

State Collapse: Government Failure in Gaddafi's Libya

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ABSTRACT:

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This article discusses the background and conditions of Libya before and during the reign of Muammar al-Gaddafi, which ended with the fall of his regime in 2011. Libya has a strong economy thanks to its oil resources, but Gaddafi's rule was characterized by strict control and strong policies of Arab nationalism. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to explain a particular event experienced by an individual or group. The conflict in Libya was triggered by a separatist movement in Benghazi and widespread protests influenced by the Arab Spring. This conflict is closely related to Gaddafi's authoritarian rule that lasted more than 50 years. After Gaddafi's fall in 2011, Libya entered a period of collapse, instability, and prolonged conflict. Libya's post-Gaddafi instability, political turmoil, and economic hardship require holistic solutions such as improved governance, a cohesive national army, financial opportunities, and living standards to reduce migrant safety risks. This article delves into the history of Libya's conflict, its collapse, government transition, restoration efforts, and potential new issues, aiming to provide a comprehensive analysis.

Introduction

A collapsed state is defined as a state that cannot perform two essential functions as a sovereign state in the modern world: projecting authority over its territory and population and protecting its national borders. Weak institutions cause countries to fail (Barma, 2024). Why is there a possibility of some countries collapsing? Western leaders see crumbling states as a source of threats, including terrorism and organized crime, as well as refugee flows and nuclear proliferation. State failure is often associated with other things, such as civil war or ethnic conflict, so the indicators are signs of political instability. State collapse is when a state cannot create and

implement binding rules, control violence, and collect taxes for at least six months (Lambach, Johais, and Bayer, 2020).

Libya is a country located in North Africa. Libya is also a member country of the Islamic Cooperation Organization ("Member States," n.d.). Most of Libya's country is located in the Sahara Desert. Oil is one of the most significant economic resources in Libya. Before 1950, Libya had limited natural resources considering its environmental environment. Libya only depends on aid from other countries and imports to support its economy. However, the discovery of oil drastically changed conditions in Libya. Due to its geographical location, Libya is dominated by the Sahara desert climate, known to be arid and hot. However, the climate is temperate around the coastal areas of the Mediterranean Sea. Libya designated Arabic as the official language used in the country ("Languages of Libya," n.d.). Not only that, English is also still used for international business and political purposes. Western influence does not easily contaminate Libya because its government strongly embraces Arab nationalism. With that, most of the Libyan population embraced Islam, and most were Sunni. Several minorities in the population adhere to Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity.

The economy in Libya is quite good if you look at the per capita income. This country has the highest per capita income in Africa. Oil remains the primary source of income and economic growth in Libya. During Muammar al-Gaddafi's leadership, the government in Libya had firm control over the economic sector. To minimize Libya's dependence on oil for its income, Libya's economic policy emphasizes development in the industrial and agricultural sectors. However, agriculture in Libya has many limitations, considering that most of the area is deserted, with various diseases that attack animals and plants ("Challenges to the Agricultural Industry," n.d.). The area of land planted is only around one percent; most of it is on the Al-Jifarah and Brace mainland, and approximately one-tenth of it is irrigated (Brown, Cordell, and Barbour 2024).

However, behind this, Libya also experienced difficulties, especially after the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi. The difficulty faced was the collapse of the country. The collapse in Libya was also marked by chaos and instability. During that time, many armed groups grew bigger and bigger, and Islamism emerged as a potent political force. Clashes between new militias also added to the chaos in the country (Rowan 2019). The current condition of Libya is in sharp contrast to the previous situation of Libya, which was a stable country and had an essential position in the North African and European regions. After more than 40 years of rule, political experts stated that

Libya at that time could not be considered a democracy. In February 2011, an armed uprising resulted in the overthrow of Gaddafi's dictatorship and instability in the country (Shaban 2019).

The collapse experienced by Libya began during Gaddafi's leadership. Gaddafi's 40-year rule was marked by controversy and his failure to build political alliances with Arab or European countries. The Arab Spring, a wave of violent protests and pro-democracy demonstrations, began in Tunisia in 2011 and spread to North Africa and the Middle East. This situation led to the president's dismissal in Tunisia, but the unrest spread abroad. Lawyer Fathi Terbil, who represented the victims of the 1996 Abu Salim Prison Massacre, led the protests in Libya. The Libyan government arrested Terbil to stop the protests, but the protests spread to various cities. The protests escalated into demands for regime change, leading to more arrests and violence.

Rebel forces became more robust, and the Libyan government increased violence against protesters (Oyenyi 2019). Libya lacked a procedural definition of State under Gaddafi, including a constitution and bureaucratic apparatus of army, parliament, security, and police. Without transparent political and social networks, the National Council faced difficulties developing sovereign institutions and fostering an environment supporting diverse political viewpoints (GARGOUM 2022). The government also imposed communications restrictions and shut down the national telephone system. International criticism followed the Libyan government's harsh response to demonstrators and civilians, which undermined the unity of the system. Senior ambassadors and justice ministers were among the top officials who quit or issued statements criticizing the government. Before Gaddafi, Libyan embassies began flying the national flag to support the revolution. Some components of the military also wavered in support of Gaddafi; two Libyan fighter pilots defected to Malta rather than carry out instructions to destroy Benghazi. Fighting continued, and as Libyan military forces increasingly aligned themselves with the opposition against the government, Gaddafi's influence declined. The anti-Gaddafi movement began to form an armed uprising as protesters joined defective military units and acquired weapons from government arsenals. On February 23, newly equipped opposition forces succeeded in driving out most of the pro-Gaddafi forces from eastern Libya, including the city of Benghazi, as well as other cities in the west. For the first time since the start of the crisis, international journalists were able to enter Libya thanks to the opening of the border with Egypt. In Tripoli, where Gaddafi, his family, and his inner circle still live, pro-Gaddafi militia groups maintain power ("Libya Revolt of 2011," 2024). This article was created to explore and learn about the background of the Libyan

conflict. When the conflict took place and Libya collapsed, there was a change of government. What efforts were made to restore Libya, which had been destroyed, and analyze whether this caused any new problems.

Method

Researchers used descriptive qualitative research methods to complete this paper. Qualitative descriptive research is a relatively crucial qualitative research model that aims to explain certain events experienced by individuals or groups. Many scientists have supported this model. Qualitative descriptive research is less interpretive than other qualitative approaches, such as phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography. This qualitative approach is at least theoretical in nature and refers to naturalistic research that examines phenomena in their natural State without selecting or manipulating variables. The flexible sampling technique aims to obtain sufficient information to fill in the data. Data collection and analysis involved minimal to moderately structured interviews, observations, and document review. Data analysis only comes from data with codes generated during research. Presentation of information includes descriptive summaries that are logically structured and organize information based on time, category, topic, or perspective. Qualitative descriptive research is suitable for describing phenomena directly and answering the questions of who, what, and where. Researchers can safely label their designs as qualitative descriptive and acknowledge the differences of other methods without mislabeling their approaches. ("Editorial: Qualitative Descriptive Research: An Acceptable Design," n.d.) With this method, researchers search for and collect information and the data needed by observation through supporting sites and journal discussions related to the theme raised. Researchers use the system in a way that makes it possible to access accessible sites to get valid information that supports the information needs of researchers in carrying out this research.

Results and Discussion

Background to the conflict in Libya

Libya, a country that became independent in 1951, is located in North Africa. Libya was once a power of the Ottoman Turks. In 2011, a democratic movement influenced by the Arab Spring emerged in Libya, which led to conflict in the form of war between communities with the Libyan government military forces led directly by Muammar Gaddafi and the National

Transitional Council movement. The conflict in Libya began with a separatist movement centered in Benghazi (Fakhriansyah 2022). The separatist movement ultimately led to all the people taking to the streets to protest in several large cities in Libya to overthrow President Gaddafi's government. The conflict was closely related to the strict government that had been carried out by Muammar Gaddafi, whom he had led for more than 50 years with a term of office from 1961 until he finally fell in 2011 (Emeagwali 2023).

Gaddafi led Libya after successfully overthrowing the previously authoritarian King Idris 1. In Gaddafi's leadership, he implemented a concept that could change the country's life at the international level (Waweru 2018). Gaddafi ruled with a system of Islamic Socialism called the Third Universal Theory. The idea behind this government is a combination of orthodox Islam, revolutionary socialism, and Arab nationalism. Not only that, Gaddafi also changed the name of Libya to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (Yahaya 2020)

Libya is the largest oil and gas-producing country. Therefore, many countries have begun to target these natural resources. However, Gaddafi was firm and fierce, so foreign countries could not take his natural resources carelessly. Because Libya had become a prosperous country, Gaddafi began to develop infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools, and the most extraordinary thing was that Gaddafi built a super large water channel that flowed from northern Libya to the desert areas in Libya (Shohib, Baidhowi, and Amrosi 2023).

Because Libya had too much money, Gaddafi supported separatist movements in various parts of the world. The way Gaddafi led Libya to protest the UN because it was considered to be damaging to the good name of the Libyan State in the eyes of other countries around the world; relations with society and various countries worsened due to Gaddafi's actions because he began to show signs of authoritarian rule. Starting from the loss of press freedom, then social inequality emerged. Social inequality occurs because of a lot of corruption and nepotism. Gaddafi had promised to abolish social classes (Shohib, Baidhowi, and Amrosi, 2023).

At first, people did not dare to voice their dislike of Gaddafi's leadership. However, after the historic event in Arabia called the Arab Spring, or some called it the Jasmine Revolution, people began to dare to voice their opinions about Gaddafi's leadership. They also wanted to follow the trend of revolutions by neighboring countries and overthrow their leaders, but this became a new problem. Many have not been able to move on from Gaddafi's greatness in leading in the early days of his leadership. Many people feel that Gaddafi has done a lot for the country. Others

supported him out of loyalty and because they had an advantageous position on Gaddafi's nepotism (Ityonzughul, Adure, and Kertyo 2022).

The Libyan Revolution conflict lasted approximately nine months, from February to October 2011. What made this conflict last so long was that Gaddafi did not want to step down and instead continued to hide. As I mentioned earlier, world countries at the UN have made a unanimous decision about Gaddafi's resignation because his regime has lost legitimacy or the trust of its people.

At the same time, the opposition formed the National Transitional Council (NTC), led by Mahmoud Jibril. The opposition began to succeed in weakening the loyalist authority in the cities. Until its peak on August 21, the opposition succeeded in controlling Tripoli. Gaddafi's troops remain in Tripoli. Only four cities are under Gaddafi's control: Sebha, Sirte, Jufra, and Bani Walid (Carati 2017).

Transition of Government in Libya After the Collapse of the Gaddafi Era

After the collapse of the Gaddafi era in 2011, Libya was expected to transition into a stable and democratic country. However, the country experienced a prolonged period of instability and conflict. Initial optimism following the revolution was short-lived as the interim government, established under Prime Minister Abdul Raheem Al-Keeb, struggled to control the country. The government's inability to disarm and demobilize the various militias and armed groups that emerged during the conflict led to a power vacuum exploited by various factions vying for control.

The international community's involvement in Libya also played an essential role in the post-Gaddafi transition. NATO's 2011 intervention, although instrumental in removing Gaddafi from power, left a complex legacy. Such interventions bring external actors with their agendas into the fold. The entanglement of foreign interests in Libya's internal affairs further complicates an already fragile political situation, making it difficult for the country to chart its path and navigate its development challenges (Erdağ 2017).

One of the most pressing obstacles was the power struggle that erupted after the fall of Gaddafi. With the dissolution of central authority, numerous armed factions and rebel groups emerged, each vying for control. These groups, often divided along regional and ideological lines, hinder the formation of a unified government. This fractured landscape makes it difficult to maintain law and order nationwide, creating a climate of insecurity.

Libya's decades under Gaddafi's iron grip have left the country unprepared for a democratic transition, and decades of centralized control resulted in weak institutions. The country needs a solid legal framework, trained civil servants, and a robust civil society. These shortcomings make effective governance a significant challenge. Building a new democratic system from the ground up while navigating a complex security situation has proven daunting.

Making the situation even more complicated is the proliferation of armed groups. The absence of a solid central authority allowed these groups to thrive, often aligning with regional or tribal interests. It has resulted in ongoing violence and clashes between rival factions, endangering stability and creating a climate of fear for ordinary Libyans. Fragile governments need help to assert their control and establish a monopoly on the use of force (Knipp 2021).

Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC) was created to manage the transition to the new government, but it also faces significant challenges. The NTC was criticized for its lack of inclusivity and representation of various groups within the country. Subsequent elections in 2012, which resulted in the formation of the General National Congress (GNC), were also marred by controversy and accusations of fraud. The GNC was seen as a more representative government but struggled to maintain stability and control over the country.

The situation in Libya continues to deteriorate, with various factions and militias competing for power. The country is divided into several regions, each with its own government and military power. The situation is further complicated by the emergence of terrorist groups such as ISIS, which exploit the power vacuum and instability to gain a foothold in the country. The Libyan government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Fayeza Serraj, has been unable to combat these groups effectively, leading to ongoing violence and instability.

The international community has been involved in efforts to stabilize Libya, with the United Nations playing a pivotal role in brokering peace talks and supporting forming a new government. The UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) was established in 2015 but also faces significant challenges. The GNA has been criticized for its lack of inclusivity and representation of various groups within the country, leading to ongoing opposition and violence (Erdağ 2017).

Efforts to Restore Libya

Libya's socio-political conditions became unstable in 2011, leading to the civil war ("Libya's Conflict Stalemate: Towards a Multitrack Approach to Stability and Peace," 2022). This crisis also resulted in significant economic losses for Libya and victimized both the government and anti-government demonstrator groups, which ultimately led to the fall of Moammar Qaddafi's regime (Syahputra 2017). More than thirty countries have recognized the Libyan National Transitional Council (also known as the Libyan National Transitional Council) as interim rulers in Libya until the collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's regime. After Colonel Muammar Qaddafi's regime collapsed, the NTC tried to get help from countries worldwide to provide financial assistance and give de facto and de jure recognition, or world recognition, to the NTC as the party currently in power in Libya (Monitor 2020). The NTC wants a peaceful transition of power before the formation of a legitimate government in Libya. On August 20, 2011, the Libyan National Transitional Committee (NTC) was recognized by the African Union as the representative of the Libyan people as they built an inclusive transitional government. Although the National Transitional Council (NTC) was in power, the council responsible for governing the country since the Libyan civil war finally stepped down (HANDINI, n.d.).

Instability in Libya is getting worse, mainly because of the military offensive carried out by General Haftar in Tripoli. The international community strongly condemned this action. The international community, including the G-7 and the EU, has pressured General Haftar to stop his coup threat (Riza 2019). They stressed that a democratic solution was needed to allow all parties involved in the conflict in Libya to talk. A fair power-sharing mechanism is proposed to reduce extremism and build an inclusive and stable government (Ellya Rosana 2016). Ghassan Salame, a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, made intense efforts to reach a peaceful resolution. It is an integral part of the political mediation process. Apart from that, the United States, through Africa Command (AFRICOM), fought ISIS and international militias in Libya before its troops finally withdrew. Other countries, including India, have supported the UN's security restoration efforts in Libya. The US and its coalition partners continue to call for political negotiations reinforced by the UN peace roadmap (Indonesia 2016). Additionally, there have been several additional recovery efforts for Libya following the civil war. In the political process, the Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed in 2016 to unite warring factions and organize

elections, social reconciliation and development, humanitarian efforts, and restoration of infrastructure destroyed by war (Nainggolan, n.d.).

Immigration Crisis and Political Governance Chaos in Libya After the Fall of Gaddafi

After the fall of the Gaddafi regime, all the Libyan people thought that by overthrowing the Gaddafi regime, they would be able to make Libya better, but what happened was the opposite: Libya faced massive security problems, political turmoil, and economic difficulties. The country's security situation worsened as several militias fought for power, resulting in a fragmented security sector that made it impossible for authorities to maintain order. Without legitimacy and failing to gain public trust, the transitional government could not disarm the militias or maintain a monopoly on the use of armed force, further weakening its authority. Furthermore, creating a constitution and establishing solid government institutions took time and effort, contributing to prolonged instability (Pradella and Rad 2017).

People who feel that their country is not going in a better direction than they thought but is actually getting worse and think it is no longer worth living in that country decide to immigrate to another, better country. Due to the large number of people wanting to emigrate from Libya, immigration became one of the most severe challenges faced by the Libyan State after Gaddafi's death. Due to its proximity to the European continent, most Libyan refugees seek to reach the continent in the hope that their lives will be better there, ultimately making it an essential actor in the international migration crisis. (Adesina 2021) Since Libya does not have an official government that can manage all the country's problems, including security and political stability, there is a vacuum that can be exploited by smugglers and human smugglers, resulting in an increase in illegal migration. Libya's ports and coastal areas have become a hub for human trafficking, with thousands of people attempting to cross the Mediterranean every year. The Libyan government, trying to enforce its authority, was unsuccessful in addressing this problem, which resulted in a severe humanitarian disaster that attracted global attention (Tjønn and Jumbert 2023).

The immigration problem in Libya has created enormous economic and social challenges, putting pressure on the economy as many migrants request food, shelter, and medical care, which the government cannot provide, thereby escalating the humanitarian situation. The flood of migrants has caused tensions within Libyan society, straining local resources. These immigration problems, based on political instability and economic constraints, have resulted in an enormous humanitarian disaster, with dangerous journeys and dire living situations for migrants. To

overcome these difficulties, a holistic solution is needed, which includes improving security, governance, economic prospects, and the safety and welfare of migrants (Ahmed 2023).

Libya's immigration dilemma requires a multifaceted strategy that can address the underlying reasons for migration and the humanitarian challenges migrants face. Some possible solutions that the current Libyan government can implement are improving governance and institutions, such as forming a cohesive national army, which could help prevent division and instability. Additionally, governments should work to create economic opportunities and improve living standards to reduce motivation to migrate. Increasing the country's capacity to handle and protect migrants through greater cooperation with international organizations and neighboring countries, as well as improving infrastructure and services for migrants, can all help alleviate the crisis and improve the humanitarian situation (Melcangi 2021).

Conclusion

Libya, a country in the Middle East, was founded in 1951 and is known for its Arab influence. In 2011, conflict erupted between the people and the government led by Muammar Gaddafi, who was re-elected. This conflict centers on separatism and the use of Islam as a political ideology. Libya's economy relies heavily on oil and gas, and the government faces resistance from the National Transitional Council (NTC). The conflict ended in 2011, with the NTC capturing Tripoli and forming the NTC.

Libya, after the fall of Gaddafi in 2011, transitioned into a stable and democratic country. However, the country faces instability and conflict. This transition was influenced by NATO intervention, regional and ideological differences, and the rise of armed groups. The National Transitional Council (NTC) was created to carry out the transition to the new government but faced criticism for its lack of representation and involvement of various groups. The UN and the international community are essential in promoting stability and addressing the country's challenges.

Libya's socio-political situation became unstable in 2011, leading to conflict stalemate and economic instability. The country's transition to a multitrack approach to stability and peace was influenced by the economic and financial crises, which led to the arrest of President Moammar Qaddafi. The National Transitional Council (NTC) was formed by the UN as representatives of the Libyan people, aiming to build an inclusive government. International organizations, such as

the G-7 and the EU, have worked to overcome the crisis and develop inclusive and stable governments. The UN National Council for National Unity (GNU) was established in 2016 to promote peace, social cohesion, human rights, and infrastructure development in Libya.

Following Gaddafi's fall, Libya has faced many challenges, including a fragmented political system, economic instability, and a lack of responsive government. The country's transition process could have been faster, but it has been criticized for not addressing economic and political stability issues. The country has also been criticized for lacking a responsive government, contributing to increased illegal migration. The crisis in Libya has caused significant economic and social challenges, including a lack of food, health care, and local resources. To address this problem, a holistic solution is needed, including improving government responsibility, economic prospects, and human rights. To overcome migration challenges and human rights issues, Libya needs to develop strategies to address the root causes of migration and human rights issues. It includes increasing government accountability, fostering a unified national identity, and increasing cooperation with international organizations and local governments.

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