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The Report is the most extensive review of the African Union's peace missions ever conducted. It is based on detailed case studies and cross-cutting research, and draws on consultations with leading experts, peacekeepers, and mediators.

This Paper is a summary of research undertaken in support of the Project.

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# International interventions in Libya since 2011: Lessons learned

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## Summary:

In 2011, together with the support of regional and international actors, Libyans toppled a forty-two year-long brutal dictatorial regime. However, within just three years, the attempted democratic transition drifted into a civil war.

The failures to achieve a peaceful and democratic transition in Libya provide invaluable lessons for countries and international organizations aiming at maintaining peace and security in the region. Although each conflict and context are unique, the lessons learned from the Libyan case allow to highlight broadly applicable recommendations. To this end, this paper evaluates the nature and effectiveness of four key dimensions of the intervention of foreign actors in the Libyan conflict and its aftermaths: Military interventions; mediation; state-building; and counter-terrorism.

Beginning with the decision to intervene, allegations of mass violence and killings should be closely scrutinized, verified and confirmed by multiple independent sources (e.g. journalists; INGOs) before they can serve as the basis for authorizing a military intervention. When the conditions warrant such an intervention, in line with the provisions in Chapter VII and/or VIII of its Charter, the United Nations should coordinate its peace and security initiatives with the regional organizations affected by the conflict and promote regional attempts at achieving a peaceful settlement, before resorting to military action.

If the situation requires the use of force, the international mandate should reflect the principle of multilateralism, whereby multiple states, including as many of the regional stakeholders as possible, coordinate the actions to be undertaken in accordance with the set of principles they agreed upon. The mandate itself should be clear and unequivocal in stating the scope and nature of the military intervention. In no case the scope should include political objectives such as regime change.

The intervening parties should be invested with the responsibility to enforce the arms embargo and/or the broader sanction regime that may be put in place. This responsibility should entail sanctioning third countries breaching this regime and, thereby turning the domestic conflict into a regional proxy war, or being held responsible for the failure to do so.

The short-term objective of protecting civilians from imminent threats should not detract from the long-term objective of ensuring the peace, stability and development of their country. Therefore, military operations should – as appropriate - be carried out in conjunction with dialogue, mediation, sanctions, embargoes and diplomatic efforts and all of these efforts should serve the long-term goals of peace, stabilization and development. To this end, comprehensive conflict analysis and planning of the post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction should be the starting point for international involvement and drive international interventions.

Mediation efforts should be unified into a single, broadly supported initiative, which should be at the core of international peace and security efforts before, during and after a conflict takes place and. In particular, the timing and nature of international judicial actions (notably ICC initiatives) and that of armed interventions should serve mediation efforts rather than impede them.

In post-conflict settings marked by a very low institutional capacity and a multiplicity of localized conflicts, mediation and dialogue efforts should not

stop when one side emerges victorious from the conflict, nor should they be confined to the national level. Even though a national conflict may have been resolved, a localized conflict whose roots extend across society and territory can compromise the peace and stability of the entire country. Mediation efforts should involve all key local stakeholders (i.e. civil society; tribal and religious leaders; representatives of marginalized groups; and local administrators) and traditional mechanisms.

In terms of post-conflict state-building, if the above-mentioned analysis and planning indicates that the country would face severe instability and would lack the capacity to provide a minimum measure of justice and security, military actions that accelerate the evolution of the conflict should only take place if and when international actors have devised and agreed to mandate and deploy a post-conflict mission with a strong political mandate; a proactive role and a credible peacekeeping capacity.

In countries lacking central state institutions, such a mission would provide the time and the secure space needed for the development of the core national political institution. Meanwhile, the bulk of international attention and aid should be allocated to the development of local governance, civil society and hybrid security arrangements. The latter are highly contextual mechanisms that combine remnants of the police and the army with selected non-state armed groups that are willing to work under the oversight and in defence of local state institutions and who enjoy some popular support. Taken together, these represent the only achievable measures for providing peace, stability and development in the short-term.

Counter-terrorism (henceforth referred to as CT) initiatives should not be kept separate from all other aspects of international engagement. Unilateral CT interventions serve the limited objectives of the countries conducting them, often with disastrous effects on the social and political stability of the target country. Therefore, CT strategies should be evaluated

in light of the comprehensive political objectives. And although UN and AU peacekeepers should not engage in CT operations themselves, these should not escape the principle of multilateralism and the purview of international organizations. Furthermore, given their impact, they should be conducted in partnership with and through coordination with local authorities.

Overall, this analysis highlights the importance of two central principles for the success of international interventions aimed at achieving peace and security in Africa: comprehensiveness and multilateralism.

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