

Unmasking the Diversionary Global Imperial Designs in the Invasion of Libya in 2011, ten years on, and counting

CHIDOCHASHE NYERE 

University of Johannesburg: Institute for Pan African Thought and Conversation (IPATC)
chidonyere@gmail.com

Abstract

In this article, I analyse the machinations of Western modernity that were manifested in the 2011 Arab Spring protests in Libya. The principal objective of the paper is three-pronged. Firstly, I critically observe the reasons for the uprisings in Libya. Secondly, I critically analyse the Libyan government's response to the protests. Lastly, I focus on the responses of the NATO-led so-called international community. The article employs a decolonial lens of analysis to address this three-in-one objective, on the basis that the current discussions on Libya's political impasse are deficient in addressing fundamental matters of intersections between regional, and global designs that fuelled the 2011 uprisings in Libya. I seek to answer why, fundamentally, was Libya targeted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), if saving lives as it purported was not achieved, and the intervention only exacerbated the conflict and increased the death toll as a result? The qualitative methodology is used and the paper uses secondary sources that are available in the public domain. The findings are that the Libyan invasion was a targeted and selective application of the legal norm of the responsibility to protect doctrine (R2P), quasi-insulated from legal reproach by being sanctioned by the United Nations (UN). As such, the UN was used as a vehicle for the powerful located in the Global North to punish a member of the weak Global South. Therefore, the Libyan invasion by NATO forces further entrenched the colonial global power structural configuration of the Euro-North American-centric world.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Global Coloniality, Libya, NATO, UN

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The Libyan Leg of the Arab Spring Uprisings

The 20th of October 2021, marked exactly ten years after the demise of President Muammar al Gaddafi of Libya, in the Arab Spring protests that enveloped North Africa and parts of the Arabic world in 2011 (Beaumont & Stephen, 2011). The Arab Spring protests in Libya started on the 15th of February 2011 with the protests in Benghazi. As evinced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (2013b), "Libya's uprising began in February 2011 after security forces in the eastern city of Benghazi opened fire on a protest". Libya's crisis today can be traced as far back as the Lockerbie crisis of Scotland (1987), however, the Arab Spring uprisings were the political context that gave rise to the Libyan invasion. The contention is that this reportage from the BBC is misleading as I will argue that the opening of fire was just propaganda against Gaddafi by Western mass media. Ghosh (2011:16) concurs with Campbell (2013:67) that the local version of the Arab Spring uprisings in Libya started on the 15th of February 2011.

As a result of the uprisings, about 1000 people died in the Libyan protests compared to about 3500 people who died in similar protests in Syria, before the so-called United Nations Security Council (UNSC)-led NATO intervention in Libya. Of course, the toll in Syria has since soared as that conflict continues unabated. Rettig reveals that "before the NATO mission to protect rebels began in mid-March, reports suggested that Gaddafi's forces had already killed over a thousand people". The

irony is that, as a result of the intervention of the UNSC-led NATO in Libya, about 30000 people died (Campbell, 2013:30; Al Jazeera News Agency, 2016; Khan, 2016; Rettig, 2011). This then raises the question, why fundamentally was Libya targeted by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), if saving lives as it purported was not achieved and the intervention only exacerbated the conflict as a result? This is therefore the question that this article seeks to answer while highlighting the implications of Libya's invasion in Africa.

It is established that the Libyan regime under the command of President Gaddafi, was a challenge to the Western bloc that housed NATO (Nazemroaya, 2012:127; Prashad, 2011:6-7). It was only a matter of time before the West's cunning regime-change agenda would be implemented (Zoubir, 2002, p. 33). The contention is that while NATO, in the name of the international community, intervened militarily in Libya's Arab Spring protests, it did not intervene in the same manner in other countries that witnessed the Arab Spring protests too in their domains, if NATO intervened at all. In other words, NATO variably responded to the Libyan leg of the Arab Spring protests, in comparison to Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, and Bahrain, for example. The Ben Ali regime in Tunisia resisted the Arab Spring protests by unleashing state-security forces to quell the rebellion (Al Jazeera News Agency, 2015; Cordall, 2018; The Firstpost, 2012; Graham-Harrison, 2018). The Mubarak regime in Egypt, invariably from Tunisia, suppressed the citizens' protests and used state-sponsored force to liquidate the protests (Elliot, 2011, p. 22; Gosh, 2011, p. 16; Rettig, 2011; British Broadcasting Corporation, 2011b; Al Jazeera News Agency, 2016b).

Similarly, the Al Bashir regime in Sudan identically crushed citizens' protests by unbridling state-security forces on protesters (Rosen, 2012, p. 57; Abdelaziz, 2011; Medani, 2013, p. 37). Furthermore, indistinguishably from Sudan's response, the Ali Abdullah Saleh regime in Yemen equally responded with violence to its local version of the Arab Spring protests (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2013a; Gosh, 2011, p. 16; The Cornell University Library, [n.d.]; Bakri & Goodman, 2011). Invariably from Yemen, the Isa al-Khalifa regime's response was that of violent resistance to the peaceful protests of the local Arab Spring protests (Gosh, 2011, p. 16; McEvers, 2012; Rettig 2011). Other governments, including the international community and NATO particularly, did not intervene, nor interfere in the domestic affairs of these named sovereign states. Put differently, the Libyan regime responded pliantly to all other governments that were affected by the Arab Spring protests. However, the Libyan government's response was to illicit a variably response from NATO, in the name of the so-called international community.

What is of significance and posited here is that "at the first sign of protests in Libya, the UN, through the tripartite alliance of Britain, France and America, expeditiously convened and passed UN Resolutions 1970 and 1973 that made it possible for the trio-led 'international community' to interfere and invade Libya" (Nyere, 2020, p. 104). The response, which was more of a reaction, from NATO to the Libyan crisis of 2011 stands out as divergent from how the international community had responded to similar protests in the respective countries affected. In the Libyan case, the set precedent - that of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of states - was to have an exception. This suggests some form of targeting or some custom-made and selective application of responses or processes.

Suffice it to note that Gosh in his analysis of the Libyan crisis of 2011, characterised Gaddafi as a despot who was a tyrant and dictator; unsurprisingly, this characterisation is underwritten by Western media and neoliberal scholarship (Time, 2011, p. 16; Taylor, 2017). As such, this tyrant and dictator had to be dislodged and silenced. Western-centric mass media and scholarship "pathologise[d], bastardise[d] and demonise[d] and therefore, legitimatise[d] the elimination of Gaddafi" (Nyere, 2020, p. 124). Western media operationalised the elimination of Gaddafi by othering him. Campbell (2013, p. 67) mentions that "Western intelligence services that had cooperated with Gaddafi were

now stroking propaganda against him and mobilising the media to argue that there was an imminent massacre of civilians in Benghazi”. The tainting of Gaddafi through negative characterisation by Western mass media inadvertently placed itself as the standard and canon, with which everything else is judged, therefore, it controls (mis)information (in the case of Libya) and knowledge (Barovick, Romero, Sanburn, Suddath, Tharoor, & Webley, 2011). “Britain’s (British Broadcasting Corporation) France’s (France 24) and the US’ (Cable News Network)” were the vehicle of the West that was used in the propaganda against the Gaddafi regime in 2011 (Nyere, 2020, p. 124).

The Decolonial Framework

Decolonial thought is advanced here in combat of a Euro-North American-centric narrative and tradition of thought that dominated the Libyan narrative of 2011, and still does to this day. Decoloniality is both an epistemological movement and a political movement of resisting colonial and imperial domination of the formerly colonised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 485). Decoloniality is, therefore, meant to dismantle and expose the fault lines of that Eurocentric modernity and disrupt the asymmetrical power relation of the resultant world system (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). It is posited here that the domineering narrative of what transpired in Libya in 2011 is largely European, which is a misnomer given that Libya is in Africa. I argue that it is a Western-style of democracy that was perceived as ideal for Libya (Nyere, 2020), hence there was an agenda to democratise and liberalise Libya (Campbell, 2013, p. 69). Gaddafi was anti-imperial and anti-colonial; it only makes sense to analyse him from his own positionality and locality. As such, a decolonial analysis is meant to evince and affirm the ideals that Gaddafi stood for, and the ideals that he was prepared to ultimately defend with his very life.

The Causes of the Libyan Leg of the Arab Spring Uprisings

Following from the Tunisian leg of Arab Spring uprisings of the 17th of December 2010, that were sparked by the self-setting alight of a street trader, Mohamed Bouazizi, the Egyptian leg of the Arab Spring uprisings was to take off on the 25th of January 2011 (Hess, 2013, p. 254; Plaetzer, 2014, p. 258; Al Jazeera News Agency, 2016). Libya, in the semblance of the Arab Spring protests of the time, was to follow suit starting from the 17th of February 2011 (Hweio, 2012, p. 112). I note that there is an almost one-month gap between the escalation of the protests from one country to the other, in the North African region particularly.

The protests in Libya were coordinated and they began simultaneously in different cities but were intense in the Eastern parts of Libya, where Gaddafi originated from. Corruption by government officials was cited to be the major cause of the Arab Spring protests in Libya (Abdessadok, 2017; Serafimov, 2012). Hweio (2012, p. 112), adds that this alone meant that Libya genuinely needed political reforms internally if it was to realise a democratic society. Of course, other authors pointed out Gaddafi’s dictatorial tendencies as the primitive rationale that sparked the Libyan dissent (Middle East Monitor, 2017; Gosh, 2011, p. 16; Lynch, 2011, p. 69). Yet, others cited that the Libyan state had abused its citizens’ human rights for long as the state systematically excluded minorities from enjoying the natural resources of Libya (Serafimov, 2012; Reuters, 2011; Bouckaert, 2011). Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a myriad of reasons and causes of the Libyan version of the Arab Spring protests, which then suggests that there may very well have been protracted issues that the Libyan government ought to have addressed, but did not, or was still in the process of addressing.

The Response of Libyan Government to its Local Leg of the Arab Spring Uprisings

The responses from NATO and the so-called international community left a lot to be desired. Unverified online messages, including Facebook messages, were used as authoritative sources to determine that Gaddafi had issued threats to his countrymen and women, and that that was the basis to intervene in Libya. As evinced by Gosh (2011, p. 16), quoting Gaddafi who had issued a communication that he would not “succumb to revolutionary rap songs, Facebook pages, and nonviolent demonstrations”. This was interpreted to mean that Gaddafi was to kill his people to protect his interests, whatever those were! Of course, this is deficient and was meant to sanitize the NATO invasion of Libya. Admittedly, Gaddafi’s regime engaged state-security forces in responding to the internal uprisings in Libya, as he ought to have done anyway, but that move was really in preparation for eventualities that ordinarily occur in such scenarios. While, Hweio (2011, p. 112) argues that the Gaddafi regime unleashed violence to the initially peaceful protests in Libya, that observation negates the fact that some Western powers, together with some Arab countries, sponsored rebels in Libya with artillery and weaponry to destabilise Libya (Nazemroaya, 2012, pp. 127-128; Campbell, 2012, p. 59). The sponsoring of arms and weapons was to give credence to the Western false narrative that there was war in Libya, thereby consolidating the West’s *Casus Bello* on Libya. In other words, seeing that the claims that Libya was at war with itself were not going to stand, Western powers had to stage a war by planting the so-called Libyan rebels and providing them with weaponry to convince the world that there was need for military intervention in Libya, yet NATO intended to militarily invade Libya for its own ends (Gazzini, 2011, pp. 2-3).

The Murdering of a Sitting President, Muammar al Gaddafi

President Muammar Gaddafi was killed by remotely piloted missiles while fleeing Sirte, his home area, by US forces (Gazzini, 2012, p. 3). Gaddafi’s convoy was fleeing from a battle between his forces and Western-sponsored ‘rebels’ when it was assaulted by missiles “from a US Air Force base in Nevada that compelled the [Gaddafi] loyalist convoy of 75 vehicles to disperse” (Gazzini, 2012, p. 3). While still trying to contain the battle, Gaddafi’s convoy was further subjected to heavy artillery at the instruction of NATO that commandeered a French jet to discharge “two 500-pound bombs” that charred “a dozen vehicles and killing at least 25 loyalists” (Gazzini, 2012, p. 3). The uncorroborated assumptions that emerged were that this second airstrike by the French at the instruction of NATO, may have caused Gaddafi’s vulnerability; as a result, he sought refuge at a proximate makeshift shelter. It is at the makeshift shelter that Gaddafi was discovered by Libyan ‘rebels’ who shot and killed him (Gazzini, 2012, p. 3). There is no doubt therefore that NATO, the US, Britain, France, and Qatar participated in the killing of a sitting African Head of State and Government of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi, with no consequence, which suggests a regime-change agenda from the very top echelons of the so-called international community. Gazzini (2012, p. 3), Campbell (2012, p. 125), and Hweio (2012, p. 112) attest to the idea that these foreign forces, Britain, France and the US, were responsible for arming ‘rebels’ in the Libyan debacle.

The contradictory explanations that were offered by the then Libyan interim Premier, Mahmoud Jibril, attests to the obvious foul play around the killing of Gaddafi. Jibril’s first explanation stated that Gaddafi had died in an ambulance enroute to a medical facility to receive medical treatment for the wounds he had sustained in the fire exchange. However, that explanation was rebutted by the ambulance driver who put it on record that, in his own words, “I did not try to revive [Gaddafi] because he was already dead”; this, the driver stated when he attended the scene (Gazzini, 2012, p. 2).

Hweio (2012, p. 112) quips that it was the foreign-armed and backed opposition fighters that were to “quickly form the Transitional National Council (TNC)” which had to steer the reformed and democratic Libya. Suffice it to note that Nicolas Sarkozy, the then French president “met the

fledging NTC leaders at the Elysee Palace on March 10 [2011] and surprised everybody (including the opposition themselves) by granting them official recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people” (Gazzini, 2012, p. 4). The granting of official recognition to a warring party is tantamount to coloniality of power, it was not Libyans who recognised the TNC officially, but a European country, France. It demonstrated that, in Libya, the regime-change agenda was foreign to Libya; it belonged to France and it was not the conation of Libyans necessarily. In other words, the TNC was a veneer of a European regime-change agenda in Libya.

What is telling in the Libyan debacle is that three days after the killing of Gaddafi, the TNC announced that it was going to pave the way for Libyans to hold democratic elections within eight months (Hweio, 2012, p. 113); this has not materialised to date because it was never the end goal for European countries to let democracy flourish in that African country. Instead, the chaos that Libya is in today, was Europe’s desired end goal. With chaos, there is no regulation and control of what transpires in Libya. Now Europeans are plundering Libya’s resources without being held to account, as they would have under Gaddafi. Libya, as an African country that belongs to the zone of non-being in the conception of Europe (Maldonado-Torres, 2002, pp. 286-7; Ramose, 2001, p. 2), could not have succeeded as it did under Gaddafi; it had to be altered to fit a European characterisation of Africa, that of being diseased, war-torn, chaotic, uncivilised and therefore requiring a European saviour and messiah.

Analysis of the Libyan Leg of the Arab Spring Uprisings

So far we have established that the singling out of the Libyan regime’s reaction to the Arab Spring protests in its domain spells the West’s long-brewing regime-change agenda. It was as if the West was just waiting for an opportune time to operationalise it. In other words, the West had been standing guard waiting for an opportunity that would justify the reason to declare war on Libya. So, the Arab Spring protests became the *Casus Bello*. Naturally, Gaddafi had to defend his territory. However, his un-reflected statements contributed to his downfall. Gaddafi responded by assuring his nation that he was prepared to “fighting to the end” in defence of Libyan territory (Gosh, 2011, p. 18). I argue that while these sentiments were justified, they were un-reflected as they gave the West an opportunity to misconstrue what Gaddafi meant, and they did just that. Admittedly, Gaddafi’s sentiments seemed to have threatened some quarters of the Libyan population, but they were more a basis for the West to use mass-media to communicate what favoured their regime-change agenda. The West interpreted what Gaddafi said to mean that the Libyans were in imminent danger whereas “Gaddafi was justifiably speaking against Western imperialism in Africa” (Tanoukhi & Mazrui, 2011, p. 151 cited in, Nyere, 2020, p. 127).

Gaddafi’s resistance to Western imperialism and neo-colonialism is significant for Africa because it asserts Africa’s position in the world. Whereas Gaddafi self-identified primarily as a Berber, Mazrui (in Tanoukhi & Mazrui, 2011, p. 15) reveals the other side of Gaddafi that he was “the first major leader of an Arab African country who regarded himself as an African first and an Arab second”. This revelation by Mazrui is an affirmation that Gaddafi saw himself as rooted in Africa; Africa was his primary identity in terms of geo-locale. Therefore, it is correct for Professor Mazrui to highlight a Gaddafi who prided himself as African and “his African constituency as more-sincere and carrying greater promise for fulfilment than his solidarity with the Arabs” (Quoted in, Tanoukhi & Mazrui 2011, p. 151). More importantly, Gaddafi pronounced on his African heritage in July 2011, 3 months before his demise, at the African Union Opening, when he asserted that:

The European experiment is of no use to us ... the area known, as North Africa should be Africanised. Either it will be an anomaly, and will therefore have no future. As an inhabitant of North Africa, I have always

rejected the Barcelona agreement, which regards North Africa as part of the Middle East, with a vocation to integrate with Europe. This is a conspiracy against the integrity of Africa. They have said to me the Barcelona agreement and cooperation with the European Union will be to Libya's advantage. They want to draw us in and make use of us, through the Barcelona agreement, to dismember the African continent, stealing North Africa to make it join with the European Union. This is unacceptable. In any case, look at what has already become of the Barcelona agreement. It is in a comatose condition and could well disappear (*sic*) (Quoted in, Campbell, 2013, p. 19).

Gaddafi correctly asserted his locus of enunciation, i.e., a position that one thinks from. Suffice to note that this position that one thinks from is grounded in space and time; furthermore, it is geographical. One thinks from a particular place. In light of that, Gaddafi was thinking from the geo-locale of Africa, thereby countering the implied argument embedded and disguised in Western epistemologies that purport themselves as objective and a point of reference where all other knowledge is judged and assessed.

Furthermore, in light of the history of conquest and colonialism in Africa, Gaddafi had every right to think in the context of Africa and defend the African position in the face of European imperialism. Africa's interests were what Gaddafi was defending primarily in resisting the NATO invasion of Libya in 2011. Gaddafi's resistance to the monolithic and gigantic NATO-led European assault on Libya was antithetical to the US National Security Council (NSC) document number 68, which explicitly stated that the US was prepared to suspend universal human rights ascribed to all of humanity if those human rights stood in the way of its interests (Chomsky, 1986: 11). In other words, the US, Britain, and France, through NATO, ignored the human rights of Libyans, and by extension Africans' when they assaulted, not only the territorial integrity of Libya which is not only guaranteed by the doctrine of state sovereignty, but by international law. The NATO assault on Libya, and Africa trivialised the doctrine of state sovereignty as well as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as protection was not provided for the so-called vulnerable people of Libya.

More importantly, Western powers through the Euro-Mediterranean Conference (1995) crafted the Barcelona Agreement that sought to co-opt four African countries into the European political and economic territory (Kukushev, 2010). The four countries that Europe hoped to co-opt were Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia; suffice it to note that these countries are Libya's immediate and regional neighbours. Gaddafi had resisted the Barcelona Agreement, and that stood at variance with the European agenda (Huliaras, 2001, p. 11; Zoubir, 2002, p. 35). Gaddafi's position therefore challenged the West's agenda in the Barcelona Agreement, and equally, disturbed the regime-change agenda of the US, Britain and France for Libya. Gaddafi's resistance to Western mechanisations in the Barcelona Agreement reflected his positionality, and that he instead, identified with the African agenda. He defended the integrity of the African Union, which was threatened by the Barcelona Agreement. Unsurprisingly, Western reportage and epistemologies deliberately omit and muffle such dynamics in its analyses of the Arab Spring protests especially as it relates to Libya.

Gaddafi's assertion and insistence that he was African, entrenched his positionality. Thus, by his assertion of his African positionality, Gaddafi alluded to the issue of instrumentalisation of Treaties, Agreements, and international legal outfits, such as R2P, International Humanitarian Law, by imperial powers for their power pursuits. Gaddafi was exposing how western-centered coloniality operates in reconfiguring its power matrices. The Barcelona Agreement was, meant to partition the North African region and join it with the Arabic world to unify the Arabic region with Europe (Kukushev, 2010). In other words, the Barcelona Agreement sought to Europeanise North Africa, via the Arab world. Gaddafi was not one to fall for this ploy. Even more, reason western modernity and coloniality loathed Gaddafi; he could see through the mask and charade they put up.

The response by the international community to Libya's case of its local version of the Arab Spring protests demonstrates an asymmetrical, targeted, vilifying, and selective response. Rosen (2012, p. 57) described the National Congress Party's regime in Sudan as the worst repressive regime of the countries that were affected by the Arab Spring protests (Rosen, 2012, p. 57). Yet, there was no international intervention in Sudan. This shows that the invasion of Libya was a *prima facie* of a long-standing regime change agenda of the West. The West, in its collective, awaited a convenient *Casus Bello* to launch the attack. There is clear uniformity in the responses of the *international community* in the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, and Bahrain. The common thread is that there is non-intervention in the domestic affairs of sovereign states. There is a sudden variance in the response when it comes to Libya because Libya stood antithetical to Western domination and Western control on power matrices and levers that perpetuate coloniality and modernity.

On 20 February 2011, Gaddafi's son, Saiph al-Islam, cautioned of the impending danger that would accompany his father's forceful departure from office, elimination, or demise (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2011a). He "warned that the country would regress into tribal wars and turn into a place where 'everyone wants to become a sheik or an emir'" (Gosh, 2011, p. 19). Al-Islam's warnings were dismissed and branded as a case of sour grapes and did not receive much attention and airplay. In the typical form of Eurocentric modernity, it was instead the views such as those held by Abdelnabi Yasin, a Libyan citizen, and writer who was in self-imposed exile in Athens, Greece, at the time, that dismissed al-Salam's forewarnings rebutted al-Islam's view and argued instead that, "we are not the medieval society that Saif described" (Quoted in, Gosh 2011, p. 19). Hweio (2012, pp. 112-113) validates Saif al-Islam's caution to Libya and the world as, "Gaddafi's regime ended when Gaddafi was captured in his tribal homeland of Sirte and killed by the opposition fighters on October 20, 2011". Saif al-Islam was right in that without Gaddafi, Libya was to descend into tribal wars and conflicts. The chaos and vacuum of leadership to date (2022) bears testimony to it.

Professor of political science, Fathi Baja, was part of the protestors who denounced Gaddafi's rule and was active in the Benghazi region. He now forms part of the Committee that leads Benghazi. He argues that the revolution was about the "creation of a modern Libya, freedom, and democracy based on a pluralistic society, based on human rights, participation of all parts of Libya in creating their government and their institutions" (Gosh, 2011, p. 19). The chaos that was to, later visit Libya, from the first day that the US, French, British and Qatari armies (Gazzini 2012, p. 3; Campbell, 2012, p. 100) engaged in combat with Gaddafi's forces in 2011 is felt today still. To this date (2022), there is not a credible national government in Libya that is recognised by all Libyans, let alone the so-called international community. The chaos that manifests today was foretold by Saif al-Islam; needless to note that his warnings were negated and dismissed as "dire prophecies [that] are typical of failing regimes" (Gosh, 2011, p. 19).

The US, Britain, and France had scores to settle with Gaddafi's Libya following the downing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland (Bowen, 2006, p. 17; Huliaras, 2002p. 11; Zoubir, 2002, p. 34), the downing of *Union de Transports Aériens* (UTA) Flight 772 over the Niger desert (Davies, 2013; Huliaras, 2002, p. 12; Zoubir, 2002, p. 34), and the bombing of the *La Belle* disco in Berlin (Hweio, 2012, p. 112; Zoubir, 2002, p. 33), Germany among other incidences. The perceived close ties between Tripoli and Moscow – a nemesis of the US – precipitated the animosity towards Libya by the US and its allies. Libya's advancement in proposing a gold-backed single-African currency was set to compete with the US dollar (Gwaambuka, 2016; Koenig, 2017). Libya advanced the development of a communication satellite via the Regional African Satellite Communication Organisation (RASCOM) which was set to compete with global mass media corporations (Pougala, 2012, p. 170; RASCOM, n.d.). These developments were challenging the very praxis upon which the current world order rests. As Gaddafi could not be trusted by this Western-centric world system, there was no telling on

how he would use the resources at his disposal to challenge – with reasonable success – the current asymmetrical, biased, hierarchised, patriarchised, and racialised world order.

So, to put a stop to that, the West used the theatrics and optics of a humanitarian crisis in Libya premised on unfounded mass-media overdrive that pushed a narrative that discredited Gaddafi (Gosh, 2011: 16; Campbell, 2013: 67). In the process, arresting all of Gaddafi's efforts reduced Gaddafi's success to ground zero.

Implications of the invasion of Libya and the killing of Gaddafi for Africa

The NATO assault on Libya's Gaddafi was, and still is, tantamount to assaulting all of Africa and the African agenda for developing itself. NATO and its allies molested the territorial integrity of Africa by invading one of Africa's sovereign states. This exposes the attitude and disdain with which NATO and its allies relate to what it 'others'. The superiority that the West thinks it is over other civilisations was further consolidated in the invasion of Libya. African states, at best, issued statements condemning the invasion but did nothing else beyond that rhetoric. Africa could have unionised and imposed sanctions and trade embargos with the NATO-member countries to indicate and register its displeasure, not only in word but deed. Militarily, Africa could not have taken up arms and fought NATO. But economically, Africa could have dented the West's insatiable thirst for oil, gold, platinum, cobalt, and all the other minerals that it so depends on. If Africa does not unite in purpose, it will continue to be trampled upon by the West, especially Britain, France, and the US, and more recently, China.

The killing of Gaddafi signalled to African Heads of State and Governments that they too can be killed without consequence. The West, in that regard, successfully bullied and silenced African Heads of States. By implication, since Heads of State are representative of the general populace, the assault on Libya was an assault on all Africans. The failure of the AU to canvas for the imposition of trade embargos and some sort of sanction on the West on the invasion of Libya, exposes the organisation, AU, and curtails what it represents, the resistance of Western imperialism particularly. Africa cannot afford to continue with business as usual, especially with respect to NATO and its allies. The natural resources and commodities that Africa has should be bargaining power and basis of engagement on Africa's terms, and not be dictated to by other countries regardless of their military might.

Conclusion

This paper demonstrated that the Arab Spring uprisings were hijacked by the West's agenda. It revealed that various governments that had the Arab Spring protests directed at them, resisted the protests and used violence to quell the demonstrations. Notably, NATO and its allies that purport to be the international community did not intervene in those countries. The non-interference stance by NATO and its allies in the Arab Spring-ridden countries consolidates the view that Libya was selectively targeted for the purpose of effecting regime change. The particular application of R2P, via the UN Security Council Resolution 1973, confirms the arbitrariness of the UN, and that casts doubt on the genuineness of a set of international norms that R2P, International Law and International Humanitarian Law are.

More importantly, the assassination of Gaddafi was made possible because the US, Britain, and France interfered in the domestic affairs of Libya. The Arab Spring demonstrations in Libya were hijacked by the US, the UK, and France to effect regime change as Gaddafi had proven to be a force to be reckoned with by the Euro-North American-centric world. Gaddafi's crime was that he had tinkered with the power structure of the current world order and that move was meant to unshackle Africa from its ascribed position of subservience to the West. In the conception of the West, that it

cannot co-exist without domineering other civilisations, Gaddafi had to be stopped, and if it meant killing him in the process, so it was! The asymmetrical power structural configuration that favours the Global North and the Western bloc particularly was simply reconfigured and remains intact.

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Author Profile

Chidochashe Nyere holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Pretoria. He is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Institute for Pan African Thought and Conversation (IPATC), University of Johannesburg. His research areas are decoloniality, decolonial international relations, and decolonial academic literacies. The “*Asymmetry, disparity, inconsistency and double-standards of global coloniality: The Libyan case of 2011*” paper is his most recent 2021 publication.