

# INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP - NEW MEDIA RELEASE

## Immediate International Steps Needed to Stop Atrocities in Libya

**Brussels, 22 February 2011:** With credible reports of concerted deadly attacks against civilians committed by Libyan security forces, including the use of military aircraft to indiscriminately attack demonstrators, the international community must respond immediately.

For members of the world community, many of whom long condoned authoritarian regimes in the Arab world and only fully backed the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings once the outcome had become clear, Libya presents a critical test. So far, the Libyan regime has offered its people no prospect beyond submission, civil war or a blood bath; its actions have condemned it in the eyes of its own people and of the world.

Many have already denounced the violent acts, but actions must now follow words. Crisis Group recommends the following urgent steps:

- Imposing targeted sanctions against Muammar Qaddafi and family members as well as others involved in the repression, including an immediate assets freeze;
- Offering safe haven to Libyan aircraft pilots and other security personnel who refuse to carry out illegal regime orders to attack civilians;
- Cancelling all ongoing contracts and cooperation for the supply of military equipment and training to Libyan security forces;
- Imposing an international embargo to prevent the sale and delivery of any military equipment or support to Libyan security forces while refraining from any commercial sanctions that could harm civilians;
- In light of the intensity of the violence and its likely regional effects, the United Nations Security Council should:
  - strongly condemn Libya's resort to state violence against civilians and call on the Libyan government and security forces to immediately halt all such attacks and restore access for humanitarian flights to Libyan air space;
  - call on member states to take the above-mentioned actions;
  - establish an international commission of inquiry into alleged crimes against humanity in Libya since 1 February 2011, tasking it to investigate the conduct of the Libyan government and all its varied security forces, as well as allegations concerning the involvement of foreign mercenaries. The body should provide recommendations on steps to be taken by national and international authorities to ensure accountability for any crime;
  - plan the establishment of a no-fly zone under Chapter VII if aircraft attacks against civilians continue.

Individual nations, particularly those with close ties to Libya, and international actors -- such as the African Union, the Arab League, and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference -- should support these and other similar measures.

Moreover, Libya's neighbours should open their borders to provide humanitarian aid and safe haven to the wounded and to those fleeing violence.

People throughout the region are claiming their rights. In several countries, their actions have led to relatively peaceful transitions or to renewed dialogue toward reform. Libya's leaders have chosen a different path, with devastating consequences for their citizens. How the international community responds could help determine whether others opt to heed their people's demands or choose to cling to power at a high, and terrifying, cost.

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**Visit our website: <http://www.crisisgroup.org>**  
**Andrew Stroehlein (Brussels) +32 (0) 2 536 0071**  
**Kimberly Abbott (Washington) +1 202 785 1602**  
To contact Crisis Group media please click [here](#)

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The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation covering some 60 crisis-affected countries and territories across four continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

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