



## ISIS Europe interview

### In Libya, we must find a non-military solution for peace

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Interview with Giji Gya, Executive Director of the International Security Information Service Europe ([ISIS Europe](#)), Brussels and Associate Fellow at the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior ([FRIDE](#)), Madrid, for [www.euroxpress.es](http://www.euroxpress.es)

**euroXpress.- Western Powers and NATO are considering the possibility of a military intervention in Libya to prevent further bloodshed among the civilian population. Do you foresee such a scenario?**

Giji Gya - At this time, the imposition of a no-fly zone is being considered, but an intervention involving aerial attacks against Libyan territory is another matter altogether. Countries with the requisite capabilities – including in particular the United States and the United Kingdom - are reluctant to intervene militarily after widespread criticism for earlier interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**eXp. - Libyan rebels have stated a preference for an internal resolution to the conflict. In the face of aggression against civilians, where does Western responsibility fall?**

G.G. - There currently appears to be differences of opinion among Libyans. However, following the failures of the international community to intervene during atrocities committed in the 1990s, we now have a global obligation as concerns the “responsibility to protect” (R2P). One aspect of R2P is that individual States hold the primary responsibility to protect their populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. A further aspect is the responsibility of the international community to adopt timely and decisive measures when a particular State is manifestly unable or unwilling to protect its population. For the moment, the priority is that Libyans themselves find a sustainable solution – with the humanitarian support of the international community – to what is so far an internal conflict.

**eXp. - Is the imposition of a no-fly zone a viable alternative with less requirements of the international community?**

G.G. - The imposition of a no-fly zone is not to be taken lightly. It would involve a large-scale multinational operation across a large territory. Furthermore, the added value of such an operation is not yet clear as information from the ground is still quite limited. Indeed, a no-fly zone would not necessarily put an end to the skirmishes currently taking place on the ground.

**eXp. - Would a military intervention without the support of the Arab League and African Union be politically acceptable?**

G.G. - It is important to recall that the only military option under serious consideration at the international level is the imposition of a no-fly zone. However, it is important that these regional organisations – as well as the Gulf Cooperation Council - are strongly engaged in any action that is eventually taken, so that greater regional responsibility is fostered.

**eXp. - In your opinion, what role should the European Union play?**

G.G. - The EU must continue to call for moderation and cessation of violence, continue to contribute funds and collaborate with the UN and countries of the region to alleviate the current humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, the EU will have to re-think its relations with Libya and re-evaluate its development assistance. A difficult process that has already begun, with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton's communication from 8 March "[A partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean](#)". The EU's trade policy with the region must also be re-examined, with emphasis on fair trade rather than free trade.

**eXp. - The International legal backing for intervention accorded by the United Nations Security Council does not appear likely due to presumed vetoes from China and Russia. What room for manoeuvre is left for the US and the EU?**

G.G. - The countries with the capabilities to contribute to a military intervention have affirmed that a UN Security Council Resolution would be necessary. While several Permanent Members of the Security Council are working towards a resolution authorizing a no-fly zone, others such as China have come out in favour of non-intervention in internal affairs. The EU as an organisation does not have a voice on the Security Council, but for the EU, the first condition for an international intervention should be a UN Security Council Resolution.

**eXp. - Following the experience of Iraq, could Libya become another failure of the international community?**

G.G. - The international community remains reluctant to intervene militarily in Libya. The struggles for civil liberties and democracy in North Africa have been processes undertaken "by the people, for the people". Reaching the right balance is delicate: the population of Libya deserves all our support to achieve their own just goals – but we must not forget that we should endeavour above all to find non-military solutions for peace.

See also analysis of EU action under Common Security and Defence Policy at [www.csdpmap.eu](http://www.csdpmap.eu)



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