

Libya



The fall of Sirte, the death of Qadhafi and the declaration of National Liberation signal a new chapter for Libyan people as they strive to build a free, democratic and inclusive Libya. The UN has welcomed Libya back into the international community. The UK is looking forward to the opportunities associated with a new era in UK-Libya relations, building on our military, political, diplomatic and humanitarian support to the Libyan people during their revolution.

On 23 October, the date officially declared as Libya's 'National Liberation day' by the NTC, the Foreign Secretary paid tribute to Libya's revolution and referred to the opportunities that lie ahead: "We welcome the NTC's confirmation that they will form an inclusive Transitional Government and work towards democratic elections. The Libyan people now have the chance to work together in a new political process, leading to a pluralistic and open society under the rule of law."

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On 17 October, the Foreign Secretary officially re-opened the British Embassy to Libya during his visit to Tripoli, and appointed Sir John Jenkins as the new British Ambassador to Libya. Paying tribute to the "great progress the National Transitional Council has made in stabilising Libya," the Foreign Secretary announced additional UK support to Libya including medical care, an increased contribution to stabilisation and security planning and the delivery of the final requested shipment of Libyan banknotes frozen in the UK.

Why is the UK involved?

In February this year, Libyans began peaceful protests calling for a more open and democratic country. Qadhafi and his forces responded with widespread violence against the people of Libya, committing serious human rights abuses against civilians.

The United Nations, through Security Council Resolution 1970, condemned the brutality and referred the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court. Wide ranging sanctions were introduced with the threat of further action. There was also unprecedented criticism of Qadhafi's actions at the League of Arab States and African Union.

In March, Libya became the first country to be suspended from the Human Rights Council. But Qadhafi ignored all of this. As the situation continued to deteriorate, the United Nations Security Council agreed resolution 1973 on 17 March which authorised "all necessary measures to protect civilians."

UN Security Council resolution 1973:

- Called for the establishment of an immediate ceasefire
- Imposed a No Fly Zone to help protect civilians;
- Increased the range of sanctions on Qadhafi's regime

Support provided to the National Transitional Council (NTC)

Transition will be a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned process with broad international support co-ordinated by the UN. The National Transitional Council is now implementing the careful planning they have been conducting over the past few months, including the formation of a Transitional Government followed by elections.

The UK Government has provided practical and material support to the National Transitional Council (NTC). Satellite phones and 1,000 sets of body armour were supplied to the NTC in April 2011. On 15 July, we delivered 5000 high visibility vests and t-shirts for use by civilian police in Benghazi. On 28 July, we delivered communications equipment for police stations. On 11 August we delivered 6650 police uniforms with 5000 sets of body armour for the sole use of the civilian police force arriving in Libya in September.

Provision of this equipment is fully in line with UNSCRs 1970 and 1973. This equipment will help the reestablishment of a civilian security presence on the streets and will strengthen the capability of the NTC police to provide security in the areas under their control.

In response to specific requests and with UN agreement, the UK has also made available Libyan assets frozen under the UN sanctions regime. 1.86 billion Libyan dinar bank notes that were printed in the UK before the current crisis have been delivered to Libya to help the Libyan population meet their basic needs.

Stabilisation planning

The UK is working closely with the NTC and others to address priority needs. We continue to engage through the British Embassy in Tripoli with the NTC and international partners. In addition we have provided, at NTC request, technical expertise, including a Senior Police Adviser deployed to Tripoli. We stand ready to respond to requests for assistance to support a Libyan led transition and will continue to work with the UN and others to ensure a timely, coordinated international response.

The UK continues to support Libya's efforts in:

- Restoring public security and order and promote the rule of law
- Undertaking inclusive political dialogue, promote national reconciliation and embark upon the constitution-making and electoral processes
- Strengthening of emerging accountable institutions and the restoration of public services
- Protecting human rights, particularly for vulnerable groups, and supporting transitional justice
- Taking the immediate steps required to initiate economic recovery
- Co-ordinating the support that may be requested from other multilateral and bilateral actors

Humanitarian effort

The UK is one of over 30 nations contributing to the humanitarian effort in Libya.

The UK has played its full part in the international effort to provide essential humanitarian aid to help those affected by the conflict and the early action by the UK and others donors has helped prevent the situation in Libya and at the borders from developing into a humanitarian crisis. Our support has been needs based with a clear focus on delivering results. We continue to work with other donors and international humanitarian partners to assess the situation and provide appropriate support. Humanitarian actors are now active in Tripoli in support of the NTC in order to meet the immediate humanitarian needs.

To date DFID has:

- helped fly home over 12,700 migrant workers stranded at the Libyan borders;
- provided emergency shelter (tents and blankets) to people at the border, as well civilians in Libya who have been driven out of their homes by the fighting;
- funded the emergency evacuation of nearly 5,000 migrant workers and injured civilians from Misrata;
- supported the ICRC to help some of the most vulnerable people in Libya and at the borders who have been affected by the fighting;
- enabled the supply of urgently needed food, medical supplies and medical personnel;
- supported mine clearance work in Misrata, Benghazi and other affected areas to help ensure the safety of 200,000 people.

In September, the Prime Minister announced that up to 50 places will be made available in UK hospitals to provide medical treatment to Libyan patients seriously injured during the conflict. These 50 patients have now arrived and are receiving medical treatment. During his visit to Tripoli on 17 October, the Foreign Secretary announced another 50 hospital places for Libyan patients in the UK. A number of Libyan health experts will travel to the UK with the patients to observe the care they receive so that these patients, as well as others with similar injuries, can be supported on their return to Libya.

More details, including a timeline of the UK humanitarian response, can be found on the [Department for International Development's website](#)

Military action

The decision on British military involvement in Libya was not taken lightly. It was taken because it was necessary to protect the Libyan people. The entire Cabinet and the vast majority of MPs agreed that it was the right thing to do. Importantly, our action has the clear legal backing of the United Nations, as well as support from the Arab League.

The UN action we are taking is necessary, legal and right. Necessary, because Qadhafi continues to show a complete disregard for the lives of the people of Libya. Legal, because UN Security Council Resolution 1973 authorises "all necessary measures" to protect civilians. And right: we have a moral duty to take action.

Our objective in Libya has always been to stop the massacre of innocent civilians by Qadhafi and his troops. Avoiding civilian casualties is paramount in this aim. Qadhafi has lost all control; he should end the violence and go, so that Libyans can lead their country in its new chapter and elect a preferred government. Britain has pledged its support to NATO continuing its operation until we can be sure there is no longer a threat to civilians from Pro Qadhafi Forces.

Progress so far

NATO assumed full operating capability over all military operations in Libya on 31 March and there are now 34 nations providing a range of assistance in the form of military, logistical or financial support and humanitarian relief.

Since then more than 25,000 sorties have been conducted. This action has seriously degraded Qadhafi's military assets and prevented widespread massacres planned by Qadhafi's forces. Almost all of Libya has been seized by Free Libya Forces (FLF) but pockets of pro-Qadhafi forces still exist and the NTC has been working to negotiate a peaceful outcome.

Full details of the NATO action in Libya including a timeline of events can be found on the [NATO website](#)

Human Rights

The UK Government condemns all human rights violations. We have been clear with that all those committing human rights abuses and atrocities in Libya must be brought to justice. The NTC has stated many times its commitment to upholding human rights. The NTC is cooperating fully with the UN Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry which is investigating allegations of human rights abuses in Libya. The Government will continue to urge the NTC to take action to fulfil its international law obligations, to investigate all alleged abuses, to take action to prevent them and to bring all those who have committed abuses to justice.

Friends of Libya

A High-level Friends of Libya meeting was held on 20th September in New York. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon formally welcomed the National Transitional Council (NTC) as the legitimate delegation of Libya at the UN. Over 75 delegations in attendance gave strong messages of support for the NTC in their efforts to complete liberation and for a Libyan-led inclusive political process to deliver a pluralistic and democratic Libya. Participants also pressed for the need to continue to implement UN Security Council resolution 2009 and the UN co-ordinated stabilisation activities in support of the Libyan people.

[Full story – Friends of Libya meeting](#)

At the meeting in New York it was agreed that the Friends of Libya group would continue to meet in Tripoli, with a Ministerial meeting of the group within one year. The first technical meeting in Tripoli took place on 9 October, co-chaired by NTC Minister of Finance (Dr Tarhouni) and UN Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr Ian Martin, and was attended by various ambassadors and senior officials. Discussions focused on the importance of liberating Sirte from Qadhafi fighters, plans for the formation of the Transitional Government as well as the NTC's work with the UN to undertake coordinated needs assessment for post-conflict stabilisation and peacebuilding.

[The London Conference on Libya](#)

The London Conference on Libya took place on Tuesday 29 March 2011 and was chaired by the Foreign Secretary, William Hague.



[Wilton Park conference on Libya and human rights](#)

The human rights situation in Libya was discussed in a Wilton Park meeting at the Foreign Office on 11 April, which involved UK officials and a wide range of international partners.



[Eyewitness: voices from Libya](#)

Over recent months, the FCO has hosted a series of "Eyewitness" meetings, which sought to improve our understanding of the situation in Libya by focusing on particular regions and vulnerable groups.



[Chatham House event: the future of Libya](#)

Minister for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt said he "firmly believes that the Libyan people will achieve their vision for a free, prosperous and democratic Libya".

