



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 17, 2012

Report Exposes More War Crimes by Obama-backed Libyan Rebels

Libyan rebels backed by the Obama administration and NATO governments committed a wide range of war crimes, including, in one case, summarily executing and torturing dozens of prisoners of war, possibly including strongman Muammar Gadhafi and his son, the non-profit group Human Rights Watch said in a newly released report. The new Western-backed government ruling parts of Libya out of Tripoli, meanwhile, has failed to investigate or prosecute the well-documented abuses.



The latest 58-page report, dubbed [Death of a Dictator: Bloody Vengeance in Sirte](#), highlights new evidence indicating that the former despot and members of his convoy were brutalized and executed by rebel forces in violation of the laws of war. After being hit with NATO missiles while attempting to flee, the Libyan strongman and his men were captured by opposition fighters and placed under “total control.” Then they were killed.

“The evidence suggests that opposition militias summarily executed at least 66 captured members of Gaddafi’s convoy in Sirte,” [said](#) emergencies director Peter Bouckaert with New York-based Human Rights Watch, adding that the ex-despot’s son was apparently executed as well. “It also looks as if they took Mutassim Gaddafi, who had been wounded, to Misrata and killed him there. Our findings call into question the assertion by Libyan authorities that Muammar Gaddafi was killed in crossfire, and not after his capture.”

As *The New American* [reported](#) at the time, suspicions about whether Gadhafi had been unlawfully executed and even sodomized after his capture were running rampant. More than a few entities, including the budding Libyan regime, pledged to investigate or called for a proper investigation. That apparently never happened.

The Libyan “National Transitional Council” (NTC) — [comprised largely of Islamic extremists, former regime officials, and others](#) — insisted repeatedly that the dictator had been killed in the crossfire amid a desperate battle. However, it now appears almost certain that, as suspected, he was actually killed by rebels after being subdued. That would be a violation of due process and the laws of war, according to experts.

Human Rights Watch also reported that Gadhafi was stabbed in the buttocks with a bayonet before being executed. His son, who was also captured alive, was taken to another city and appeared on camera. Not long after that, he was found dead with a wound across his throat that was not previously visible in the film.

The Libyan militias said to be responsible continue to run wild, in many cases holding influential positions of authority in the new Libya. Most recently, one of the armed rebel groups [killed the U.S. ambassador and several other American personnel](#).



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Human Rights Watch also uncovered new evidence that dozens of Gadhafi loyalists captured outside of Sirte were “summarily executed” as well, perhaps as many as 66. Among the most damaging findings, the group said, is a mobile phone video taken by a rebel that shows a large group of detainees alive and well while being abused by opposition forces. Morgue records helped identify the victims and apparently confirmed that at least 17 of the prisoners shown in the clip were later executed.

“In case after case we investigated, the individuals had been videotaped alive by the opposition fighters who held them, and then found dead hours later,” Human Rights Watch’s Bouckaert said in a statement. “Our strongest evidence for these executions comes from the footage filmed by the opposition forces, and the physical evidence at the Mahari Hotel, where the 66 bodies were found.”

According to the human rights organization, Libyan authorities have an obligation to investigate what happened because killing captured combatants is a war crime. “These killings constitute the largest documented execution of detainees by anti-Gaddafi forces during the eight-month conflict in Libya,” Human Rights Watch said in announcing the results of its investigation. So far, little to nothing has been done despite official promises to investigate, the group added.

Some of the bodies that were found even had their hands tied behind their backs, the group reported after its research team visited the site where over 50 dead regime loyalists were found. Witnesses including officers in rebel militias and surviving members of Gadhafi’s convoy also corroborated the evidence of mass executions.

Among the victims cited by Human Rights Watch was 29-year-old navy recruit Ahmed Ali Yusuf al-Gharyani from the city of Tawergha. That town, largely populated by blacks, was [essentially “wiped off the map” by the Western-backed rebels](#) in what critics said was “ethnic cleansing” and even “genocide” aimed at exterminating Libyan blacks, who were seen as supportive of the regime. Many of the massacred victims also had their hands tied behind their backs.

Human Rights Watch said the new regime needed to get a grip on the armed groups ruling over much of the nation. “One of Libya’s greatest challenges is to bring its well-armed militias under control and end their abuses,” Bouckaert explained. “A good first step would be to investigate the mass executions of October 20, 2011, the most serious abuse by opposition forces documented so far.”

Analysts commenting on the new report said the revelations were yet another embarrassment to Western powers that armed, trained, funded, and supported opposition forces, many with open links to al-Qaeda. It also raised questions about the wisdom of supporting “regime change” in the first place — especially after so much of the war propaganda was exposed as bogus.

However, this is hardly the first time that the militias and their NATO backers have been [accused of committing wanton war crimes in Libya](#). Previously documented atrocities and crimes committed by opposition forces include the [“ethnic cleansing” of blacks, rapes, mass murder, extortion, and more](#). Even the United Nations, which purported to authorize the “no-fly zone” cited by NATO to justify the bloodbath in Libya, was forced to [acknowledge](#) the widespread accusations.

“There are allegations of crimes committed by NATO forces, allegations of crimes committed by NTC-related forces, including the alleged detention of civilians suspected to be mercenaries and the alleged killing of detained combatants,” chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo with the self-styled “International Criminal Court” [told](#) the UN Security Council late last year. “These allegations will be examined impartially and independently by the Office.”

NATO powers were heavily criticized for a wide range of issues, including their overwhelming support



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for rebel factions that in [many cases were led by known terror leaders](#) — more than a few of whom were openly affiliated with al-Qaeda and had previously battled U.S. troops from Iraq to Afghanistan. One of those militia leaders, [former Guantanamo detainee Abu Sufian Ibrahim Ahmed Hamuda bin Qumu](#), was later reportedly involved in the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi that left the American ambassador and several others dead.

The Western military assault, including the American bombing campaign [unconstitutionally ordered by President Obama](#), also came under fire for mass civilian casualties and attacks on non-military infrastructure. A NATO aerial campaign near the Libyan city of Zlitan, for example, [reportedly](#) left around 100 civilians dead — over half women and children. More than a few observers said the actions in several attacks constituted war crimes.

While Libya continues to deal with the fallout, much of the nation is [now run by out-of-control militias amid a dramatic resurgence of Islamic extremism](#). Weapons from the conflict have [been spread throughout the region](#), helping to spark instability and coups. Western powers and especially Obama, however, have already moved on to Syria, where a similar campaign of [support for ruthless Islamic extremists](#) is aimed at deposing secular strongman Bashar al-Assad.

According to the UN and human rights groups, the U.S.-backed Syrian rebels — many of them [jihadists seeking a dictatorship under Sharia law](#) — are also engaged in widespread war crimes. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed by both sides in the conflict. Critics of the bloody campaign have even accused the U.S.-backed rebels of [ethnic cleansing the nation's sizeable Christian population](#), too.

The latest Human Rights Watch report on war crimes committed by Western-backed rebels in Libya should serve as another reminder of why interventionism leads to “blowback” and anti-U.S. sentiment. Still, few experts expect that anyone with real power will be held accountable for the latest war crimes revelations — especially Western government leaders or the warmongering powers behind the recent wars.

2011 photo of revolutionary fighter zipping up a body bag of on of more than 30 Gadhafi loyalists in Sirte, Libya: AP Images

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