



# International Actors in Libya (2011-2019): A Factor for Stability or Destabilisation?

Flavia De Lucia Lumeno

Associate Professor, Department of Politics, Law and Social Sciences, History of International Relations, Professor of Euro-Mediterranean Relations and Contemporary History, Niccolò Cusano University, Via Don Carlo Gnocchi, 3, 00166 Rome, Italy.

## Article Details

Article Type: Review Article

Received date: 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2025

Accepted date: 06<sup>th</sup> February, 2025

Published date: 08<sup>th</sup> February, 2025

**\*Corresponding Author:** Flavia De Lucia Lumeno, Associate Professor, Department of Politics, Law and Social Sciences, History of International Relations, Professor of Euro-Mediterranean Relations and Contemporary History, Niccolò Cusano University, Via Don Carlo Gnocchi, 3, 00166 Rome, Italy.

**Citation:** Lumeno, F. D. L., (2025). International Actors in Libya (2011-2019): A Factor for Stability or Destabilisation?. *J Poli Sci Publi Opin*, 3(1): 116. doi: <https://doi.org/10.33790/jpspo1100116>.

**Copyright:** ©2025, This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

## Abstract

The Libyan nation is currently experiencing a challenging transition from a state of war to one of peace, since the collapse of the Qaddafi Jamahiriya in 2011, although with weak reconstruction efforts. With frequent interruptions due to internal political and military fragmentation and the interference of numerous foreign states, the peace process has seen the active participation of supranational bodies such as the United Nations and, to a lesser extent, the European Union.

The political and military events that have taken place in Libya over the last thirteen years have created a situation of profound instability. This has led the international community to make an even harsher judgement than that of the "rogue state", born out of the anti-Western attitude of the Jamahiriya period, i.e. the classification of Libya as a "failed state". Despite the implementation of numerous peace-building policies sponsored by Western states, and despite the implementation of civilian and military missions directly on the ground, the situation in Libya remains catastrophic today.

An investigation of the *modus operandi* followed by the United Nations, through the UNSMIL mission, and by the European Union, highlights the contradictions between the pursuit of particularistic interests of certain European actors (notably Italy and France) and a vague EU diplomatic action, incapable of opposing the unscrupulous initiatives of other external actors, including first and foremost Turkey and Russia.

A thorough examination of the primary documents of international bodies, particularly the EU and the UN, in conjunction with that of the actions of the major state actors involved, reveals that Libya's stability is imperilled not only by the consequences of years of corrupted government, the recent conflict, and the vulnerability of domestic institutions, but also by the actions of global entities and the interference of external state actors. Through their manipulation of power dynamics, these actors can represent a significant impediment to the genuine pacification of the nation.

**Keywords:** Libya – Italy – EU – UNSMIL – Mediterranean – Turkey – Russia – US

## Introduction

The Libyan crisis, which commenced with the 2011 uprising against Muammar al-Qaddafi's regime, has evolved into a complex and protracted conflict with far-reaching consequences for regional stability and international relations.

The origins of the current situation can be traced back to the 2011 NATO-backed intervention that led to the overthrow of Qaddafi's authoritarian regime. While initially hailed as a success, the power vacuum left by Qaddafi's fall quickly gave way to political fragmentation and security challenges. The absence of strong state institutions and the proliferation of armed groups created a volatile environment ripe for conflict [1].

The period from 2014 to 2020 was characterised by a civil war between rival political factions, primarily the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli and the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by General Khalifa Haftar in the east. This conflict was further complicated by the involvement of various international actors, each supporting different factions.

A significant turning point was reached in October 2020 with the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the warring parties, a development that was facilitated by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). This was followed by the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in March 2021.

The failure to hold elections has exposed the fragility of Libya's political transition and the deep-seated divisions that continue to plague the country [2]. While the humanitarian situation in Libya has improved since the height of the conflict, it remains precarious. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), approximately 300,000 people in Libya required humanitarian assistance in 2023, representing a significant decrease from 1.3 million in 2016 [3]. However, new challenges have emerged, including the impacts of climate change,

as evidenced by the devastating floods caused by Storm Daniel in September 2023.

The Libyan crisis has had considerable ramifications for regional migration patterns and human rights. The North African nation of Libya has emerged as a pivotal transit point for migrants seeking to reach the European continent, resulting in a multitude of tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea. A 2023 report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) emphasised the escalating number of fatalities and missing people cases along the Central Mediterranean route [4].

The future of Libya's stability remains uncertain. The nation continues to grapple with pervasive political divisions, debilitating economic challenges, and pernicious security threats. Sustainable peace in Libya will require not only political reconciliation but also comprehensive security sector reform and economic diversification.

#### **From an international point of view**

The Libyan crisis has had significant ramifications for regional migration patterns and human rights. The nation has become a key transit point for migrants attempting to reach Europe, leading to numerous tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea. A 2023 report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) highlighted the increasing number of deaths and disappearances on the Central Mediterranean route [4].

Looking ahead, the prospects for Libya's stability remain uncertain. The nation continues to grapple with pervasive political divisions, debilitating economic challenges, and pernicious security threats. As Frederic Wehrey and Anas El Gomati argue in their 2024 analysis for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "sustainable peace in Libya will require not only political reconciliation but also comprehensive security sector reform and economic diversification" [5].

The Libyan crisis, therefore, from 2011 to 2024, can be considered a complex interplay of domestic, regional, and international factors, and while progress has been made in reducing violence and establishing a framework for political dialogue, significant challenges remain. The international community's continued engagement, coupled with genuine efforts at national reconciliation, will be crucial in determining Libya's future trajectory.

The involvement of regional powers has served to further complicate the situation. Engel (2018) has analysed how countries such as Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have supported different Libyan factions, thereby transforming the country into a battleground for competing regional interests. This external interference has rendered the achievement of a lasting political settlement in Libya increasingly arduous.

The European Union's role in post-intervention Libya has been a subject of particular scholarly interest. In this context, Loschi and Raineri [6] have examined the EU's efforts to manage migration flows from Libya, arguing that the Union's policies have prioritised short-term security concerns over long-term stability and human rights considerations. This migration-focused approach has had a discernible impact on the EU's engagement with Libya, frequently giving rise to contentious collaborations with local militias and detention centres.

The United States' approach to Libya has evolved over time. Vandewalle [7] discusses the shift from the Obama administration's "leading from behind" approach during the 2011 intervention to subsequent administrations' more disengaged stances. This shift in U.S. policy has had ramifications for international endeavours to stabilise Libya and combat terrorism in the region.

The humanitarian consequences of the ongoing instability have been severe. Amnesty International [8] has reported widespread human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, torture, and human

trafficking. These issues have been exacerbated by the absence of effective governance and the proliferation of armed groups across the country.

The Libyan crisis has had significant ramifications for neighbouring countries. Lacher [9] explores how the instability in Libya has affected the Sahel region, highlighting the spill over of arms and fighters into countries like Mali and Niger. This regional destabilisation has implications for international security and has prompted increased counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel.

The ongoing conflict has also had economic repercussions. Costantini [10] conducted an analysis of the impact of political instability on Libya's oil industry, which has experienced significant disruptions since 2011. The fluctuations in Libyan oil production have had implications for global energy markets and Libya's economic recovery.

International diplomatic efforts to resolve the Libyan crisis have been characterised by both progress and setbacks. The UN-brokered Libyan Political Agreement of 2015 aimed to establish a unified government, but its implementation has been hindered by ongoing conflict and political divisions. Mezran and Miller [11,12] assess the challenges facing international mediation efforts in Libya, including the competing interests of external actors and the fragmentation of local power structures.

In recent years, Russia's role in Libya has come to the fore as a significant factor. Katz [13] examines Russia's increasing involvement in Libya, including its support for General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). This Russian engagement has added another layer of complexity to the international dynamics surrounding the Libyan conflict.

The issue of justice and accountability for crimes committed during and after the 2011 intervention remains contentious. Kersten (2015) discusses the challenges of pursuing international criminal justice in Libya, including the tensions between the International Criminal Court's (ICC) mandate and local justice mechanisms. The inability to effectively address past atrocities has implications for reconciliation efforts and the establishment of the rule of law in post-Qaddafi Libya.

Researchers have also explored the rapid formation of civil society in Libya after the collapse of the Qaddafi dictatorship. Basir and Auster [14] conceptualise this context as one of institutional chaos and the need for reconstruction, examining the resources, actors, and processes involved. The findings of this research offer invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities for the establishment of democratic institutions in a post-conflict setting.

The political upheavals have had a significant impact on Libya's oil and gas industry. Bahgat [15] conducts an analysis of the repercussions on production, consumption, shipping, and investment in the sector. Comprehending these economic dynamics is imperative for evaluating Libya's prospects for recovery and the interests of international actors in the country's resources.

The absence of a coherent political philosophy and social contract has been identified as a major challenge for Libya's future. Masoud [16] has expressed concerns regarding the absence of articulated social contract principles and a political philosophy grounded in public principles of justice, which are capable of addressing the aggregate interests of Libyans, particularly in Eastern Libya. This absence of a comprehensive political philosophy has far-reaching implications for Libya's capacity to achieve enduring stability and reconciliation.

Jeursen and Borgh [17] provide analysis of the transitional period of 2011-2012, focusing on the capacity and strategy of national actors to build state structures and navigate the complex landscape of security actors, control, power, and authority. Their work identifies key security actors and the dynamic interactions among them as they sought to expand and institutionalise their networks and influence.

In conclusion, an examination of the extant literature on international intervention in Libya post-2011 reveals a complex and multifaceted crisis that has defied simple solutions. Scholars have drawn attention to the unintended consequences of the initial intervention, the challenges of post-conflict stabilisation, the impact of regional and global power politics, and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The Libyan case study thus prompts critical interrogations of the efficacy of humanitarian intervention, the responsibilities of intervening powers in the aftermath of regime change, and the challenges of state-building in complex, fragmented societies.

One of the most notable benefits of international counterterrorism efforts in Libya has been the reduction of terrorist activity. For example, the US-led 'Operation Odyssey Lightning' in 2016 targeted ISIS strongholds in Sirte, eliminating approximately 800 militants over several months and driving the group out of a key stronghold [18]. The success of this operation demonstrated the strategic value of precision strikes, combined with local partnerships, in mitigating the threat posed by terrorist networks.

Efforts to secure Libya's vital oil infrastructure have had measurable economic benefits. By 2012, Libya's oil production had recovered to around 1.5 million barrels per day, close to pre-2011 levels [10]. This was crucial for the country's economy, as oil accounted for over 95% of Libya's export revenues. The Waha and Sharara oil fields - two of the largest in the country - played a pivotal role in maintaining this level of production, despite periodic disruptions caused by local protests and conflict [19].

In addition to economic stabilisation, counter-terrorism operations have contributed to regional security. For example, the containment of armed groups in the southern regions of Libya reduced the flow of arms and fighters into the Sahel, where instability in Mali and Niger had been exacerbated by spillover effects. By limiting these flows, the interventions reduced regional instability and reduced the operational capacity of extremist groups operating throughout North Africa.

While international counterterrorism efforts yielded tactical successes, they also incurred significant economic, humanitarian, and political costs. Economically, the prolonged instability in Libya deterred foreign investment and disrupted key industries beyond the energy sector. For example, TotalEnergies' \$450 million investment in the Waha concessions faced substantial risks, including temporary shutdowns due to protests and security concerns. Additionally, the broader economic cost of instability—including infrastructure damage and the loss of tourism revenues—was estimated to exceed \$50 billion between 2011 and 2019.

Humanitarian consequences were profound and far-reaching. By 2016, approximately 1.3 million Libyans—roughly 20% of the population—required humanitarian assistance, including food, water, and medical supplies [3]. Displacement was another critical issue, with over 200,000 people forced to flee their homes due to conflict by the end of 2017. Civilian casualties from airstrikes and other military actions further exacerbated the crisis. The United Nations reported that in 2019 alone, over 200 civilians were killed and 350 injured in conflict-related incidents, underscoring the human cost of prolonged intervention [3].

Politically, international counterterrorism efforts often undermined Libya's sovereignty and exacerbated its political fragmentation. France's support for General Khalifa Haftar, for instance, sought to secure access to oil resources but deepened divisions between the eastern and western factions. Haftar's forces, bolstered by foreign military support, launched a protracted offensive against Tripoli in 2019, leading to widespread destruction and a further erosion of trust between rival political groups. Turkey's military backing of the Government of National Accord (GNA) in response to Haftar's advances highlighted the geopolitical rivalries that turned Libya into

a proxy battleground. This external interference not only prolonged the conflict but also hindered efforts to establish a unified government capable of addressing the nation's pressing challenges.

The complexity of proxy conflicts in Libya significantly hampered international mediation efforts. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) faced significant obstacles in fostering dialogue among the rival factions due to the competing interests of foreign powers. The presence of Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group, estimated at over 1,200 fighters in 2019, further complicated the situation by providing tactical support to Haftar's forces and undermining ceasefire agreements [5]. These developments highlighted the challenges of achieving a political settlement in a conflict increasingly shaped by external actors.

### Theoretical Models

Geopolitical game theory provides a framework for analysing the strategic interactions between states and non-state actors in the Libyan conflict. The dynamics between the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) resemble a classic prisoner's dilemma. Despite recognising the potential benefits of cooperation, mistrust and competition for resources and power have led to sub-optimal outcomes. External actors, including France, Turkey, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, have further complicated this dynamic by pursuing their own strategic objectives. The theory highlights how rational actors, driven by security and resource considerations, often perpetuate conflict in the absence of trust and enforceable agreements [5].

Alliance theory, in particular Stephen Walt's balance of threat framework, provides insights into the formation of alliances in Libya. External powers have aligned themselves with local factions based on perceived threats rather than power alone. For example, Egypt and the UAE supported General Khalifa Haftar and the Libyan National Army (LNA) to counter the influence of Islamist groups, while Turkey supported the GNA to expand its regional influence and counterbalance its rivals. This theory highlights how threat perceptions shape alliance behaviour and influence the course of conflicts [20].

Neorealism accentuates the anarchic nature of the international system, wherein states pursue the maximisation of their security and power. From this perspective, NATO's intervention in Libya was not solely propelled by humanitarian concerns, but rather by the strategic objective of maintaining stability in the Mediterranean region. Correspondingly, the involvement of external actors, such as Russia and Turkey, mirrors their aspiration to assert influence and secure strategic footholds in North Africa. The theory elucidates the persistence of conflict as a consequence of competing interests within an anarchic system [21].

Liberal theories concentrate on the function of international institutions and norms in encouraging cooperation and stability. The intervention in Libya was partly justified under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, which emphasises the international community's obligation to prevent atrocities. However, the subsequent fragmentation and lack of coordinated international support highlight the limitations of liberal frameworks when states prioritize national interests over collective action [22].

### The main actors

When analysing the causes of the ongoing crisis that Libya is currently experiencing, it is crucial that the role of foreign actors is given particular attention in order to gain a full comprehension of the dynamics that have led to the protracted state of instability in the nation.

Since the onset of the Libyan crisis in February 2011, a series of external actors have exerted a profound influence on the evolution of



the uprisings against the Qaid and, more recently, on the events that have shaped the nation's history. This influence can be so significant that the Libyan issue can be regarded, in various contexts, as an example of 'internationalisation' of the conflict [23].

From 2016 onwards, two blocs of countries more or less openly asserted themselves around the opposing sides: the first, in support of the government in Tripoli, initially consisted of Italy and Qatar, to which Turkey was added in November 2019, following a gradual official march of rapprochement. In contrast, the second bloc, supporting the government in Tobruk and thus General Haftar, comprised a more heterogeneous group of states, including France, Russia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, as well as Jordan, Sudan and Syria. The United States of America adopted a more detached stance, particularly in the aftermath of the violent events in Benghazi in 2012.

In order to comprehend the strategic interests of each of the involved countries, it is necessary to reconstruct, albeit synthetically due to the complexity of the subject, the stages of these actors' approach to the Libyan chessboard.

### **Egypt and United Arab Emirates**

Since 2014, countries such as Egypt and the United Arab Emirates on the one hand, and Qatar on the other, have intervened, respectively and in ways different, supporting the eastern faction the former and the western one the latter.

The Egyptian and UAE governments have provided military assistance, including arms and military equipment, while Qatar has focused its support on a different approach, providing a financial channel and political backing for the government in Tripoli.

In the context of the geopolitical dynamics between the eastern and western regions of Libya, the establishment of the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli has been instrumental in reshaping the balance of power. A notable escalation in support for General Haftar has been observed among the bloc of countries favouring the eastern region. This shift in support has been facilitated by significant military assistance from France and the United Arab Emirates, including the supply of armoured vehicles, armaments, ammunition, and valuable aircraft.

In addition, a UN Security Council report confirmed the United Arab Emirates' establishment of a covert base in Libya in 2016, located in Al-Khadim [24] in the eastern part of the country, with connections to military bases in Benina, near Benghazi, and to the base north of the Siwa oasis within Egyptian territory. In addition, the UAE had installed Russian-made Pantsir S-1 defence systems at the Al-Jufra base in the Fezzan region, which served as a drone launch pad against Tripoli targets situated approximately 600 kilometres away. Between March and November 2017, the Al Khadim base underwent further upgrades, including the construction of checkpoints and logistics buildings.

In the same period, France sent a special forces contingent under the supervision of the Directorate-General for External Security (DGES), whose presence in eastern Libya was officially confirmed in July 2016 following the crash of a helicopter near Benghazi that resulted in the loss of three soldiers [25]. French military operations in Libyan territory were mainly attributable to clandestine reconnaissance missions and sniper elimination of enemy formations [5].

In July 2019, during Haftar's offensive to take Tripoli, France was the protagonist of an episode that caused it great international embarrassment, further instilling doubts about the European country's role in Libya. In fact, rival forces of the Tripoli government found a consignment of four American-made Javelin anti-tank missiles in the hands of Haftar's Libyan National Army forces [26]. A French military advisor was rapid to refute claims that the transalpine country was responsible for supplying the weapons, in contravention

of both the sales agreement with the United States, the producer of these systems, and the UN Security Council embargo. However, the French government was subsequently compelled to acknowledge that the missiles found were part of its military arsenal, but justified the discovery on the grounds that they were disused and stored in a warehouse awaiting destruction.

The assistance provided by foreign allies to General Haftar gradually took the form of targeted military actions and open diplomatic support in order to safeguard strategic interests in the region, mainly related to the production and distribution of oil products.

In this regard, France and the United Arab Emirates have been instrumental in supporting Haftar's offensive operations in the Fezzan region and the oil crescent, where a significant proportion of Libya's oil production is concentrated. These actions have been justified as a necessary intervention to restore order among local communities, citing the perceived inadequacy of the Tripoli-based government to do so.

Notably, Egypt has been and continues to be a particularly active player in the Libyan scenario, perceiving the Sahel country as a natural extension of its own interests. Since 2014, Egypt has been openly supporting General Haftar's forces by supplying obsolete Russian-made aircraft such as Mi-8 helicopters and MiG-21 fighter jets. In addition, Haftar has acknowledged on multiple occasions the close cooperation with Cairo, which has obtained intelligence information and military assistance [27].

Following the 2011 uprising, the Egyptian government adopted a securitarian approach to political action in Libya, with the primary objective being the safeguarding of Egyptian security and stability. This approach was complemented by an ideological stance, which was aimed at opposing all groups drawing inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood, both in Egypt and Libya. This approach has been operationalised through various actions, including measures aimed at securing the 1,200 km of the western border (particularly in counter-terrorism and combating illegal trafficking), the protection of Egyptian citizens working in Libya, and the support of those forces in Cyrenaica who align ideologically with Cairo.

However, Egypt's commitment to a Libyan national political dialogue aimed at ensuring the unity of the state has also been driven by the desire to protect its interests in the neighbouring country. This commitment has taken the form of pragmatic support for General Haftar, who is regarded as the ideal instrument to implement this strategy.

In the recent period, Egypt has modified its strategic course, opting to adopt a mediation role in order to maintain its influence in the crisis, in order to avoid the rise of other external actors.

This shift is evidenced by the eleven memorandums of cooperation in various domains that were signed in April 2021, marking the culmination of a historic visit by an Egyptian delegation to Tripoli. The delegation, comprising institutional and business figures from Cairo, had not visited Libya since 2010 [28].

Similarly, the United Arab Emirates interpreted their involvement in Libya as a significant chapter in the struggle for Middle Eastern hegemony, pitting them, in conjunction with Saudi Arabia and Egypt, against Turkey and Qatar.

As in the case of Egypt, the salient feature of Emirati activism in Libya has been the support of all those factions' intent on opposing Islamist movements, in most cases belonging to the large family of the Muslim Brotherhood. Following the year 2011, the entire region of North Africa served as the primary theatre for the most significant ideological confrontation between the Saudi-Emirati alliance, to which Egypt also contributed, and the Turkish-Qatari axis. The primary objective of this confrontation was to curtail the influence of political Islam throughout the region.

This position underwent its first concrete development since 2014, when Abu Dhabi and Cairo provided support for an air raid by forces aligned with Haftar against political and military targets in Tripolitania. Since that time, the UAE has oscillated between unilateral stances and diplomatic, albeit somewhat biased, expressions of support, seeking to establish broad and pragmatic alliances, particularly with France and Russia, as well as Egypt, in order to provide financial, military and political support to General Haftar in his actions against forces in western Libya. These endeavours have contributed to Haftar's success in gaining control over a significant portion of Cyrenaica and Fezzan. Additionally, the UAE's involvement has enhanced its international standing, gaining weight, influence and reputation on the global stage. This support reached its zenith in the UAE's overt backing of the attempted incursion on Tripoli, which subsequently stalled.

In light of the evolving regional and international dynamics, Abu Dhabi has adopted a more nuanced approach, shifting from a robust assertive stance to a more accommodating one, and has formally committed to engaging in dialogue with both Libyan factions engaged in conflict. This strategic realignment was underpinned by a pragmatic approach, aligning with the evolving regional and Middle Eastern context. The primary objective of this shift was to facilitate negotiations and establish compromises between the warring factions. This shift in approach has been particularly evident since 2021, when Abu Dhabi supported the UN-sponsored Libyan political dialogue and maintained this approach even after the failure of the elections in the same year. Despite the absence of developments and the tendency for the crisis to intensify, in December 2022, the United Arab Emirates reaffirmed its commitment to support the efforts of the UN Special Representative for the stabilization of the country. This dynamic has been further cultivated by the resumption of diplomatic relations between the aforementioned Special Representative, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt with Turkey and Qatar.

## Russia

Since 2014, Russia has been particularly active in Libya, sending personnel, logistical equipment, military advisers, and intelligence officers to assist Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army. The impetus behind Russia's intervention in Libya can be traced to two primary factors. Firstly, Russia seeks to atone for its failure to veto United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, which established a no-fly zone over Libya [29]. This resolution was widely interpreted by Western nations as a strategic victory. Secondly, Russia seeks to assert its dominance in the region by leveraging its position as a bridgehead for the Sahel.

Historically, Russia has prioritized access to landfall points in the central Mediterranean region as a strategic objective, driven by its expansionist ambitions. Libyan ports such as Tobruk and Darnah have historically been regarded as pivotal for the Russian naval force to expand its operational reach, particularly in conjunction with the Syrian ports of Tartus and Latakia.

In addition to the aforementioned points, a compelling rationale for Russia's ongoing military engagement in the nation is the potential for strategic exploitation of its substantial energy resources. This is facilitated through port concessions and ad hoc energy agreements, which are often accompanied by the provision of military assistance to General Haftar's forces [30].

The military intervention, which commenced in September 2019 and is primarily executed through private military companies (PMSCs), has been a far more significant development than economic policy. These entities, which are instrumental in the Kremlin's "hybrid warfare" strategy, have likely been in operation since 2016, albeit in a non-combat capacity. As early as 2017, the international press noted the presence of Russian gunmen from a company called RSB Group 100, which provided security and demining services for Haftar's

forces and helped Haftar's forces maintain Soviet-era weapons and assets. In contrast, the military company known as Wagner Group, now officially merged into Africa Corps, first appeared on the Libyan chessboard in the first half of 2018. Initially, Wagner's role was to provide training, security services and battlefield advice. A few months after appearing in eastern Libya, Wagner also appeared in Tripolitania, at the al-Wattiyah airbase, then controlled by Libyan National Army forces.

Estimates of the number of Wagner fighters deployed in Libya have ranged over time from 300 to several thousands [31]. They have coordinated their actions on behalf of the Russian government with other Russian military personnel deployed in Libya to support Haftar's forces, as evidenced by the construction of fortifications and networks stretching up to 70 kilometres from Sirte to the Al Jufra airbase [32].

In itself, Wagner's deployment in Libya has not delivered a decisive victory for Haftar and the Libyan National Army (LNA), although an increasing presence on the front lines of the battle for Tripoli, which began in September 2019, has helped to move the needle in Haftar's favour. The US ambassador to Libya himself, Richard Norland, called the Russian presence a 'game changer' and confirmation that they were achieving a low-risk, high-reward strategic advantage in Libya.

As a result of Turkey's increased involvement in supporting the GNA, Moscow decided to deploy Mig-29A aircraft and a Sukhoi SU-24 supersonic attack aircraft from a controlled airbase in Syria to Libya between May and July 2020, operating from the Al Jufra and Al Khadim air bases. This equipment, along with armoured components for the benefit of the Russian private security company Wagner, will allow Russia to operate militarily in the region without formal involvement, thereby denying or downplaying any direct involvement or possible Russian casualties in Libya [33]. In July, US intelligence confirmed, based on satellite imagery, that Russia continued to violate arms embargo resolution 1970 (2011) by sending SA-22 air defence systems and armoured vehicles to Libya [34].

This low-cost strategy allowed Moscow to become an indispensable power broker in a country where it had seemingly lost all spheres of influence [35].

Another country that pledged its support for the eastern deployment is Saudi Arabia, which promised a substantial financial contribution to support General Haftar's cause during a meeting in Riyadh in March 2019 between Haftar and the top leadership of the Saudi kingdom [36].

## The United States

Regarding the role of the United States of America, following the death of Ambassador Stevens and the bloody events in Benghazi, the U.S. presence in Libya gradually declined until even the relocation of its own U.S. diplomatic mission from Tripoli to Tunis in 2015, due to growing instability. Despite this, Washington continued to strongly support the UN-led peace process by officially recognizing the government of Tripoli.

Conversely, the United States never severed relations with General Haftar, whose citizenship it holds, by the way, and identified him as an ideal figure to counter the threat of jihadist terrorism in Libya.

In the wake of its own counterterrorism policy, on August 1, 2016, the North American country launched the military mission "Operation Odyssey Lighting," executed by the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), at the direct request of the Tripoli government in order to eliminate the presence of Daesh in Libya [18].

After Donald Trump took office in the White House on January 20, 2017, the U.S. administration's attitude toward the Libyan issue was mixed. Initially, the president declared that Libya was not a problem for the United States, which was engaged in much more challenging

Middle Eastern contexts and the containment and countering of other rivals such as Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran [37, 38].

Despite maintaining the recognition of Libya's western region as a legitimate interlocutor, in April 2019, President Trump authorised General Haftar's offensive against Tripoli following a meeting in Washington on 9 April 2019 with Egyptian President Al-Sisi, the primary supporter of the forces in the east.

The motivation behind the abrupt shift in the US president's stance can be attributed primarily to the fact that the US disengagement in the region had created significant opportunities for other competing actors, particularly Russia, which has overtly expressed its ambition to establish a naval base on the Libyan coast, a strategic hindrance to Mediterranean stability.

In light of the significant failure of General Haftar's military operation, attributable to Turkish military intervention in support of the Tripolese forces, and the subsequent status quo in the country, the United States maintained a more moderate stance on the Libyan issue, considering it a lower priority on its diplomatic agenda. The broader context in which the issue was viewed was that of ensuring Mediterranean security and containing the increasingly aggressive expansionist aspirations of Russia in the region.

## Turkey

As noted above, the country that has played the most decisive role in tipping the balance on the ground is undoubtedly Turkey. Ankara has never hidden its ambitions to become the leading Mediterranean power and to seize the opportunity to extend its long reach into the Sahel.

During the turbulent months of the 2011 uprising, after initially supporting Qaddafi, Turkey condemned the regime's violence and sent its own naval contingent to take part in NATO military operations.

After the death of the Qaid and in the later stages of the conflict, Turkey focused its action on infrastructure support for the Transitional National Council and, after the establishment of the Government of Accord, pledged its support to the new executive [39]. Since the start of Haftar's offensive against Tripoli, Turkey has officially kept a low profile but continued to covertly supply arms to Tripoli forces [8].

In a crescendo of tensions, Turkish interference in the dynamics of the conflict became increasingly evident. In November 2019, when it was already clear that General Haftar's forces would conquer Tripoli in a short time, thanks to the military support of the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and the field operations of thousands of Russian mercenaries from the then Russian private company Wagner, Ankara decided to intervene directly in the conflict.

There were several reasons for this: on the one hand, the Turkish government invoked its strong historical ties with Libya; on the other, it accused General Haftar of staging a veritable coup against legitimately recognised institutions; finally, direct military intervention was justified by an official request from the Government of National Accord.

In reality, the military action was linked to the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), which represented Turkey's real strategic objective, namely to assert its interests as a regional power in Libya [40]. The most significant memorandum, which garnered considerable criticism and led to substantial protests in Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and Israel, is the one pertaining to the redefinition of the maritime borders between Libya and Turkey. This memorandum involved a redrawing of the maritime boundaries between the two nations, resulting in the establishment of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The memorandum of 27 November 2019 delineated the new maritime borders at 18.6 nautical miles (approximately 35 kilometres) within which the two countries can exclusively exercise economic

and energy cooperation, allowing Turkey to conduct explorations in a much larger portion of the eastern Mediterranean, ranging from the southwestern part of the Anatolian peninsula to the northeastern coast of Libya. On 13 October 2022, Libya and Turkey renewed the memorandum, providing for further cooperation in hydrocarbon exploration in Libyan territorial waters and on Libyan soil and in bilateral scientific, technological, legal, administrative and commercial fields. The other MoU concerned military cooperation, under which Turkey guaranteed, and still guarantees, the sharing of military expertise, training, joint exercises and logistical support.

In this context, on 17 August 2020, Turkey, in collaboration with Qatar, concluded an agreement with the Tripolese executive aimed at further strengthening military cooperation and enhancing the military capabilities of Libyan institutions, reinforcing its strategic presence at the Al-Watiya military airport, located a mere 27 kilometres from the Tunisian border, as well as at the Misurata naval base, which has already been utilised by its contingent in support of western Libya [41].

It is also noteworthy that, in order to consolidate its influence over the government in Tripoli, both financially and otherwise, Turkey signed a memorandum with the Central Bank of Libya in August 2020 to enhance economic cooperation between the two nations [42].

## The European actors and the difficulties of a common foreign policy

As demonstrated in the preceding section, the incremental escalation in the participation of regional powers within the Libyan context has been identified as a salient factor in the persistent absence of European countries' unity. To date, European nations have demonstrated an inability to provide substantive support to the UN-led process, nor to establish a unified forum for dialogue that would facilitate the resolution of differences among the various Libyan actors.

In 2011, under the leadership of President Nicolas Sarkozy, France seized the opportunity presented by the initial revolts in Benghazi to re-establish its long-lost position in Libya. However, the impossibility to effectively influence and direct the Libyan revolution in a manner consistent with its interests led to a de facto withdrawal from the North African country by the end of 2012. This was followed by a return in late 2014, driven in part by a desire to enhance its reputation with its primary client in the defence industry, the United Arab Emirates, and to support the Egyptian- and UAE-sponsored Haftar [43].

The fragmentation of European diplomacy is chiefly characterised by the dualistic vision advocated by France and Italy, in which their respective economic, political and security interests have frequently prevailed over the search for a common ground for dialogue. This is based on the awareness that the Libyan chaos and its repercussions in the wider Mediterranean region represent a common challenge. Since President Macron took office in 2017, Paris has adopted a more assertive and unilateral approach to the Libyan dossier. The fundamental tenet of this strategy entailed the promotion of General Haftar to the position of political interlocutor in the Libyan crisis, thereby ensuring the provision of 'open' political support – a support that, prior to this, the General had lacked.

France thus sought to assert its leadership in the diplomatic process, determining the timing and modalities of negotiations unilaterally, even to the extent of disregarding minimal coordination with its European partners. This approach effectively superseded the strategic guidelines established by the High Representative of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, thereby rendering them obsolete and outdated.

On 25 June 2017, Macron took a unilateral diplomatic initiative, excluding European partners and institutions, by organising a summit in Paris with Al-Serraj and General Haftar. This initiative, however,



contributed little to resolving the crisis, other than renewing accusations of connivance with Islamist fringes by the commander of the eastern faction. The meeting was a prelude to a further French diplomatic initiative that was subject to censure from many quarters.

In this regard, the Paris International Conference on Libya, held on 29 May 2018, is noteworthy. The conference saw the attendance of the leaders of the two rival factions, as well as the president of the House of Representatives and the president of the High Council of State.

Representatives from various international institutions, including the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council, as well as representatives from Italy, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, were invited to attend. The outcome of the conference was a vague declaration agreed upon by the opposing factions that set yet another attempt at presidential and parliamentary elections in Libya for 10 December 2018.

It is noteworthy that this agreement was not formally endorsed, thereby affording it an informal character and underscoring the pervasive mistrust and absence of political recognition among the parties involved. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the French initiative had committed a grave error in judgment in attempting to hold elections in Libya by the end of 2018, despite the country being in a state of legal vacuum and lacking the approval of a new constitution to regulate the functioning of institutions and the division of powers. Moreover, the initiative was met with a reserved response from the UN organisation, which, while acknowledging the Paris Conference in its official declaration dated 6 June, made no reference to future Libyan elections, incautiously alluded to. According to the UN, the priority was to stabilise Libya and then organise new elections, rather than the other way around, as events had so far shown [44].

As demonstrated, France had been providing both official and unofficial support to the Haftar regime, with the primary motivation being the assurance of oil supply. Prior to the conflict, the French oil company Total was producing approximately 55,000 barrels of crude oil per day in Libya. In 2010, France imported 15% of Libya's oil exports, emphasising the country's reliance on Libyan crude [45]. Despite a return to pre-2011 production levels by 2012, challenges were encountered in subsequent years due to political instability and social unrest. In 2018, TotalEnergies acquired Marathon Oil Libya Limited for \$450 million, thereby securing a 16.33% stake in the Waha concessions. In December 2019, Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) approved TotalEnergies' purchase of stakes in the Waha concessions, thereby solidifying the company's position in the Libyan oil industry [19]. Actually, TotalEnergies is part of a consortium operating the Sharara oil field, one of Libya's largest, with a capacity of about 300,000 barrels per day. This field has been a frequent target of local protests, leading to periodic shutdowns and production reductions [46].

The manner in which the various French initiatives had been carried out was inevitably perceived by Italian diplomacy, although involved in participating in the French initiative, as a lack of willingness to cooperate on France's part. The manner in which the various French initiatives were carried out was inevitably perceived by Italian diplomacy, albeit involved in participating in the French initiative, as a lack of willingness to cooperate on the part of France.

In an effort to counterbalance the French initiatives and re-establish its position in the peace process, the Italian government, presided over by President Giuseppe Conte at the time, organised the International Conference in Palermo. Notably, President Macron, signifying a divergence in diplomatic stance, did not participate through the attendance of the Foreign Minister pro tempore. Conversely, the conference witnessed notable political weight at the international level, as evidenced by the presence of the Assistant Secretary for

Oriental Affairs for the United States of America and the then Russian Prime Minister Medvedev. In addition, the event attracted a substantial representation of 38 countries and organisations from the European Union, the Arab League, the United Nations and the African Union, reflecting the broad international support for the conference's objectives.

However, the course of the meeting was not straightforward, as General Haftar only participated in one day of talks by attending a restricted summit with Al-Serraj, the Egyptian Head of State Al-Sisi and Russian Prime Minister Medvedev. The Turkish delegation, another of the key players involved, also withdrew from the conference in reaction to their exclusion from the aforementioned summit. The Palermo conference did not result in the formulation of a definitive declaration; however, it did culminate in the conclusion document, which all participants endorsed. This document underscored the imperative for fostering dialogue among the involved parties to achieve the stabilisation of Libya.

In contrast to the positions adopted by Italy and France, Germany's engagement in the Libyan crisis was primarily characterised by an exclusively diplomatic approach, consistent with its own foreign policy, which favoured peaceful and multilateral solutions. As might have been anticipated, during Operation Unified Protector (2011), the German capital exercised a policy of non-engagement in military operations, opting instead to assume a mediating role between the warring factions. This strategic vision enabled Berlin to establish itself as a credible mediator in the complex web of alliances and conflicts in Libya.

A notable success of this approach was the Berlin Conference of 19 January 2020. The success of this summit, which was organised in close collaboration with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, can be attributed to the efforts of German diplomacy. It brought together the main international powers involved in the Libyan crisis, including Russia, Turkey, France, Egypt and the United States, as well as representatives of the international organisations directly concerned. The primary objective of Germany, as well as that of the then-Chancellor, Angela Merkel, was to establish the foundations for a sustainable cessation of hostilities and to encourage adherence to the arms embargo stipulated by UN resolutions. While the conference did not immediately resolve the conflict, it represented a significant step towards establishing a shared foundation for the restart of the normalisation process in the country. In this regard, Germany emphasised the necessity of a political and diplomatic solution, devoid of external interference, with the objective of facilitating a process led by the Libyans themselves. The Berlin Conference resulted in a series of commitments, including the respect of the ceasefire and the cessation of external military support for the conflicting parties. However, the implementation of these commitments was hindered by the ongoing interference of external actors [47].

It must be noted that the EU has been unsuccessful in implementing a cohesive long-term strategy and has been unable to constrain the actions of individual member states within the context of the Libyan crisis.

However, the EU, while not having a single and cohesive position among all its member states, has sought to promote, through its instruments, the stabilisation of the country and to address some of the key issues related to the Libyan question, such as security, migration and respect for international law.

Through its support for the UN-mediated peace process, the Union's action has covered support for development, cooperation and cooperation and political dialogue under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to its southern partners.

The Southern Neighbourhood Policy in the last decade has developed - also due to an increased heterogeneity of the situations and aspirations of the Southern Neighbourhood countries - on the

basis of a bilateral approach with each country, without the definition of a real common European framework. Against this backdrop, the European Commission has indicated the need to give new impetus to its policy towards the Southern Neighbourhood countries by launching a process aimed at defining, in an organic manner, the EU's strategic priorities towards these countries [48].

As one of the objectives of the ENP, the EU is seeking to assist the Libyans in establishing a stable and inclusive state. The EU supports UN mediation efforts to end hostilities and sends signals of a diplomatic approach to Libyan and regional stakeholders. Libya does not have an association agreement or other contractual arrangements with the EU, but it is eligible for funding under the NDICI-Global Europe and other financial instruments. Instability at the local and regional level has transformed Libya from a country of destination for migratory flows to a country of transit, which required an immediate EU response to address the most urgent needs. Libya therefore received funding through the North Africa section of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which addresses the root causes of irregular migration and provides support for protection and migration management [49].

## Conclusions

The ongoing instability in Libya since 2011 can be largely attributed to the actions and interventions of various international actors, who have often pursued their own strategic interests, thereby compromising Libya's stability and sovereignty.

The 2011 NATO-backed intervention that led to the overthrow of Muammar al-Qaddafi's regime signalled the onset of a protracted period of instability in Libya. While initially hailed as a success, the power vacuum left by Qaddafi's fall quickly gave way to political fragmentation and security challenges. The absence of robust state institutions, compounded by the proliferation of armed groups, engendered an environment characterised by volatility and the potential for conflict. This situation was further exacerbated by the involvement of various international actors, each supporting different factions and pursuing their own agendas.

Russia has been identified as one of the most disruptive countries in the Libyan crisis. Since 2014, Russia has been particularly active in Libya, sending personnel, logistical equipment, military advisers, and intelligence officers to assist Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army. The primary motivations behind Russia's intervention can be identified as twofold: firstly, a strategic desire to atone for its failure to veto United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, which established a no-fly zone over Libya and was interpreted by Western nations as a strategic victory; and secondly, a broader ambition to assert its dominance in the region by leveraging its position as a bridgehead for the Sahel.

The military intervention of the Russian Federation, chiefly executed through the medium of private military companies (PMSCs) such as the Wagner Group (now officially merged into Africa Corps), has been a significant factor in both the prolongation and intensification of the conflict. These entities, which are instrumental in the Kremlin's "hybrid warfare" strategy, have likely been in operation since 2016, albeit initially in a non-combat capacity. The deployment of Russian mercenaries and military equipment has had a considerable impact on the balance of power on the ground, and has the potential to hinder the establishment of a peaceful resolution.

Turkey has also played a decisive role in altering the balance of power on the ground in Libya. The Turkish government's intervention became increasingly evident in November 2019 when it decided to intervene directly in the conflict. This intervention was officially justified by an appeal from the Government of National Accord; however, it is evident that this was a ruse to conceal the true motivation behind Turkey's involvement, which was to assert its regional influence in Libya. This was achieved through the signing of

two Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs). The most significant memorandum concerned the redefinition of the maritime borders between Libya and Turkey, establishing an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that allows Turkey to conduct explorations in a much larger portion of the eastern Mediterranean. This development has further complicated the regional dynamics and potentially destabilised the eastern Mediterranean.

Significant disruptive forces in Libya have also been Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. Since 2014, these countries have intervened by supporting the eastern faction led by General Haftar. The Egyptian and UAE governments have provided military assistance, including arms and military equipment, to Haftar's forces. This support has been instrumental in prolonging the conflict and preventing a unified government from taking control of the entire country. Egypt's involvement, in particular, has been driven by security concerns and an ideological stance aimed at opposing all groups drawing inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood.

France, too, has been involved in the Libyan crisis, albeit in a controversial manner. While officially supporting the UN-backed government in Tripoli, France has been accused of providing covert support to General Haftar. This duplicitous approach has undermined efforts to achieve a political solution and has contributed to the ongoing instability. France's actions have been driven by its desire to protect its economic interests in Libya, particularly in the oil sector, and to counter terrorism in the Sahel region.

Despite its initial involvement in the 2011 intervention, the United States has adopted a more detached stance in recent years. Nevertheless, its sporadic interventions and shifts in policy have contributed to the prevailing state of instability. For instance, President Trump's apparent endorsement of General Haftar's offensive against Tripoli in April 2019 sent mixed signals and undermined the internationally recognised government.

The European Union, as a collective entity, has been largely ineffective in addressing the Libyan crisis. The EU has been unsuccessful in implementing a cohesive long-term strategy and has been unable to constrain the actions of individual member states within the context of the Libyan crisis. This absence of a consolidated approach has enabled other international actors to capitalise on the situation, thereby further exacerbating the already fragile security landscape in Libya.

The actions of these actors have had severe consequences for Libya. The ongoing conflict has resulted in pervasive human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, torture, and human trafficking. The ongoing conflict has also had significant economic repercussions, disrupting Libya's oil industry, which is crucial for the country's economy.

Furthermore, the Libyan crisis has had far-reaching implications for regional stability. The conflict has led to the spillover of arms and fighters into neighbouring countries, particularly in the Sahel region. This has contributed to increased instability and terrorism in countries like Mali and Niger, further complicating the security situation in North Africa and the Sahel.

The intervention of foreign actors has also complicated efforts to achieve a political solution to the crisis. The presence of external forces and the support they provide to different factions has made it more difficult for Libyan parties to reach a compromise. The presence of these external actors has led to a situation where factions within Libya are less willing to make concessions necessary for the establishment of a sustainable peace agreement.

The humanitarian situation in Libya has been severely impacted by the ongoing instability fuelled by foreign intervention. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [50], approximately 300,000 individuals in Libya were in



need of humanitarian assistance in 2023. While this figure represents a decrease from previous years, it nevertheless indicates a substantial humanitarian challenge that is directly linked to the ongoing conflict and instability.

The actions of international actors have also had a profound impact on migration patterns in the region. Libya has become a key transit point for migrants attempting to reach Europe, leading to numerous tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea. The inability of the Libyan state to effectively manage its borders, compounded by the exploitation of migrants by armed groups and human traffickers, is a direct consequence of the instability engendered by foreign intervention.

The failure of international actors to support a genuine process of state-building and reconciliation in Libya has been a critical factor in the country's ongoing instability. Instead of prioritising the establishment of robust institutions and the promotion of national unity, foreign powers have frequently pursued their own strategic agendas. This has hindered the formation of a stable and unified government with the capacity to tackle the country's numerous challenges.

The absence of a coherent political philosophy and social contract, as identified by Masoud [16], has been exacerbated by foreign interference. The absence of articulated social contract principles and a political philosophy grounded in public principles of justice has made it difficult for Libyans to develop a shared vision for their country's future. This vacuum has been exploited by foreign actors to advance their own agendas.

In conclusion, the actions of international actors have been a significant factor of instability for Libya since 2011. Russia, Turkey, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and France have been identified as the most disruptive countries, each pursuing their own strategic interests at the expense of Libya's stability and sovereignty. Their military support to different factions, economic interventions, and political machinations have been a prolongation of the conflict, hindered efforts at national reconciliation, and prevented the emergence of strong, unified state institutions.

The underlying motivations for these interventions are multifaceted, encompassing geopolitical ambitions, economic interests, ideological considerations, and security concerns. The net effect of these interventions has been to transform Libya into a battleground for competing regional and global interests, at the expense of the Libyan people's aspirations for peace, stability, and prosperity.

The establishment of an international supervision mechanism to ensure that external forces cease their interference in Libya is in accordance with several United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and European Union (EU) decisions from 2011 to 2019. The call for a neutral international body to monitor violations is consistent with UNSC Resolution 1970 [50], which imposed an arms embargo on Libya and established a sanctions committee to oversee its implementation. The proposal for a coalition involving regional organisations is consistent with the collaborative approach endorsed in UNSC Resolution 2017 [51], which urged regional states to prevent the proliferation of arms from Libya. The emphasis on a clear division of responsibilities among international actors is in line with the structure proposed in the EU's decision on 1 April 2011, which concerned a European Union military operation in support of humanitarian assistance in Libya.

The enhancement of the feasibility and practicality of this mechanism through robust monitoring tools and sanctions enforcement is supported by UNSC Resolution 2240 [52], which authorised member states to intercept vessels off the Libyan coast suspected of migrant smuggling, thereby addressing illicit arms flows. The proposal to engage regional powers diplomatically is consistent with the EU's ongoing initiatives, as evidenced by the European Parliament's recommendations in 2022, which underscored the importance of

diplomatic engagement with regional actors to stabilise Libya. By integrating the supervision mechanism within these established frameworks, the international community can work towards a sustainable resolution to external interference in Libya.

## References

1. Lacher, W. (2020). *Libya's fragmentation: Structure and process in violent conflict*. I.B. Tauris.
2. Megerisi, T. (2022). *Libya, the failure of the elite*. ISPI. <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/libya-failure-elite-35660>
3. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - OCHA. (2023). *2023 FLASH Flood response Libya*. <https://libya.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/FA-Libya-Clean-1.00pm.pdf>.
4. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *West and central Mediterranean situation*. Global Focus. <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/west-and-central-mediterranean-situation>
5. Wehrey, F. (2020). "This War is Out of Our Hands": The Internationalization of Libya's Post-2011 Conflicts From Proxies to Boots on the Ground. New America. <https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/this-war-is-out-of-our-hands/>
6. Loschi, C., & Raineri, L. (2017). *Containing the Human Cost of Border Externalization. The Case of EU-Libya Migration Management Cooperation*. EUMENIA Policy Paper.
7. Vandewalle, D. (2018). Libya Since 2011: Political Transformation and Violence. *Middle East Policy*, 25(1), 140-157.
8. International Crisis Group. (2020). Turkey Wades into Libya's Troubled Waters. *Europe Report n. 257*, 1-30.
9. Lacher, W. (2017). Was Libya's Collapse Predictable? *Survival*, 59(2), 139-152.
10. Costantini, I. (2016). Conflict dynamics in post-2011 Libya: a political economy perspective. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 16(5), 405-422.
11. Mezran, K., & Neale, E. A. (2019). *Libya, the US, and the Palermo Conference*. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/libya-the-us-and-the-palermo-conference/>
12. Miller, E. (2019). *One year later, the UN Action Plan for Libya is dead*. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/one-year-later-the-un-action-plan-for-libya-is-dead/>
13. Katz, E., (2019). Coercive Control, Domestic Violence, and a Five-Factor Framework: Five Factors That Influence Closeness, Distance, and Strain in Mother-Child Relationships. *Violence Against Women*. 25(15):1829-1853. doi: 10.1177/1077801218824998.
14. Basir, N., & Auster, E. R. (2016). Structure from Chaos: The Creation of Libyan Civil Society. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2016(1), 17943.
15. Bahgat, G. (2012). The impact of the Arab spring on the oil and gas industry in North Africa – a preliminary assessment. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 17(3), 503-519.
16. Masoud, N. (2015). John Rawls Theory of Justice: Lessons for Eastern Libya. *International Journal of Management & Information Technology*, 10(7), 2293-2304.
17. Jeursen, T., & van der Borgh, C. (2014). Security Provision after Regime Change: Local Militias and Political Entities in Post-Qaddafi Tripoli. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 8(2), 173-191.

18. Kirkpatrick, D. (2019). *Trump Endorses an Aspiring Libyan Strongman, Reversing Policy*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/19/world/middleeast/trump-libya-khalifa-haftar.html>
19. Statista (2024). *Volume of crude oil imported to France from Libya from 2011 to 2023*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/459740/france-total-amount-petroleum-imported-libya/>
20. Del Sarto, R. A., & Soler i Lecha, E. (2024). Regionalism and Alliances in the Middle East, 2011-2021: From a “Flash in the Pan” of Regional Cooperation to Liquid Alliances. *Geopolitics*, 29(4), 1447–1473
21. Kirdim, S. E. (2017). A Neo-Realist Case Study of U.N.-Authorized Humanitarian Interventions in The PostCold War World. *Gazi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 19(2), 615-632.
22. Teimouri, H & Subedi, S. P. (2018). *Responsibility to Protect and the International Military Intervention in Libya in International Law: What Went Wrong and What Lessons Could Be Learnt from It?* Journal of Conflict and Security Law, 23 (1), 3-32.
23. Hof, F., & Magri, P. (2017). “Introduction”. In K. Mezran & A. Varvelli (Eds.), *Foreign Actors in Libya's Crisis* (p. 9). Atlantic Council – ISPI.
24. United Nations Security Council. (2019). *Letter dated 29 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council*. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/\\_S\\_2019\\_914.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/_S_2019_914.pdf)
25. Landauro, I., & Morajca, H. (2016). *Three French Special Forces Soldiers Killed in Helicopter Crash in Libya*. The Wall Street Journal.
26. Defense Security Cooperation Agency. (2010). *Javelin anti-tank guided missiles*. <https://www.dsca.mil/tags/javelin-anti-tank-guided-missiles>
27. Amer, A. (2016). *Cairo backs Libyan stance*. Al-Ahram Weekly. <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/17388/17/Cairo-backs-Libyan-stance.aspx>
28. Laurenza, P. (2021, April 21). *Libia ed Egitto rafforzano i legami di cooperazione*. Sicurezza Internazionale. <https://sicurezzainternazionale.luiss.it/2021/04/21/libia-ed-egitto-rafforzano-legami-cooperazione>
29. Lovotti, C., & Varvelli, A. (2021). *Wagner nel deserto: che cosa cercano i russi in Cirenaica*. Limes. <https://www.limesonline.com/cartaceo/wagner-nel-deserto-che-cosacercano-i-russi-in-cirenaica?prv=true>
30. Borshchevskaya, A. (2020). *Russia's Growing Interests in Libya*. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/russias-growing-interests-libya>
31. Stronski, P. (2020). *Implausible Deniability: Russia's Private Military Companies*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2020/06/implausible-deniability-russias-private-military-companies?lang=en>
32. Walsh, N. P. (2021). *Foreign fighters were meant to leave Libya this week. A huge trench being dug by Russian-backed mercenaries indicates they plan to stay*. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/01/22/africa/libya-trench-russia-intl/index.html>
33. Bertolotti, C. (2020). *Libia: le ambizioni della Turchia. La competizione tra Ankara, Mosca e il Cairo nel settore Security Force Assistance (SFA)*. Start Insight. <https://www.startinsight.eu/libia-ambizioni-turchia-ssr/>
34. U.S. Department of Defense. (2020). *Russia, Wagner Group Continue Military Involvement in Libya*. <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/article/article/2287821/russia-wagner-group-continue-military-involvement-in-libya/>
35. Jones, S. G., Doxsee, C., Katz, B., McQueen, E., & Moye, J. (2021). *Russia's Corporate Soldiers – The Global Expansion of Russia's Private Military Companies*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-corporate-soldiers-global-expansion-russias-private-military-companies>
36. Malsin, J., & Said, S. (2019). *Saudi Arabia Promised Support to Libyan Warlord in Push to Seize Tripoli*. The Wall Street Journal. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-promised-support-to-libyan-warlord-in-push-to-seize-tripoli>
37. Trump White House. (2017). *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>
38. The White House. (2017, April 20). *Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Gentiloni of Italy in Joint Press Conference*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/04/20>
39. Young. (2020). *Into the Libya Vortex: In An Interview, Jalel Harchaoui Discusses the Regional Repercussions of the Proxy War in North Africa*. Carnegie Middle East Center. <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/80776>
40. Özşahin, M. C., & Çakmak, C. (2022). *Between defeating "the warlord" and defending "the blue homeland": a discourse of legitimacy and security in Turkey's Libya policy*. Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 37(1), 79–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2022.2089545>
41. Savina, M., & Stefanelli, M.G. (Eds.). (2022). *Zee e Gas nel Mediterraneo: l'intesa turco-libica*. OSMED Osservatorio sul Mediterraneo.
42. Reuters. (2020). *Turkish Central Bank Signs MOU with Libyan Central Bank*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/turkey-cenbank-libya>
43. Mezran, K., & Saini Fasinotti, F. (2020). *France must recognize its role in Libya's plight*. Atlantic Council. [https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/france-must-recognize-its-role-in-libyas-plight/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/france-must-recognize-its-role-in-libyas-plight/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
44. United Nations Security Council. (2018). *Libyan Political Agreement still Key to Holding credible elections, ending Crisis, Security Council says in presidential Statement, calling for compromise*. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018>
45. Anderson, D. (2011). *The Fight for Libya's Oil*. Oxpul. [https://blog.politics.ox.ac.uk/the-fight-for-libyas-oil/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://blog.politics.ox.ac.uk/the-fight-for-libyas-oil/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
46. Reuters (2024). *Libya's Sharara oilfield output down 60,000 bpd*. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/omv-says-oil-production-reduced-el-sharara-field-libya-2024-08-05>
47. Cristiani, D., & Mezran, K. (2021). *Europe and Libya: between ambitions and illusions*. Aspenia Online. <https://aspeniaonline.it/author/dario-cristiani-and-karim-mezran/>
48. Trapouzaniis, C., & Oaida, C. (2024). *I partner meridionali. Note tematiche sull'Unione Europea Parlamento Europeo*. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/it/sheet/173/i-partner-meridionali>
49. Camera dei Deputati. (2021). *Una nuova agenda per il Mediterraneo*. Documenti Camera Dossier n. 48. <https://documenti.camera.it/leg18/dossier/pdf/ES048.pdf>
50. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2023). *Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/libya/libya-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-december-2022>
51. United Nations Security Council. (2011). *Resolution 2009 (2011)*. [https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/2009-\(2011\)](https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/2009-(2011))
52. United Nations Security Council. (2023). *Resolution 2702 (2023) - UNSMIL*. [https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s-res-2702\\_english.pdf](https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s-res-2702_english.pdf)