warrants."

The ICC stands exposed as an instrument of war and great power neo-colonialism. The US government, along with a host of the regimes it sponsors, such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen and Iraq, are guilty of the very crimes that the court alleges Gaddafi has committed—the killing of civilians to suppress political opposition. Ocampo, as WikiLeaks revealed, blocked any investigations by the ICC into the numerous war crimes committed by the United States in Iraq.

The ICC has selectively charged the Libyan leadership in order to assist the US and European

powers achieve their objective of installing a more compliant regime in Tripoli and gaining dominance over the strategic country's lucrative oil and gas resources.

Gaddafi's deputy foreign minister, Khaled Kaaim, dismissed the war crimes charges and accurately labelled the ICC as "a political court which serves its European paymasters." The court has no credibility to prosecute anyone.

It is just over 100 days since Britain, France and the US secured the agreement of the United Nations Security Council to pass Resolution 1973. The resolution was immediately utilised by the major powers to launch a massive air war against Libya, ostensibly to "protect" civilians from reprisals and repression by pro-Gaddafi security forces.

In reality, NATO is functioning as the air force for the Transitional National Council based in Benghazi, little different to the way in which Hitler's Luftwaffe was deployed to support the Spanish fascist rebellion in the 1930s.

The Council, made up of break-aways from Gaddafi's regime, long-standing CIA assets and religious fundamentalists, is completely subservient to the interests of the major powers. It does not have the popular support or military capacity to dislodge Gaddafi from the country's capital Tripoli. It has only survived for the past three months due to more than 5,000 NATO air strikes on Libyan military personnel, hardware and facilities.

NATO missiles and bombs have slaughtered an unknown number of Libyan soldiers and hundreds of civilians. Nevertheless, the military situation remains an effective stalemate, with the "rebel" forces still incapable of advancing from the strongholds they have established in eastern Libya and areas of the west.

In recent days, the international media lauded the successes of the “rebels” in the mountainous Nafusa region of western Libya. On Tuesday morning, they seized control of a government-held military base barely 40 kilometres from Tripoli, and looted large stockpiles of weapons and ammunition.

Press accounts, however, had to admit that the victory was the by-product of the ferocious aerial bombardment of the base for days beforehand. The *New York Times* reported that “all but a handful of the concrete storage bunkers had been partly or totally destroyed by several waves of NATO airstrikes.”

Indicative of both the capabilities and morale of the rebels, the *Times* further reported that “hundreds” of their fighters stopped looting and “fled the base after a rumour that pro-Gaddafi soldiers were returning.”

A rebel spokesman told the *Times* that there was no prospect of their forces advancing on Tripoli from the mountain region. “We have to organise ourselves out here first,” he said.

Even the weapons that the mountain rebels used to attack the base were primarily supplied from outside. The French government has been forced to admit that it had made aerial drops of arms and ammunition in the area, in defiance of the terms of the UN resolution and without the knowledge of even its own NATO partners.

The NATO member-states are growing increasingly frustrated by the lack of any prospect that the disorganised and undisciplined forces of the Transitional National Council will gain a decisive ground victory. Thus NATO is ever more openly pursuing the criminal policy of assassination, seeking to kill Gaddafi in the hope his successors will capitulate and surrender.

On April 30, NATO aircraft killed Gaddafi’s youngest son and three of his grandchildren in a murderous attack on one of his family’s private residences. On June 20, at least 19 civilians, including nine children, were slaughtered by missile onslaught on a residential compound owned by a close associate of Gaddafi. The attack was almost certainly motivated by NATO’s belief that the Libyan leader was taking refuge in the building.

The US-based think tank Stratfor, which has close links to the American intelligence and military establishment, provided a crude but honest assessment of both the ICC charges and the nature of the Libyan

war in a comment on June 28.

Stratfor wrote: “The warrant... provides added impetus to NATO’s current strategy of using airpower to try to assassinate the Libyan leader as a means of accomplishing the mission: regime change. The three countries currently leading the Libyan intervention—the United States, the United Kingdom and France—are also increasing their efforts to induce people close to Gaddafi to betray him...”

The think tank commented that NATO is seeking to “separate Gaddafi’s inner circle from the regime, offering those without ‘blood on their hands’ a share of power in the new Libya in exchange for betraying their leader.” Stratfor cynically noted that “deciding who does and does not fall in this category will most likely be subject to negotiation, not based upon a true examination of the personal records of various regime officials.”

The *Wall Street Journal* reported on June 29 as to the character of the post-Gaddafi regime that US, British and French imperialism are conspiring to install. There will be no “democracy.” The main priority of a new government will be to restart the country’s oil exports. It will rest on the same military and internal security apparatus as Gaddafi. Andrew Mitchell, the British Secretary of State for International Development, told the newspaper that after the death or overthrow of the Libyan leader, “one of the first things that should happen is someone gets on the phone to the former chief of police and tells him he has a job.”



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