Beyond Revolution: Ending Lawlessness and Impunity During Revolutionary Periods

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BEYOND REVOLUTION: ENDING LAWLESSNESS AND IMPUNITY DURING REVOLUTIONARY PERIODS

Vanessa A. Arslanian*

Abstract: In early 2011, mass protests erupted throughout Libya, political elites defected to form the resistance National Transitional Council, and the international community eventually intervened in the conflict. The result was the ouster of long-ruling leader Muammar Gaddafi and the beginning of considerable political change in Libya. Following the Gaddafi regime’s overthrow, the regional militias that displaced Gaddafi refused to surrender arms to the interim government and continued to perpetrate illegal detentions, displacements, rapes, and summary executions. This Note assumes that events in Libya constitute an ongoing revolution, and places the violent episodes associated with it in a historical tradition of violence inherent in revolutionary periods. While revolutionary violence may be politically justifiable ex post, it is no longer legally justifiable given the network of international and regional law. Given this, interim Libyan leaders and their successors should ensure that both revolutionaries and former Gaddafi supporters are held accountable for their crimes. A hybrid approach, starting with a truth commission with eventual limited prosecutions, is the best way to bring a stable peace to Libya.

INTRODUCTION

On October 20, 2011, Colonel Muammar el-Gaddafi, Libya’s self-designated “leader of the revolution,” became the victim of a different revolution: the Libyan revolutionaries that ousted him from power also

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ended his life. Many Libyans rejoiced at the prospect of a new beginning after Gaddafi’s oppressive forty-two-year reign. Western leaders, including U.S. President Barack Obama, also welcomed his downfall. Some, however, voiced concern. Official reports from the National Transitional Council (NTC) initially stated that Gaddafi had been killed in cross-fire, an assertion belied by the videos and photographs that would surface in the hours following his death. Videos depicting Gaddafi at the time of his capture by militants, bleeding and apparently beaten, later showed him dead with a close-range bullet wound. The NTC now faces crucial choices about how to come to terms not only with the Gaddafi regime’s crimes, but also subsequent acts attributable to anti-Gaddafi revolutionaries.

Part I of this Note provides a background on the conditions in Libya during the conflict. Part I also tracks events leading up to the present, outlining Libya’s continued revolution, in which it experiences spasms of violence similar to other modern revolutions. Part II examines relevant international and regional law in the context of the Libyan revolution. Part III argues that while ex post political justifications for anomic revolutionary behavior—the idea “that all must be permitted to those who act in the revolutionary direction”—may still exist, a legal justification does not, given established regional and international law. Part III concludes that Libya and the international community


5 See id.; Libya: Investigate Deaths of Gaddafi and Son, supra note 2.


7 Fahim et al., supra note 4; CNN Wire Staff, supra note 6; Libya: Investigate Deaths of Gaddafi and Son, supra note 2.


should hold both sides of the Libyan conflict accountable for their actions. They can best do so through a hybridized truth commission and trial approach, as has been used in other settings.

I. BACKGROUND

A. Conditions in Libya During the Conflict and Immediately Following Gaddafi’s Death

1. Conditions During the Conflict Prior to Gaddafi’s Death

February 17, 2011 marked Libya’s “day of revolt,” in which large-scale protests erupted throughout the country. Gaddafi’s forces responded to these protests by using snipers, helicopters, and artillery on the crowds. Amid the protests, rebel fighter militias began to advance, only to be repelled by the Libyan military and Gaddafi’s threat to root out protesters “alley to alley, house to house.” Concerned with the Gaddafi regime’s gross human rights violations against civilians, the United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted a resolution imposing a no-fly zone over Libya. Fighting continued for months, with rebels advancing throughout the country, taking Tripoli in August 2011, and going on to attack the pro-Gaddafi strongholds of Bani Walid and Surt.

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10 Eric Wiebelhaus-Brahm, Truth Commissions, in Routledge Handbook of International Criminal Law 369, 372 (William A. Schabas & Nadia Bernaz eds., 2011). A Truth Commission has been defined as:

An ad hoc, autonomous, and victim-centered commission of inquiry set up in and authorized by a state for the primary purposes of (1) investigating and reporting on the principal causes and consequences of broad and relatively recent patterns of severe violence or repression that occurred in the state during determinate periods of abusive rule or conflict, and (2) making recommendations for their redress and future prevention.

Id.


13 Kareem Fahim, Rebels Pour into Central Tripoli Square, Declaring Victory: Instead of Bloody Struggle, a Headlong Rush into a Cheering but Wary Capital, N.Y. Times, Aug. 22, 2011, at A1; Rod Nordland, Qaddafi Strongholds Are Attacked, N.Y. Times, Sept. 10, 2011, at A4. See generally Battle for Libya: Key Moments, supra note 11 (detailing the events of seven months of conflict between the initial uprising and the fall of Tripoli).
The rebels then reportedly arrested, detained, and tortured African migrants and dark-skinned Libyans alleged to be Gaddafi supporters, and systematically drove them out of cities such as Tawergha.16

2. Gaddafi’s Death and Ensuing Conditions

Sources indicate that militia brigades from the city of Misrata are responsible for Gaddafi’s death and the execution of fifty-three of his supporters in mid-October 2011.17 Immediately following Gaddafi’s death, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International all called for an investigation into the matter.18 Luis Moreno-Ocampo, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), stated in December 2011 that the manner of Gaddafi’s death may have constituted a war crime; Moreno-Ocampo is also investigating allegations that anti-Gaddafi forces and NATO committed war crimes during the conflict.19

The NTC agreed to investigate Gaddafi’s death20—though it has since focused on prosecuting Saif al-Islam el-Qaddafi, Muammar Gaddafi’s son, and Abdullah el-Senussi, Libya’s former intelligence chief21—and announced its intention to create an investigative committee tasked with exploring and eventually prosecuting Gaddafi-era crimes.22 Yet Libya has no effective justice system, and militia councils have revoked their pledge to lay down weapons until a new constitution is ratified, thereby entrenching themselves as de facto local governments in Misrata, Tripoli, and other cities.23 As a result, militias are essentially un-

20 Id.
constrained, and the likelihood of additional atrocities remains high.\textsuperscript{24} Allegations of arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and displacement continue, leading NTC Chairman Mustafa Abdel-Jalil to warn that the lack of control over rival militias could lead to civil war.\textsuperscript{25}

In January 2012, Abdel-Jalil’s warnings began to crystallize: protesters ransacked the NTC’s main offices in Benghazi following the publication of a draft election law.\textsuperscript{26} The protesters accused the interim government of lacking transparency and having past ties to the Gaddafi regime.\textsuperscript{27} In early February 2012, approximately 100 western Libyan militias united in a federation with the aim of pressuring the NTC to continue reform.\textsuperscript{28} In light of the NTC’s inability to control these militias, they maintain custody of three-quarters of war detainees,\textsuperscript{29} refuse to bring some to trial,\textsuperscript{30} and continue using torture and other abusive practices.\textsuperscript{31} In March 2012, militia and tribal leaders in the oil-rich eastern region declared their intention to establish their own government.\textsuperscript{32} These leaders seek a return to pre-Gaddafi federalism, and demand their own legislature, courts, and police.\textsuperscript{33} Such increased demand for regional autonomy threatens the NTC’s plan to form a constituent assembly,\textsuperscript{34} especially because the NTC is seemingly unwilling and unable to use force against unified eastern leaders.\textsuperscript{35} On May 3, 2012, the NTC legislatively granted amnesty to rebels for revolutionary

by rules of the international court and the will of the Security Council, it must first convince the judges that Libya is willing and able to hold fair trials.”.\textsuperscript{36}


\textsuperscript{27} Id.


\textsuperscript{33} Id.

\textsuperscript{34} Id.

acts. As of October 2012, Libya had dismissed the prime minister elected less than a month earlier, again attempted to dissolve unauthorized militias, and witnessed an armed assault on the U.S. diplomatic mission which resulted in the killing of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three members of his staff.

B. Is Libya Mid-Revolution?

Commentators have used several terms to refer to the Libyan conflict, including: uprising, revolt, rebellion, civil war, and revolution. Categorizing the ongoing social and political change in Libya is important to analyze its future implications or compare it with previous conflicts. Among the terms used, the Libyan conflict most likely seems to be a “revolution,” which has been defined as “[a]n overthrow of a government, usu[ally] resulting in fundamental political change; a successful rebellion.” “Revolution,” however, is often used liberally,

36 Stephen, supra note 9.
43 E.g., Timeline: Libya’s Uprising Against Muammar Gaddafi, supra note 40.
44 E.g., Gerntholtz, supra note 2.
46 BLACK’S LAW DICTIONARY 1435 (9th ed. 2009); see also David Kirkpatrick, Libya Begins to Elect Assembly, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 3, 2012, at A8 (demonstrating Libya’s fundamental political change through new laws establishing democratic procedures).
applied to everything from the “Social Media Revolution”\textsuperscript{47} to the “Sexual Revolution.”\textsuperscript{48} In a political and legal context, revolution is defined in varying ways, and with more nuance than in the mainstream definition.\textsuperscript{49}

In politics or law, classifying an event as a revolution is not a straightforward task: “[a]fter the big two—the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution—social scientists find it hard to agree on others.”\textsuperscript{50} For example, some would include the American Revolution but not the Glorious Revolution of 1688.\textsuperscript{51} Despite such disagreement on classification, many revolutionary scholars agree on five necessary elements of a successful revolution: “(1) mass frustration resulting in popular uprisings among urban or rural populations; (2) dissident elite political movements; (3) unifying motivations; (4) a severe political crisis paralyzing the administrative and coercive capabilities of the state; and (5) a permissive or tolerant world context.”\textsuperscript{52} Together, these five elements combine to create what Samuel Huntington describes as “a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies.”\textsuperscript{53}

Historian Parviz Daneshvar, determining whether the 1979 Iranian Revolution qualified as a revolution, provides a comprehensive survey of revolutionary theory, divided into three general schools of thought: The first theory, which includes Huntington’s definition, emphasizes that a revolution transforms a state’s social, political, and value structure.\textsuperscript{54}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49} See, e.g., Marlin, \textit{supra} note 45, at 1294–97.
\item \textsuperscript{50} See James L. Gelvin, \textit{The Modern Middle East: A History} 286 (2d ed. 2008).
\item \textsuperscript{51} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Marlin, \textit{supra} note 45, at 1295 (citing several scholars as the source of this test).
\item \textsuperscript{53} Samuel P. Huntington, \textit{Political Order in Changing Societies} 264 (1968). Notably, Huntington states that revolutions are distinguished from insurrections, rebellions, revolts, coups, and wars of independence. A coup d’état in itself changes only leadership and perhaps policies; a rebellion or insurrection may change policies, leadership, and political institutions, but not social structure and values; a war of independence is a struggle of one community against rule by an alien community and does not necessarily involve changes in the social structure of either community.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Parviz Daneshvar, \textit{Revolution in Iran} 178–79 (1996).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Marxist theory fits within this tradition; it attributes revolution-induced societal changes to class struggle and the resultant shift from “an existing mode of production to a new one.” 55 Other scholars who endorse a class-based definition of revolution note a distinction between social revolution and merely political revolution. 56 They argue that social revolutions entail unique factors, including overlaps between political change, social transformation, and class upheaval. 57 In this view, class-based revolts from below drive social revolutions to ultimately result in the “rapid, basic transformation of a society’s state and class structure.” 58

Daneshvar’s second category of revolutionary theory grounds revolutions’ seismic shifts in nations’ political and legal contexts. 59 Within this theory, some scholars state that while revolutions generate societal upheaval, they are nonetheless “regular political activity . . . subject to certain general rules about the amount and quantity of force employed on each side.” 60 Others argue, however, that rather than being “regular political activity,” revolutions are special social changes, but still “must be studied within the context of the social systems in which they occur.” 61

Daneshvar’s third category of revolutionary theory is rooted predominantly in the work of Hannah Arendt. 62 Arendt’s definition of revolution recognizes the “basic ingredients of revolution” that other scholars do, but goes further by requiring freedom as a revolutionary goal. 63 Arendt notes that revolutions are conceptually distinct from “successful insurrections.” 64 Civil wars, factional strife, and coups d’état, among other phenomena, are often associated with revolution because their common denominator is the violence that accompanies them. 65 Arendt asserts that violence is no more appropriate an indicator of revolution than is change; in order to qualify as a revolution, the goal of such violence must be freedom:

[O]nly where change occurs in the sense of a new beginning, where violence is used to constitute an altogether different

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55 Id. at 178.
56 See id.
57 See id.
58 Id.
59 See id. at 178–79.
60 Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 178–79.
61 See id. at 179.
62 See, e.g., id. at 179–80.
63 See Arendt, supra note 9, at 25–28; Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 179.
64 See Arendt, supra note 9, at 27.
65 Id. at 27–28.
form of government, to bring about the formation of a new body politic, where the liberation from oppression aims at least at the constitution of freedom can we speak of revolution.  

The term “revolution” appropriately describes Libya’s current situation, given the term’s basic requirements and the above scholarly definitions. First, mass uprisings and fighting by the numerous anti-Gaddafi militias tore through the country, starting in February 2011. Second, NTC members were former Gaddafi-regime elites that defected once the revolution began. Third, the goals of ending Gaddafi’s rule and creating a free Libya unified the Libyan people. Finally, the combination of the broader context of the “Arab Spring,” international political pressure, and armed intervention all hindered Gaddafi’s government and fostered the necessary “permissive” context that enabled anti-Gaddafi forces to succeed.

C. The Tradition of Revolutionary Violence

Libya’s turmoil—if indeed a revolution—joins the ranks of revolutions preceding it that have been lawless and violent, with significant risk that current conditions may descend into further chaos. Most scholars agree on one point: violence is inseparable from the general

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66 Id. at 28 (emphasis added).
67 See id. at 27–28; Huntington, supra note 53, at 264; Marlin, supra note 45, at 1295–96 (highlighting the five factors necessary for a successful revolution); supra notes 53, 66 and accompanying text.
68 See Marlin, supra note 45, at 1295 (“(1) mass frustration resulting in popular uprisings”); Battle for Libya: Key Moments, supra note 11.
69 See Marlin, supra note 45, at 1295 (“(2) dissident elite political movements”); Leaders of the Libyan Rebellion, supra note 42 (“The Libyan rebels fighting to topple Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi are led by longtime opponents of the Qaddafi government as well as officials who defected once the rebellion began.”).
70 See Marlin, supra note 45, at 1295 (“(3) unifying motivations”); Garcia-Navarro, supra note 41 (“[The rebels’] strength . . . lie[s] in their diversity, in their willingness to fight and to die for the right to live outside of Gadhafi’s brutal autocratic grip.”).
72 See S.C. Res. 1973, supra note 14, pmbl., ¶¶ 6–8 (authorizing the use of force against Libya); Marlin, supra note 45, at 1295–96 (“(4) a severe political crisis paralyzing the . . . state; and (5) a permissive or tolerant world context”); Leaders of the Libyan Rebellion, supra note 42.
73 See supra Part I.B.
74 See ARENDT, supra note 9, at 87, 111; Goodman, supra note 25. Arendt notes that the American Revolution is a conspicuous exception to this general rule. See ARENDT, supra note 9, at 87, 114–15.
concept of revolution.\textsuperscript{75} Indeed, a brief sample of universally recognized revolutions verifies this observation and provides perspective on events in Libya.\textsuperscript{76}

1. The French Revolution

The French Revolution is considered one of the paradigmatic revolutions in recent history.\textsuperscript{77} In 1788, amid a crumbling economy and withering government authority, the first spasms of revolutionary violence broke out in France as protesters demanded a representative assembly known as the Estates-General be convened.\textsuperscript{78} Tension surrounding the economic crisis and the Estates-General’s elections catalyzed widespread riots and insurrections throughout the country.\textsuperscript{79} This social agitation culminated in the storming of the Bastille, a fortress and prison in Paris, on July 14, 1789.\textsuperscript{80} The crowd lynched military officials and “[t]heir severed heads were carried through the streets in a gory celebration of the popular victory.”\textsuperscript{81}

After the storming of the Bastille, the “Great Fear” ensued as peasants killed nobles and burned châteaux.\textsuperscript{82} France instituted political change in the months and years following, including the Declaration on the Rights of Man and the Citizen,\textsuperscript{83} but revolutionary violence still persisted.\textsuperscript{84} In October 1789, female marchers seized cannons to march on Versailles, killing several palace guards.\textsuperscript{85} In 1791, the military shot approximately sixty demonstrators in the massacre of the Champs-de-Mars.\textsuperscript{86} Domestic social unrest continued, France engaged in war, and revolutionary militants created ad hoc tribunals and summarily exe-

\textsuperscript{75} See Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 179–80.


\textsuperscript{77} See Gelvin, supra note 50, at 286 (referring to the French and Russian Revolutions as the “big two”).

\textsuperscript{78} Popkin, supra note 76, at 24–25.

\textsuperscript{79} Id. at 30–31.

\textsuperscript{80} Id. at 31–32.

\textsuperscript{81} Id. at 32.

\textsuperscript{82} See id. at 33–34.

\textsuperscript{83} See id. at 37. The Declaration on the Rights of Man and the Citizen, adopted by the National Assembly on August 26, 1789, set forth “the fundamental principles of a new society based on equality and individual rights.” Id. at 37.

\textsuperscript{84} See Popkin, supra note 76, at 43, 56.

\textsuperscript{85} Id. at 42–43.

\textsuperscript{86} Id. at 56.
cuted about 1300 people. In 1792, the revolutionary government executed the King by guillotine as a rebellion in the rural west grew into a “veritable civil war, waged with unrelenting cruelty on both sides.” The “Great Terror” then took root and remained until 1794, when Maximilien Robespierre and his followers were led to the guillotine.

2. The Bolshevik (Russian) Revolution

The Bolshevik (Russian) Revolution of 1917 is also widely recognized as a revolution, and though the transfer of power between the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks was unexpectedly “almost bloodless,” fighting between the sides still occurred. Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin believed that violence in the form of an armed insurrection was necessary to effectuate the Bolsheviks’ desired changes; accordingly, the Bolsheviks’ storming of the Winter Palace required hours of artillery attack. In response, the Provisional Government’s former prime minister instigated a counterrevolutionary revolt, resulting in a battle “with many more casualties than occurred in the capture of the Winter Palace.”

Although violence during the Bolshevik Revolution was limited, “[d]ecades of bloodshed, labor and suffering lay ahead for the Russian people,” beginning with violent contests between the powerful forces opposing the Bolsheviks. The drive to consolidate authority throughout Russia sparked prolonged violence: in Moscow, Bolsheviks massacred Kremlin soldiers during the fight for the city, while the Ukraine, Tiflis, and Russian-speaking Cossack regions fiercely resisted Bolshevik

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87 Id. at 66, 68.
88 Id. at 73–75.
89 Id. at 89–91.
90 See Gelvin, supra note 50, at 286; Huntington, supra note 53, at 264.
91 Carr, supra note 76, at 70. The Provisional Government took power after the overthrow of the Romanov Dynasty in February 1917 (the “February revolution”). Id.
92 See id. at 86, 98–99 (highlighting the Bolsheviks’ military preparation and expectation that they would assume power only after a violent struggle).
93 Daniels, supra note 76, at 42. Petrograd’s Winter Palace was previously the Tsar’s official residence and became the seat of the Provisional Government. Id.
94 Id. at 189 (chronicling the bombardment of the Winter Palace, starting at approximately 9:30 PM and ending at approximately 2:00 AM the following day).
95 See id. at 201–05.
96 Id. at 201, 203; see Carr, supra note 76, at 99.
dominance in what became a three-year civil war.\textsuperscript{99} By 1920, 700,000 Russians were listed as dead or missing, 250,000 of whom were confirmed as killed in the course of combat.\textsuperscript{100} The Revolution and its after-effects thus entailed significant bloodshed, even though the initial power transfer required little physical force.\textsuperscript{101}

3. The Iranian Revolution

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 also provides an illustrative example of revolutionary violence.\textsuperscript{102} In 1978, Iran saw drastic inflation, water and electricity shortages, heightened economic inequality, and a monarchy that insisted on ruling with absolute power.\textsuperscript{103} Citizens took to the streets, and the Shah’s security forces responded with brutality, often firing on protesters.\textsuperscript{104} After a lull in violence, an explosion killing 400 people in a movie theatre with locked emergency exits spurred widespread riots and street protests.\textsuperscript{105} By December 1978, thousands of Iranians had been killed in the protests.\textsuperscript{106}

Even after the Shah transferred power to an interim government led by resistance leader Shapour Bakhtiar, strikes and protest marches continued, resulting in more deaths.\textsuperscript{107} Upon Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s celebrated return to Iran and his naming of a new government, the Iranian Air Force, “[s]upported by thousands of armed anti-government civilians,” fought pro-Shah forces.\textsuperscript{108} The Iranian military then declared neutrality and its command disintegrated.\textsuperscript{109} The revolutionaries seized power shortly thereafter.

Similar to France and Russia, Iranian revolutionary forces began consolidating authority throughout the country immediately after the change in power.\textsuperscript{110} They established the Revolutionary Courts, Revolu-

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Daniels, supra note 76, at 207–208.
\item See Carr, supra note 76, at 99; Daniels, supra note 76, at 201, 203.
\item See Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 180.
\item Id. at 97; Amin Saikal, The Rise and Fall of the Shah 186–88 (1980).
\item See Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 101–02.
\item See id. at 105, 107–08.
\item Id. at 111.
\item Id. at 114, 116.
\item Id. at 124–25.
\item See id. at 125.
\item See Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 125.
\item See id. at 128; Daniels, supra note 76, at 201, 203, 207–208; Popkin, supra note 76, at 66, 68; Mawdsley, supra note 100, at 102.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
tionary Guard, and Revolutionary Council. The Council was vested with both supreme executive and legislative authority. Additionally, Revolutionary Committees—akin to small militias led by individual mullahs—emerged throughout the country, including over 1500 in Tehran alone.

Iran was overtaken by lawlessness, as civilian militias seized over 300,000 small arms and roamed the country, capturing and killing suspected counter-revolutionaries or members of the old regime. The Revolutionary Courts carried out spontaneous trials, charging and eventually executing many innocent individuals for crimes such as “war against God” and “corrupt[i]on earth.” In the months and years following the revolution and consolidation, the government purged the Iranian armed forces, the Iran-Iraq war plunged the country into military conflict for almost a decade, and hundreds of thousands of refugees fled Iran.

4. Is There Law During a Revolution?

Commentators have come to accept that pervasive violence is a necessary factor of revolution—the violent revolt against the existing legal and political order, geared toward the establishment of an entirely new order. It is therefore necessary to determine what law, if any, governs actors when a revolution occurs, or whether the opposite is true, and the repudiation of l’ancien régime coupled with the idea that all “must be permitted to those who act in the revolutionary direction” suspends legal constraints on actors in the revolutionary context.

112 Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 128.
113 Id. at 133.
114 Id. at 134 (“The Revolutionary Committees (the Komeetehs), were an extension of the local committees that had been formed around district mosques throughout 1978–9 to organize protests . . . .”).
115 Id. at 131–32.
116 Id. at 134–35.
117 See id. at 128–29, 153.
118 See, e.g., Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 179–80 (presenting several scholars’ assertions that violence is inherent to revolution). For Hannah Arendt, violence is not just a frequent externality of revolution; it is in fact constitutive of the new order and required for a revolution to succeed. See Arendt, supra note 9, at 28.
119 Arendt, supra note 9, at 27–28; see Huntington, supra note 53, at 264. This definition borrows most heavily from Arendt’s view, which appears to require conflicts to meet more specific conditions in order to qualify as a “revolution,” excluding the requirement of class struggle in Marxist theory. See Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 178–80.
120 Arendt, supra note 9, at 87; see Huntington, supra note 53, at 266; cf. Frits Kalshoven & Liesbeth Zegveld, Int’l Comm. of the Red Cross, Constraints on the
II. Discussion

A. International Humanitarian Law

The body of international humanitarian law is an important constraint on the waging of armed conflict. There are two main branches of international humanitarian law: the law of The Hague and the law of Geneva. In the area most applicable to revolutions, the 1949 Geneva Convention set forth rules for internal armed conflict. Article 3 therein defines internal armed conflict as “armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties.” The Convention prohibits the mistreatment of “persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause.” It also proscribes the following acts: murder, mutilation, torture, hostage-

Waging of War: An Introduction to International Humanitarian Law 11 (3d ed. 2001) (showing international humanitarian law’s applicability to armed conflict).

121 Kalshoven & Zegveld, supra note 120, at 11.

122 Id. at 19. The law of The Hague includes the 1899 First Hague Peace Conference Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land, with Annexed Regulations. Id. at 21. This Convention and associated regulations set forth rules governing several situations that arise in land warfare, including discerning who qualifies as a combatant, safeguarding civilians, and “the treatment of prisoners of war.” Id. The 1907 Second Hague Peace Conference dealt with advances of wartime techniques and naval warfare. See id. at 23.

123 Id. at 19. The first Geneva Convention in 1864 set forth rules applying to medical personnel on the battlefield. See id. at 27. These rules included a requirement that medical personnel be distinguished by a uniform with a white cross on a red background and that they be treated as neutral parties. See id. Subsequent treaties broadened the categories of individuals entitled to these protections. Id. The 1929 Geneva Conventions adopted a separate treaty dealing with the treatment of prisoners of war in order to improve upon the regulations from the 1899 Hague Conference. Id. This treaty added an outright prohibition “on reprisals against prisoners of war.” Id. at 28.


125 Id.

126 Int’l Comm. of the Red Cross, Glossary: Terms Used in EHL 7 (2009), available at http://ehl.redcross.org/resources/downloads/glossary.pdf. Hors de combat, literally meaning “out of the fight” . . . describes combatants who have been captured or wounded or who are sick or shipwrecked, or who have laid down their arms and surrendered, and thus are no longer in a position to fight.” Id.

127 1949 Geneva Convention, supra note 124, art. 3(1).
taking, “outrages upon personal dignity,” and summary executions.\textsuperscript{128} On May 22, 1956, Libya acceded to the 1949 Geneva Convention.\textsuperscript{129}

\section*{B. International Criminal Law}

Beyond international humanitarian law, the ICC’s jurisdiction may also extend to the revolutionary context.\textsuperscript{130} The Rome Statute establishing the ICC sets forth the conditions to the court’s exercise of jurisdiction in prosecuting war crimes and atrocities.\textsuperscript{131} The court may exercise its jurisdiction over states that ratify or accede to the Rome Statute, and over situations that have been referred to the court.\textsuperscript{132} State parties (pursuant to Article 14 of the Rome Statute), the UN Security Council (acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter), and the Prosecutor, acting \textit{propr\'o motu}, can each make referrals to the ICC.\textsuperscript{133}

Libya is not currently among the 121 states party to the Rome Statute,\textsuperscript{134} but on February 26, 2011, the UN Security Council acted under

\textsuperscript{128} Id. art. 3(I)(a)–(d). A summary execution is one “cond


\textsuperscript{131} Rome Statute, supra note 130, arts. 8, 12–15 (defining war crimes and setting out the bases for jurisdiction, referral, and prosecution, respectively); Scheffer, supra note 130, at 73.

\textsuperscript{132} Rome Statute, supra note 130, arts. 12(1), 13–14.


Chapter VII to refer the situation in Libya to the court. After an investigation, the Prosecutor issued warrants on June 27, 2011, for Muammar Gaddafi, Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi (then the de facto Prime Minister), and Abdullah Al-Senussi (then the head of Military Intelligence).

The ICC has subject-matter jurisdiction over several crimes that may occur during a revolution, including genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The definitions of these crimes encompass many individual acts, such as torture, killing a prisoner of war, or denying prisoners their right to a fair trial.

Under the Rome Statute, any grave breach of the Geneva Convention is a war crime. The two treaties, however, are distinct: whereas the Geneva Convention focuses on individual combatant behavior, the Rome Statute is primarily geared toward “leadership crimes of significant magnitude.” Article 8(1) of the Rome Statute sets forth the “particularity requirement,” stating that “[t]he Court shall have jurisdiction in respect of war crimes in particular when committed as part of a plan or policy or as a part of a large-scale commission of such crimes.” As a result, the particularity requirement is a frequent anchor of the court’s jurisdiction.

C. Other International Law and Regional Law

While the UN Security Council possesses the “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security,” its past practice demonstrates direct involvement in domestic conflicts. The

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137 See Rome Statute, supra note 130, arts. 5–8.
138 Id. art. 8(2) (c).
139 Id. art. 8(2) (a).
140 See Scheffer, supra note 130, at 72.
141 Rome Statute, supra note 130, art. 8(1) (emphasis added); Scheffer, supra note 130, at 72.
142 See Scheffer, supra note 130, at 72 (“This particularity requirement . . . has become the standard for war crimes prosecutions before the Court.”).
143 U.N. Charter art. 24(1); see M. Cherif Bassiouni, The New Wars and the Crisis of Compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict by Non-State Actors, 98 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 711, 801–02 (2008) (stating that the Security Council is “completely free to decide” if and when to intervene in “conflicts . . . of a non-international character.”); Marc M. Boutin, Note, Somalia: The Legality of U.N. Forcible Humanitarian Intervention, 16 Suffolk Transnat’l L.
Security Council has taken several steps to affect events in Libya.\(^{144}\) These steps include referring the situation to the ICC, enforcing an arms embargo, imposing a no-fly zone and asset freeze, subjecting specified individuals to travel restrictions, and authorizing military intervention.\(^{145}\) The Security Council has also worked closely with other organizations in this case, particularly the African Union (AU) and the League of Arab States (Arab League), and has established the UN Support Mission in Libya to assist the country’s post-conflict phase.\(^{146}\) The Security Council can create an \textit{ad hoc} international criminal tribunal if it decides the action is warranted, as it did with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).\(^{147}\)

Libya is a member of the Arab League and the AU.\(^{148}\) Arab states created the Arab League, in part, to “draw closer the relations between [them] and co-ordinate their political activities with the aim of realizing a close collaboration.”\(^{149}\) The League’s policy coordination emphasizes


\(^{145}\) See S.C. Res. 1970, supra note 14, ¶¶ 4, 6, 13, 19, 22; S.C. Res. 1973, supra note 14, pmbl., ¶ 5 (citing the initial involvement of these regional organizations in taking action against the Gaddafi regime).

\(^{146}\) See William A. Schabas, The UN International Criminal Tribunals: The Former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone 48 (2006). Given the referral of the situation in Libya to the ICC, and the fact that the ICC was established to create a more permanent justice system for international war crimes, creation of a Libya tribunal is unlikely, though still possible. See S.C. Res. 1970, supra note 135, pmbl., ¶¶ 4–8; Schabas, supra, at 48.


economic and financial policy, communications, nationality issues, health problems, and social affairs. Each state has one vote on the League Council, which “realiz[es] the purpose of the League and . . . supervis[es] the execution of [its] agreements.” Under Article 7 of the Pact of the Arab League, the organization’s founding treaty, unanimous Council decisions are binding on all member states. Majority decisions of the Council are binding only on those states that voted in favor of them. All decisions of the Council are enforced “in each member state according to its respective basic laws.”

The Arab League contributed to the course of the Libyan conflict. It suspended Libya’s membership and began communicating with the NTC—rather than the Gaddafi regime—soon after hostilities began in early 2011. Additionally, the League recommended the no-fly zone over the country, paving the way for Security Council Resolution 1973. The uniqueness and force of the Arab League’s decision carried particular weight with other nations and the UN Security Council.

The AU, has goals similar to those of the Arab League. Among the AU’s stated objectives are achieving “greater unity . . . between the African countries,” safeguarding sovereignty, and “[p]romot[ing] democratic principles and institutions.” Other objectives include “promot[ing] peace, security, and stability on the continent; . . . promot[ing] and protect[ing] human and peoples’ rights in accordance

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150 Id. art. 2(a)–(f).
151 Id. art. 3.
152 Id. art. 7.
153 Id.
154 Id.
156 See id.
158 See S.C. Res. 1973, supra note 14, pmbl.; S.C. Res. 1970, supra note 135, pmbl; Bronner & Sanger, supra note 155 (The League’s decision to recommend a no-fly zone was an “extraordinary move by the 22-nation bloc—an extremely rare invitation for Western military forces on Arab territory . . . .”)
159 Compare The Constitutive Act of the African Union art. 3(a)–(b), (g), July 11, 2000, 2158 U.N.T.S. 3 [hereinafter AU Constitutive Act] (The AU seeks to “[a]chieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and . . . [d]efend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States . . . .”); with Pact of the League of Arab States, supra note 149, pmbl. (stating an intention “to strengthen the close relations and numerous ties which bind the Arab States, [a]nd . . . respect . . . the independence and sovereignty of these States”).
160 AU Constitutive Act, supra note 159, art. 3(a)–(b), (g).
with . . . relevant human rights instruments;” and “encourag[ing] international cooperation, taking due account of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

The AU is not as clear as the Arab League regarding the extent to which decisions bind member states.\footnote{161} The AU’s Constitutive Act does note, however, that a member state may be subject to sanctions should it refuse to comply with the AU’s policy decisions.\footnote{163} While its decisions may not necessarily bind member states, the AU still wields influence and has the potential to affect actors in Libya.\footnote{164} The AU has been a focus of several Security Council resolutions, including those pertinent to the Libya situation; additionally, its Peace and Security Council has created a “High-Level ad hoc Committee on Libya.”\footnote{165}

In addition to regional organizations, Libya is also a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).\footnote{166} The objectives set forth in the OIC’s Charter include “promot[ing] and protect[ing] human rights and fundamental freedoms including the rights of women, children, youth, elderly and people with special needs as well as the preservation of Islamic family values,” and “reaffirm[ing] its support for the rights of peoples as stipulated in the UN Charter and international law.”\footnote{167} The OIC, endowed with a Permanent Mission to the UN, can make itself heard at the Security Council and among other mem-

\footnote{161} Id. art. 3(c)–(f), (h).
\footnote{162} Compare Pact of the League of Arab States, supra note 149, art. 7 (“The decisions of the Council taken by a unanimous vote shall be binding on all the member States of the League; those that are reached by a majority vote shall bind only those that accept them.”), with AU Constitutive Act, supra note 159, arts. 7, 11 (failing to indicate that “Decisions of the Assembly” are binding on any or all member states and not specifying whether “Decisions of the Executive Council” are binding).
\footnote{163} AU Constitutive Act, supra note 159, art. 23. Such sanctions include “the denial of transport and communications links with other Member States, and other measures of a political and economic nature to be determined by the Assembly.” Id.
ber states, as evidenced during the international community’s reaction to the situation in Libya.168

D. Libyan Domestic Law and Custom

The NTC adopted the transitional Constitutional Declaration on August 3, 2011; its principles currently govern Libya.169 The Declaration guarantees the following to all Libyans:

Libyans shall be equal before the law. They shall enjoy equal civil and political rights, shall have the same opportunities, and be subject to the same public duties and obligations, without discrimination due to religion, doctrine, language, wealth, race, kinship, political opinions, and social status, tribal or eminent or familial loyalty.

. . . .

Human rights and . . . basic freedoms shall be respected by the State. The state shall commit itself to join the international and regional declarations and charters which protect such rights and freedoms. The State shall endeavor to promulgate new charters which shall honor the human being as being [Allah]’s successor on Earth.170

Over the past several decades, Libya has acceded to several treaties and made certain legislative changes that could demonstrate state practice and custom in conformity with international norms respecting human rights.171 According to the International Committee of the Red

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170 Id. arts. 6–7.
Cross, Libya recently made legislative changes that further improved its conformity with such norms. According to Article 56 of the Libyan Military Penal Code, “[a]nyone who abandons kills or harms a wounded under his custody, shall be punished by death.” Outside the military realm, the Gaddafi regime claimed that its “Criminal Code guarantees respect for the human person and prohibits all forms of physical and mental torture.” Several state laws aimed to guarantee the right to a fair trial. Article 60 of the Libyan Code of Criminal Procedure for Armed Personnel states that “after hearing prosecution witnesses, the [court] shall hear defense witnesses, followed by the defendant and the prosecution.” The defendant is entitled to examine said witnesses once again to clarify the facts subject of their testimony. Under Article 64 of the same Code, a defendant is also entitled to an interpreter if he or she does not understand Arabic.

In addition to the preceding indicators of custom, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya signed on to several treaties. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limita-


172 See Libyan Codes of Criminal Procedure Extracts, supra note 171; Libyan Military Penal Code Extracts, supra note 171.


175 Libyan Codes of Criminal Procedure Extracts, supra note 171.

176 Id.

177 Id.

178 Id.

179 U.S. Relations with Libya, U.S. Dep’t State, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5425.htm#history (last updated Jan. 15, 2013). Italy invaded the territory containing Libya and colonized it in 1911, choosing the name “Libya,” which the Greeks had used to refer to most of North Africa. Id. Italy would later relinquish the colony, leaving a monarchy in place. Id. When Gaddafi’s Revolutionary Command Council abolished the monarchy in 1969, it changed the name of the country to the Libyan Arab Republic. Id. On March 2, 1977, Gaddafi changed the country’s name to the Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamanhiya. Id. Its official name is once again Libya. See Libya Const. Declaration 2011, supra note 169, art. 1; see also U.S. Relations with Libya, supra.

180 See supra note 171 (listing relevant treaties to which Libya has acceded).
tions to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.\textsuperscript{181}

\textbf{E. \textit{Islamic Law}}

Both Gaddafi-era and revolutionary actors have utilized Islamic law in developing their respective laws and policies.\textsuperscript{182} Libya’s 1951 Constitution, establishing the country as a constitutional monarchy under King Idris, declared Islam to be the state religion and stipulated that only Muslims could serve as deputies or regents to the king.\textsuperscript{183} Under Gaddafi’s Libya, religion played a different role, as Gaddafi encouraged ordinary Libyans to learn the Quran rather than cede legitimacy to religious scholars.\textsuperscript{184} The NTC’s transitional constitutional proclamation, which revokes prior constitutional documents, likewise emphasizes Islamic jurisprudence (Sharia) as a source of law and Islam as the national religion.\textsuperscript{185}

While much of the scholarship pertaining to Islamic law of war focuses on \textit{jihad} as it applies to non-believers,\textsuperscript{186} some also addresses the question of whether Islamic law of war applies to rebellions or revolutions.\textsuperscript{187} Based on general scholarly consensus and interpretations of \textit{hadith},\textsuperscript{188} Islamic law largely prohibits rising up against a political ruler at all, but it is not completely prohibited: traditional Islam requires an uprising against a leader who openly declares or acts in a way that undeniably confirms his \textit{kufr}, or “unbelief” in Islam.\textsuperscript{189} \textit{Kufr} consists of a complete repudiation of Islam, one of Islam’s fundamental pillars, or of the integrity of the Prophet, but is not to be confused with a sin such as “being too lazy to pray.”\textsuperscript{190}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{181} See sources cited supra note 171.
\item \textsuperscript{182} See \textit{Libya Const. Declaration 2011}, supra note 169, art. 1; Nicholas Hagger, \textit{The Libyan Revolution} 101 (2009).
\item \textsuperscript{183} See \textit{Libya’s Constitution}, Libyan Const. Union, http://www.libyanconstituitionalunion.net/constitution%20of%20libya.htm (last updated June 14, 2012) (arts. 5, 51).
\item \textsuperscript{184} Hagger, supra note 182, at 101.
\item \textsuperscript{185} See \textit{Libya Const. Declaration 2011}, supra note 169, pmbl., arts. 1, 34.
\item \textsuperscript{186} See, e.g., Royal Aal Al-Bayt Inst. for Islamic Thought, \textit{Jihad and the Islamic Law of War} 9–11 (2009).
\item \textsuperscript{187} See id. at 47.
\item \textsuperscript{188} M. Cherif Bassiouuni & Gamal M. Badr, \textit{The Shari’ah: Sources, Interpretation, and Rule-Making}, 1 UCLA J. Islamic & Near E. L. 135, 150–52 (2002). \textit{Hadith} is a subset of Sharia law, second in authority to the Quran, which is comprised of the Prophet Muhammad’s sayings and acts. Id.
\item \textsuperscript{189} Royal Aal Al-Bayt Inst. for Islamic Thought, supra note 186, at 48, 50, 52.
\item \textsuperscript{190} Id. at 48–49.
\end{itemize}
In contrast, according to the same interpretation, Muslims should not rise up against a political ruler who does not declare his *kufr*, regardless of his conduct. The reasoning behind this prohibition lies in the notion that revolutions bring about more “resulting strife, bloodletting, and corruption,” than that which they seek to end. Instead, Muslims are instructed to obey: in one hadith, the Prophet says, “[e]ven if they beat you and take your wealth, listen and obey.”

Other scholars contend that only a war with an “ultimate religious purpose” is permitted. Correcting a violation of Islamic law or enforcing that law is one such purpose. According to Muslim thinker Ibn Khaldun, only *jihads* and wars against rebels are justified. In any case, Islamic law of war prohibits unjustified aggression or attacks against non-combatants, and emphasizes the protection of innocent people. If a rebellion against a government, sometimes known as *baghi*, takes place between two groups of Muslims, the retreating party may not be killed; this does not apply to *baghi* when only one side is Muslim.

III. Analysis

A. Libya in Revolution

As noted earlier, Libya is likely mid-revolution: it is currently undergoing the aftermath of a violent revolt against the existing legal and political order, geared toward the establishment of an entirely new order. Although the revolution’s success is waning as the NTC fails to effectively consolidate power throughout the country, the ensuing

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191 Id. at 50–52.
192 Id. at 50, 52.
193 Id. at 50–51.
195 Id. at 69.
196 Id. at 70–72.
197 See *Royal Aal Al-Bayt Inst. for Islamic Thought*, supra note 186, at vi, 61, 64.
199 See supra text accompanying notes 52–72.
200 See ARENDT, supra note 9, at 27–28; HUNTINGTON, supra note 53, at 264. As previously discussed, this definition borrows most heavily from Arendt’s view, which appears to require conflicts to meet more specific conditions to qualify as revolutions. DANESHVAR, supra note 54, at 178–80; supra notes 63–66 and accompanying text.
201 See ALZWAY & KIRKPATRICK, supra note 32; STACK, supra note 26; *Libya: Leader Says Force Against Tribal Leaders Isn’t Possible*, supra note 35; *Libya: Western Militias Unite, Posing Challenge to Transitional Government*, supra note 28.
political and legal instability in Libya mirrors that of other revolutions.  

B. Resolution and Reconciliation

Despite the historical tradition of violence associated with revolutions, it is clear that a number of international, regional, and religious norms are in place to discourage the use of indiscriminate force that many Libyan revolutionaries currently employ. Given that severe violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have occurred throughout the Gaddafi regime’s rule and in the wake of the revolution, how Libya addresses these crimes is of the utmost importance.

Commentators have identified several reasons to support the administration of “transitional” or “post-conflict justice,” terms used “to denote the range of judicial and non-judicial mechanisms aimed at dealing with a legacy of large-scale abuses of human rights and/or violations of international humanitarian law.” Transitional justice thus “contribute[s] to the restoration and maintenance of peace” in a number of ways.

Transitional justice promotes stability by establishing a “norm of accountability,” thereby deterring repeat offenses. Transitional justice also generates a record of human rights violations, which helps to prevent “collective amnesia and . . . the possibility for revisionism.” Though post-conflict justice can take several forms, reparations constitute a concrete improvement in victims’ lives and foster the rule of law

202 See Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 131–32 (highlighting the “lawlessness,” “chaos,” and independent revolutionary groups that “created a climate of fear and uncertainty” in post-revolution Iran); Daniels, supra note 76, at 207–08 (noting “atrocity[es]” and “bloody contest[es] for power” during the consolidation phase of the Bolshevik Revolution); Popkin, supra note 76, at 42–43, 56, 89 (noting “bloody clashes,” “violent episodes,” a “massacre” and the “Great Terror” during the French Revolution).
203 See supra Part II.
204 Rachel Kerr & Eirin Mobekk, Peace & Justice: Seeking Accountability After War 3–4 (2007) (highlighting “the need for accountability, . . . justice and to foster reconciliation in societies in transition from authoritarian to democratic rule or from war to peace.”); see Whitson, supra note 8 (noting the need for the NTC to address both Gaddaf-era and revolutionary war crimes).
205 Kerr & Mobekk, supra note 204, at 3.
206 Id. at 4.
208 Kerr & Mobekk, supra note 204, at 5.
by reducing community resentment toward other transitional programs such as disarmament and reintegration. Transitional justice also bolsters stability and the rule of law by creating reliable judicial institutions and preventing perpetrators from retaining power. For these reasons, the NTC and its eventual permanent successor should utilize transitional justice mechanisms in order to contribute to a stable, enduring peace in the aftermath of Libya’s revolution.

The question remains as to what form of post-conflict justice is best suited to Libya. The following sections address three broad options for Libya: judicial national responsibility, judicial international responsibility, and truth commissions. The final subsection further argues that rather than any one solution in isolation, a contextualized, multifaceted approach involving international assistance and emphasizing the role of national stakeholders would be ideal.

1. National Responsibility

The ultimate responsibility for prosecuting Gaddafi-era and revolutionary crimes falls with Libya itself. The Rome Statute and the UN
Security Council strongly encourage states to prosecute war criminals themselves and end impunity.\textsuperscript{218} In November 2011, the NTC announced plans to investigate and potentially prosecute Gaddafi-era crimes, which include rapes, “mass murders, disappearances and public executions,” among other offenses.\textsuperscript{219}

Interim Justice Minister Mohammad al-Alagi expressed the NTC’s intention to “emphasize[] fact-finding and accountability rather than punishment.”\textsuperscript{220} With the hope of employing institutional models like those used in Chile and Argentina, and specifically the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the NTC aims “to show the public what happened, the reality.”\textsuperscript{221} Al-Alagi indicated that these eventual institutions would pursue fair trials, particularly for higher-level Gaddafi-era officials.\textsuperscript{222} For those not identified as central criminal figures, al-Alagi seemed to suggest that a law of forgiveness, or amnesty, may be considered.\textsuperscript{223} In his comments, al-Alagi focused particularly on Gaddafi-era officials, and non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch have pointed out that there is no evident investigation into crimes committed by anti-Gaddafi fighters.\textsuperscript{224}

Though it remains to be seen how the reconciliation will progress, any attempt by the NTC to follow through on plans to create an investigative committee will face significant obstacles because Libya’s court system needs significant reform and militias still retain power in most of the country.\textsuperscript{225} Instead of channeling national reconciliation through a carefully-planned and executed truth commission or similar institution, Libyans have pursued a similar revolutionary path to Iran, charging and trying individuals for arbitrary crimes like “treason against the revolution.”\textsuperscript{226} Additionally, the NTC has been incapable of extending control over either prisoners—housed in various detention facilities throughout

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{218} See Rome Statute, supra note 130, pmbl.; see, e.g., S.C. Res. 1674, ¶ 8, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1674 (Apr. 28, 2006).}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{219} See Nossiter, supra note 22.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{220} Id.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{221} Id. (internal quotation marks omitted).}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{222} See id.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{223} See id.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{224} See id.; Libya: Make Urgent Justice System Reforms, supra note 24.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{225} See Nossiter, supra note 22; Delays in a Trial Show Libya’s Legal Disarray, supra note 30; supra text accompanying notes 23–39.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{226} Compare Delays in a Trial Show Libya’s Legal Disarray, supra note 30 (noting the crime of “treason against the revolution” as one of the shortcomings of Libya’s justice system), with Daneshvar, supra note 54, at 134–35 (highlighting the activity of Iranian Revolutionary Courts, which charged numerous individuals with crimes like “war against God”).}
the country—or the militias.\textsuperscript{227} With multiple challenges to its dominance, it is unclear if the NTC will be able to retain control over Libya in a way that would lead to effective national reconciliation.\textsuperscript{228}

Libya’s current political and legal challenges exemplify many of the shortcomings associated with relying solely on national courts to administer post-conflict justice.\textsuperscript{229} Such challenges generate “unrealistic” expectations for national courts to meet in prosecuting war crimes.\textsuperscript{230} Domestic courts are often influenced by concerns of state as well as political pressures when attempting to judge their own citizens.\textsuperscript{231} Often, justice is limited to the trial of the “losers” by the “winners” in a civil war or similar conflict.\textsuperscript{232} In other instances, the judicial system may cease to function independently of an oppressive regime, and is thus incapable of administering appropriate transitional justice.\textsuperscript{233}

Although national courts in Libya may not currently provide the best option for post-conflict reconciliation, the importance of national involvement in any reconciliation process is crucial.\textsuperscript{234} In a 2004 report to the UN Security Council, then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized the need for “active and meaningful participation of national stakeholders,” including political leaders, legal officials, and “key groups” such as displaced persons and women.\textsuperscript{235} The Secretary-General also suggested that the UN should leave decision-making to these domestic stakeholders and carefully consult atrocity victims in

\textsuperscript{227}\textit{Libya: Make Urgent Justice System Reforms, supra note 24.}

\textsuperscript{228} See \textit{Alzway & Kirkpatrick, supra note 32; Stack, supra note 26; Delays in a Trial Show Libya’s Legal Disarray, supra note 30; Libya: Leader Says Force Against Tribal Leaders Isn’t Possible, supra note 35; Libya: Western Militias Unite, Posing Challenge to Transitional Government, supra note 28; Libya: Make Urgent Justice System Reforms, supra note 24; cf. 2011 Secretary-General Report, supra note 207, ¶¶ 6–8 (“For societies emerging from conflict, weak justice and security institutions struggle to manage the wider socio-economic and political challenges inherent in recovery processes.”).}

\textsuperscript{229} Compare \textit{Beigbeder, supra note 213, at 2–3 (noting requirements for successful national justice, such as judicial independence and separation of powers), with Nossiter, supra note 22 (noting that Libya’s court system needs a “top-to-bottom overhaul”), and 2009 Human Rights Report: Libya, U.S. Dep’t State (Mar. 11, 2010), http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/nea/136074.htm (stating that Libya’s judiciary was not independent under the Gaddafi regime).}

\textsuperscript{230} See \textit{Beigbeder, supra note 213, at 2–3.}

\textsuperscript{231} Id. at 3.

\textsuperscript{232} Id.

\textsuperscript{233} See \textit{Barria & Roper, supra note 209, at 5–6; 2009 Human Rights Report: Libya, supra note 229.}

\textsuperscript{234} See 2004 Secretary-General Report, supra note 209, ¶¶ 14–18; Barria & Roper, supra note 209, at 6; Nossiter, supra note 22; Delays in a Trial Show Libya’s Legal Disarray, supra note 30.

\textsuperscript{235} 2004 Secretary-General Report, supra note 209, ¶ 15.
designing any transitional justice mechanism.\textsuperscript{236} Even if national institutions are presently inadequate to effectuate post-conflict justice, Libyan stakeholders should play a central role in shaping any reconciliation model.\textsuperscript{237}

2. International Responsibility: International Criminal Tribunal or Hybrid Criminal Tribunal?

As previously discussed, the UN Security Council referred the situation in Libya to the ICC on February 26, 2011.\textsuperscript{238} The ICC Prosecutor opened cases against top officials of the Gaddafi regime only: the de facto Prime Minister, the then-head of military intelligence, and Gaddafi himself.\textsuperscript{239} While the ICC is primarily designed to prosecute leadership crimes, it also has jurisdiction to try any grave breach of the Geneva Convention.\textsuperscript{240} The Prosecutor could initiate further investigations of the events in Libya, including the apparent summary execution of Gaddafi, which the Prosecutor stated may have been a war crime.\textsuperscript{241} Given the Rome Statute’s “particularity” requirement, however, it is more likely that the Prosecutor will only pursue those “war crimes . . . committed as part of a plan or policy or as a part of a large-scale commission of such crimes.”\textsuperscript{242}

Reliance on the ICC or \textit{ad hoc} international criminal tribunals for administering post-conflict justice may raise significant issues.\textsuperscript{243} Though not subject to identical domestic pressures as state or national courts, international tribunals operate under other influences, such as international politics.\textsuperscript{244} International tribunals “are dependent on states for their creation, their staffing, their financing and their legal, logistical and administrative support,”\textsuperscript{245} and function at the juncture of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{237} See 2004 Secretary-General Report, \textit{supra} note 209, ¶¶ 14–18; Kerr & Morek, \textit{supra} note 204, at 10; Nossiter, \textit{supra} note 22; Delays in a Trial Show Libya’s Legal Disarray, \textit{supra} note 30.
  \item \textsuperscript{238} See \textit{press release} accompanying note 135.
  \item \textsuperscript{239} See Press Release, Int’l Criminal Court, \textit{supra} note 136.
  \item \textsuperscript{240} Rome Statute, \textit{supra} note 130, arts. 5, 8(2)(a), 12–15; Scheffer, \textit{supra} note 130, at 72.
  \item \textsuperscript{241} Scheffer, \textit{supra} note 130, at 73; Gaddafi’s Death May Be a War Crime, \textit{supra} note 19.
  \item \textsuperscript{242} Rome Statute, \textit{supra} note 130, art. 8(1); Schiesser, \textit{supra} note 130, at 72; see \textit{supra} text accompanying notes 139–142.
  \item \textsuperscript{243} See, e.g., Beigbeder, \textit{supra} note 213, at 3–4.
  \item \textsuperscript{244} \textit{Id.} at 4.
  \item \textsuperscript{245} \textit{Id.}
\end{itemize}
law and international politics. Such influence was clear in the Nuremberg and Tokyo military tribunals, as both “exercised victors’ justice” against the respective German and Japanese defendants, but not against members of the Allied forces. Later tribunals such as the ICTR still tend to focus disproportionately on the crimes of the vanquished, rather than the victorious.

Another possibility for Libya is to create a hybrid criminal tribunal akin to those used in East Timor, Cambodia, and Sierra Leone. Because these tribunals require financing and administration by both national and international actors, states and the international community are less likely to raise objections over sovereignty and financing, respectively. These hybrid courts utilize both domestic and international judges, laws, and lawyers. In theory, hybrid tribunals also help reconstruct the post-conflict society’s judicial branch: they “provide greater educational and training benefits than international tribunals, and also offer local ownership of the judicial process while . . . ensuring international standards of justice.” As a result, hybrid tribunal participants can use their experience to establish new, more sound judicial institutions.

In his 2004 report to the Security Council, the Secretary-General noted that in certain situations, mixed tribunals have been beneficial: they “have helped bring justice and hope to victims, combat the impunity of perpetrators and enrich the jurisprudence of international criminal law.” The Secretary-General also noted, however, that both mixed tribunals and international criminal tribunals like the ICTY and ICTR are costly and have failed to support long-term institutional justice administration in post-conflict countries. As a result, such tribunals, standing alone, will be unlikely to promote sustainable peace in Libya.

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247 Beigbeder, supra note 213, at 4.
248 See id.
249 See Barria & Roper, supra note 209, at 7; cf. Nossiter, supra note 22 (discussing several options for Libyan transitional justice mechanisms, including truth commissions and trials).
250 See Barria & Roper, supra note 209, at 7.
251 Id.
252 Id.
253 See id.
254 2004 Secretary-General Report, supra note 209, summary.
255 Id.
256 Compare 2011 Secretary-General Report, supra note 207, ¶ 5 (indicating that events in Libya pose significant challenges to ensuring the rule of law), with 2004 Secretary-
3. Truth Commissions or Amnesties and Rule of Law Reform

Another option for Libyan post-conflict reconciliation is for the NTC to grant amnesty to individuals or groups implicated in Gaddafi-era and revolutionary crimes.257 Numerous post-conflict governments have used amnesties.258 It is unclear, however, whether states can legally grant amnesty for crimes against humanity, given the nature of these crimes and states’ affirmative responsibility under international law to prosecute war criminals.259 Additionally, revolutionary groups can ignore amnesties as they did in Iran, and incoming regimes can grant them merely to avoid challenges to their legitimacy.260

In light of the challenges inherent in international and mixed tribunals, the Secretary-General emphasized the importance of considering truth commissions as a legitimate alternative.261 A truth commission has been defined as:

an ad hoc, autonomous, and victim-centered commission of inquiry set up in and authorized by a state for the primary purposes of (1) investigating and reporting on the principal causes and consequences of broad and relatively recent patterns of severe violence or repression that occurred in the state during determinate periods of abusive rule or conflict,
and (2) making recommendations for their redress and future prevention.\(^{262}\)

Unlike tribunals, truth commissions have none of the trappings of a court: their crucial functions include finding and reporting facts, assessing origins of the conflict, and “dignify[ing] victims through victim-centered public hearings;” they cannot impose penalties on individuals.\(^{263}\) In a truth commission’s final report, however, it can recommend future action, “including the prosecution of individuals, judicial reform, and changes within the military and law enforcement.”\(^{264}\)

A truth commission and its resultant recommendations closely match the NTC’s ideas for post-revolution reconciliation, and provide an opportunity to eventually hold both pro-Gaddafi and revolutionary fighters accountable for their actions.\(^{265}\) According to the Secretary-General, the search for appropriate transitional justice mechanisms, like those required in Libya today, must look beyond international or hybrid tribunals.\(^{266}\) Truth commissions, complemented by later tribunals and accompanying rule of law reforms,\(^{267}\) provide more promise than international or hybrid tribunals alone, which would be “distant from the citizenry” and the goals of establishing a long-term, healthy judicial system.\(^{268}\)

**Conclusion**

Libya erupted in conflict in early 2011, culminating with the overthrow and eventual death of Muammar Gaddafi. Yet that conflict is on-

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\(^{263}\) Id. at 71–72.

\(^{264}\) Barria & Roper, supra note 209, at 9.

\(^{265}\) See 2004 Secretary-General Report, supra note 209, ¶¶ 23–27 (emphasizing the need of consulting with national stakeholders in shaping any transitional justice mechanism); Kerr & Moreek, supra note 204, at 10 (repudiating “a one-size-fits-all approach to transitional justice” and noting the importance of considering national context); Barria & Roper, supra note 209, at 9; Nossiter, supra note 22 (indicating the NTC’s intention to model post-conflict justice mechanisms after institutions such as South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission).

\(^{266}\) Compare 2011 Secretary-General Report, supra note 207, ¶ 5 (highlighting challenges to building the rule of law in Libya), with 2004 Secretary-General Report, supra note 209, ¶¶ 25–26 (stressing the importance of focusing exclusively on international or mixed tribunals as a transitional justice mechanism), and Whitson, supra note 8 (emphasizing Libya’s need to come to terms with both Gaddafi-era and revolutionary crimes).

\(^{267}\) Barria & Roper, supra note 209, at 9.

\(^{268}\) See 2004 Secretary-General Report, supra note 209, summary, ¶¶ 25–26; Barria & Roper, supra note 209, at 7–8; Hafner & King, supra note 236, at 104 (“Tribunals are too remote from the people to accomplish all that has been expected of them.”).
going at the time of this writing, as militias illegally detain suspected Gaddafi supporters, and torture, rape, forcibly displace, and execute non-combatants. Assuming for the purposes of this Note that the Libyan conflict is a revolution, the turbulence in Libya can be located within an established tradition of revolutionary violence. Scholars have accepted violence as an inevitable facet of revolution, but few have addressed the idea that individuals engaging in anomic revolutionary behavior should be held accountable for their crimes.

Multitudes of laws and influences operate on actors in the Libyan context, from international humanitarian law to Islamic law, and despite the abrogation of the Gaddafi-era legal order, law still governs these actors. Because Libyan revolutionaries are not outside the law, it is imperative to creating a sustainable peace in Libya that these actors—whether pro- or anti-Gaddafi, pro- or counter-revolution—be held accountable for their actions.

Among the options for holding these actors accountable, a multifaceted approach would be best to ensure peace in post-conflict Libya. An initial step in doing so would be creating a mandate for a truth commission, whose recommendations would eventually lead to individual prosecutions and to simultaneous strengthening of the rule of law in the country.