



THE POLITICAL SLAVERY ISSUE IN LIBYA

Forum: SPECPOL

Issue: The political slavery issue in Libya

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Introduction:

Auctioning of slaves that is going on in Libya has come to the attention of media when CNN received a video of two men being sold then after working on it to verify its authenticity, a team from CNN is sent to Tripoli, the capital city of Libya, in October 2017 for further research. After being covered by CNN, the question of slave trade in Libya surfaced and started being discussed on UN Security Council meetings.

Definition of Key Terms:

Slave: a person held in servitude as the chattel of another / one that is completely subservient to a dominating influence

Auction: a sale of property to the highest bidder

Migrant: a person who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work or better living conditions

Repatriate: to restore or return to the country of origin, allegiance, or citizenship

General Overview:

Unsettlement in Libya has been going on since February 2011, and it started with police taking down anti-government protests in Benghazi, within days protests spread to Tripoli and more than 200 people are killed. Because of the upheaval then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon holds a meeting with then president Moammar Gaddafi and demands the conflict to be

ended. Gaddafi makes a speech stating that he is not stepping down then he states the reason of this conflict is al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and is fueled by drugs. Just in 10 days then president of United States of America Barack Obama signs an executive order that freezes Gadhafi's assets. One day after, on 26th of February, the UN Security Council imposes sanctions against Libya that includes an arms embargo and asset freeze also referring Gaddafi to International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged crimes against human rights. Two days late European Union bans the sale of arms and ammunition to Libya also freezing Gadhafi's and his family's assets. On March of 2011 NATO begins 24-hour air surveillance of Libya. On March 19th, French, British and American military forces begin the first phase of Operation Odyssey Dawn, which is aimed at enforcing the no-fly zone, ending more than 110 Tomahawk missiles being fired from American and British ships and submarines which hit about 20 Libyan air and missile defense targets. On March Obama states "Tonight, I can report that we have stopped Gadhafi's deadly advance," he also states that United States will "support the aspirations of the Libyan people" as the "military effort ratchets down.". on the 31st of March, NATO announces Operation Unified Protector which is taken sole command of air operations to "protect civilians and civilian-populated areas from attack or the threat of attack.". Later, Italy's Foreign Minister Franco Frattini announces that they will become the third country, after France and Qatar, to recognize the rebel Libyan National Transitional Council as the legitimate international representative of Libya. On the 27th of June, the ICC issues arrest warrants for Gadhafi, his son and his brother-in-law for crimes against humanity. On the 19th of August US officials say Gaddafi may be making preparations for a "last stand" in Tripoli as the month-long NATO air campaign continues. Later on September, Russia recognizes the National Transitional Council as Libya's official government. Then 60 countries had a meeting in Paris in order to discuss Libya's transition from Gadhafi's rule to democracy. On September 16, the UN Security Council adopts a resolution that establishes a support mission for Libya

for the next three months. On the 20th of October, Gaddafi is captured and killed by rebel forces. On October 27, the UN Security Council votes to end military operations in Libya. With Gaddafi being taken over Libya enters its state of conflict.

Another upsurge starts in 2014 which causes the Libyan Civil War to start on 16th of May. It is still going and it is a conflict between two rival factions, one is the House of Representatives (also known as the “Tobruk Government”) which was elected in 2014 while raising controversy and its rival is General National Congress endorsed government (also known as “National Salvation Government”) which was established after Operation Odyssey Dawn and a failed coup attempt based in Tripoli.

With these conflicts taking place combined with failed implementation of rule of law in the country, Libya became more and more vulnerable to illegal acts such as slave trade. Bearing in mind that Libya is also a transit country where migrants from all over Africa, especially from Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan and also refugees from Eritrea, hoping to reach Europe by sea. Most of these migrants are males that are eligible for workforce. While the journey they aspire is being considered dangerous, around 3,000 people died attempting it, flow of people from Libyan borders is still continuing. Estimated number of people who are migrants or refugees in Libya is between 400,000 and one million, this causes the detention centers, places where unauthorized migrants are sent to, are overrun.

The Libyan Coast Guard is supported by European Union, especially by Italy with funds and resources, because of this the number of boats smuggling people to Europe has decreased. However this creates other problems, the number of reports of robbery, rape, and murder among migrants has increased, according to a report made by the UN Human Rights Agency. Also the conditions in these detention centers are described as “horrific”. Other than these abuses, migrants are vulnerable to being auctioned off as slaves. Because smugglers can’t smuggle that

much people into Europe quickly they anticipate a steady money flow from these migrants and when migrants can't afford it they have a high chance of being sold as slaves.

Footage covered by CNN: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2S2qtGisT34>

On the article published by the news site Al Jazeera in the 26th of January 2018, two Eritrean refugees who has been sold as slaves before were interviewed: “We were lied to. They beat us with sticks and a water hose. And they electrocuted us. We told them we had no money, but that did not stop them from beating us.”. “They then took us to the town of the Libyan Bani Walid, where we were held in an illegal detention center. They gave us one piece of bread a day. ... We endured physical torture but the mental torture was worse. Our captors would systematically choose people unable to pay to set an example.”. “They would hang them upside down and beat them. They would electrocute their nipples and waterboard them. They would pour hot oil on them and burn them. We saw people dying while being tortured. ... My friend died in front of me after he was electrocuted. He came with me and we survived the journey through the desert only for him to die as a slave in captivity. ... Watching others being tortured made people call anyone they could for them to send money by any means. They made us call while being tortured.”. “The first time they tortured me they asked me to pay. I said I don't have the money, my father is dead and I only have my mother. They asked me if I had relatives in Europe, to which I said no. ... They were not pleased, so they hanged me upside down and beat me everywhere and electrocuted me. They called my mother while I was being tortured so she could hear my screams. ... The detention center had people from Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, as well as Nigeria and other West African countries. ... At night, it used to be worse. The guards would get high on drugs and resort to beating, abuse and torture.”. “Women and children were kept separate from the men. Many girls and women were raped and had children as a result of it. Our buildings were close to each other so we would hear their screams and

cries.”. “They asked us for money in exchange for freedom. When they inquired about my religion I lied to them that I was a Muslim, hoping they would treat me better. ... I was lucky because they asked me for less money, which I was able to secure eventually.”. “We were held in an apartment building complex from where we were not allowed to go out. ... After paying the ransom, they took me from Az Zawiya to the sea. But we were stopped by Libyan coast guards, who took us to Tripoli. ... In Tripoli, they demanded 1,000 euros (\$1,225) in order for a person to be released.”. “They kept us in a large, container-like shed. It was really a cramped area with around 320 of us and had one toilet to share. I stayed there for three months. ... There were women and children in the same container as the men, children as young as two years, and there were infants born as a result of rape by the Libyan captors. ... Walid was stingy with food. He would starve us and say we would receive food if we could transfer money. He would say ‘No money no food, you can die of hunger for all I care.’ In order for us to leave we had to pay \$2,200.”. “The whole day and night we would just sleep and lie down without being allowed out and seeing daylight. ... The scariest thing was not knowing if you would ever be freed.”.

Timeline of Events:

<p style="text-align: center;">February 2011</p>	<p>Conflict in Libya begins.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">October 2011</p>	<p>Prime Minister of Libya Muammer Gaddafi is killed.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">May 2014</p>	<p>Civil War in Libya begins.</p>

October 2017	CNN covers a slave auction done in Libya.
December 2017	UN Security Council meets to discuss the question of Libyan slave trade.

Previous Attempts & Major Parties Involved & Conventions and Treaties:

Libyan government, backed by UN has launched a formal investigation into allegations. On the 29th of December 2018, Libyan government made a deal with the European Union and African leaders in order to allow the emergency repatriation of refugees and migrants facing abuse in detention centers. Also a transit center is opened for vulnerable refugees so they can be safely housed before being settled in another country.

On the same day African and European leaders met in Ivory Coast to agree upon an urgent evacuation plan, around 15,000 people would be flown out of Libya, which also included initiatives to target traffickers that included a task force to be set up.

The day before that UN Security Council met on an emergency meeting in order to stop abuses, it was also discussed that the UN Refugee Agency was facing important amounts of funding gap.

Around the same week the Foreign Ministry of Rwanda said that they will be extending asylum to 30,000 for sub-Saharan Africans that re in Libya.

On the week of 20th of December 2017, the parliament of the United Kingdom debated upon the issue of Libyan slave trade. The conservative MP Paul Scully said: “I am asking the UK government to put pressure on the Libyan government to take immediate action to stop these criminals from selling more people, to set current prisoners free, arrest the criminals and end this.”

Unfortunately, because this is an issue that hasn't been debated much on treaties and conventions weren't signed.

Possible Solutions:

While writing clauses I believe mainly focusing on ways to stop the flow of people into Libya will be the most beneficial. Try to focus on what can be done in order to stop migrations to Libya. Also try to find ways on how can the detention centers be improved. Another thing to focus on is that how to eradicate the smugglers since they play biggest role in this issue.

Notes from the Chair:

If you get bored while reading long articles try watching some videos such as:

<https://youtu.be/2S2qtGisT34>

<https://youtu.be/Bp6eTK0MmeE>

<https://youtu.be/goLH6rX6kG0>

Feel free to send an email if you have any questions: defne.menceloglu@fmvisik.k12.tr

Useful Links:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/02/27/africa/nigeria-migrant-smugglers-intl/index.html>

<https://edition.cnn.com/specials/africa/libya-slave-auctions>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/20/world/libya-civil-war-fast-facts/index.html>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13755445>

<https://www.google.com.tr/amp/s/www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-42433326>

<https://www.google.com.tr/amp/s/www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-42433326>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2017/11/considers-sanctions-fight-libya-slave-trade-171128183838460.html>

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IOM%20DTM%20Libya%20Migrant%20Report%20December%20-%20March%202017_0.pdf

<https://edition-m.cnn.com/2017/11/14/africa/libya-migrant-auctions/index.html>

[\[zero.net/m/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi5tLndpa2lwZWZWRpYS5vcmevd2lraS9MaWJ5YW5fQ3Jpc2lzXygyMDEx4oCTcHJlc2VudCk\]\(http://www.wiki-zero.net/m/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi5tLndpa2lwZWZWRpYS5vcmevd2lraS9MaWJ5YW5fQ3Jpc2lzXygyMDEx4oCTcHJlc2VudCk\)](http://www.wiki-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2018/01/slavery-libya-life-container-180121084314393.html>

<https://www.google.com.tr/amp/amp.timeinc.net/time/5042560/libya-slave-trade>

<https://youtu.be/2S2qtGisT34>

<https://youtu.be/Bp6eTK0MmeE>

<https://youtu.be/goLH6rX6kG0>