



AFRICA FORUM

**FORUM FOR FORMER AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
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**AN URGENT APPEAL
ON LIBYA
BY
FORMER AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

May 25, 2011

**H.E. Chairperson Jean Ping
African Union Commission
African Union Headquarters
ADDIS ABABA**

Your Excellency,

All of us, signatories to this Appeal, know intimately what it means when Africans turn one against the other, and decide to resolve their differences by spilling one another's blood.

We are convinced that no African sleeps and can sleep easily, while our fellow Africans in Libya continue to slaughter one another.

It is now almost two months since the UN Security Council adopted its Resolution 1973 on Libya.

The determined military actions taken by sections of the international community since then have not ended the Libyan conflict.

We are gravely concerned that especially these military interventions, now under the leadership of NATO, have not brought us any closer to a durable resolution of this conflict.

Rather, in our view, they have made it even more difficult to achieve this result both in the short and the long term.

It is very obvious that the perpetuation of the current violent conflict, with no end in sight, including the further exacerbation of the animosities among the Libyans and the destruction of infrastructure, will make it ever more difficult to reconstruct Libya as a united, democratic and peaceful country.

We hold the considered view that the continuing military confrontation will neither solve the challenges facing Libya nor establish the basis for the achievement of the national reconciliation the country will need to set itself on a new path.

In this regard we regret deeply that, so far, it seems to have proved impossible to implement the Plan and Programme adopted by the African Union peacefully to end the Libyan conflict through meaningful negotiations.

This is especially important for us because, first and foremost, Libya is an African country and a Member State of the AU.

In addition, it is also inevitable that Africa carries and will carry the principal burden of the consequences of this country's conflict.

Inevitably, Africa will host the largest numbers of displaced Libyans.

Weapons and combatants generated by the conflict will ineluctably migrate especially into the Sahel countries, south of Libya, resulting in the protracted destabilisation of an entire and important African region.

Many African countries will have to receive back their citizens who had legitimate income-earning jobs in Libya. This will result in the further entrenchment of poverty in these countries, including through ending the remittances on which large numbers of Africans depend.

The one and only way to address all the negative consequences of the current military conflict we have just mentioned, affecting both Libya and its African neighbourhood, is immediately to encourage the Libyan belligerents to enter into negotiations to arrive at a peaceful resolution of their important differences.

These negotiations must necessarily be based on the objective to reconstruct and develop Libya as a united and democratic country.

We therefore call on the African Union vigorously to pursue the Peace Plan and Programme it has already decided.

We further appeal to the rest of the international community, especially the UN Security Council, fully to respect Africa's principal responsibility to take the lead in terms of resolving what is a conflict in an African country, whose major consequences our Continent will have to bear.

In this regard, we express our full support for the request of the AU Commission conveyed to all AU Member States, that they should convene in an Extraordinary Assembly of Heads of State and Government no later than the end of this month.

We urge all Member States positively and immediately to respond to this critically important request to convene in an Extraordinary Assembly.

We trust that the Extraordinary Assembly will adopt all necessary decisions about what Africa must do, urgently to facilitate a peaceful and speedy end of the Libyan conflict.

We have no doubt that the sister people of Libya want peace now. We are also convinced that they fervently desire to live and work together, at peace with one another, and as members of one united nation.

We also know that millions of Africans, throughout our Continent, expect and pray that their premier organisation, the African Union, will spare no effort urgently to intervene to end the immense suffering and agony of the sister people of Libya, which is also truly an African agony.

At the same time we must remain mindful of the cardinal responsibilities of the Libyan government for the welfare and well-being of the people, the need to respect the legitimate aspirations of the citizens and the need to guard against impunity.

The costly crisis in Libya has emphasised the fundamental truth that the absolute imperative for the rest of the world to respect our right and duty as Africans to determine our destiny is also a matter of life and death for millions of Africans.

Our fellow Libyan Africans need peace now, not more war!

They deserve an opportunity to embark on the road to peace as a matter of extreme urgency, away from a dead-end and deadly option of a vain attempt to resolve their differences by continuing resort to senseless violence by all concerned.

Those who block the road to a peaceful, negotiated resolution of the Libyan conflict, if these exist, should know that on their hands will be the blood of many innocent Africans.

For its part, the African Union must act firmly to discharge its truly sacred responsibility to bring about peace among the Africans, and peace between Africa and the rest of the world.

Signed by:

1. HE Dr Kenneth David Kaunda, Former president of the Republic of Zambia
2. HE Sir Ketumile Joni Quett Masire, Former President of the Republic of Botswana
3. HE Samuel Daniel Shafiishuna Nujoma, Former President of the Republic of Namibia
4. HE Olusegun Mathew Okikiola Aremu Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
5. HE Dr Abdul Salam Abubakar, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
6. HE Pierre Buyoya, Former President of the Republic of Burundi
7. HE Thabo Mbeki, Former President of the Republic of South Africa
8. HE Edem Kodjo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Togo and Former Secretary General of the OAU
9. HE Joaquim Alberto Chissano, Former President of the Republic of Mozambique and Chairperson of Africa Forum
10. HE Cassam Uteem, Former President of the Republic of Mauritius
11. HE Karl Auguste Offmann, Former President of the Republic of Mauritius
12. HE Nicephore Dieudonne Soglo. Former President of the Republic of Benin and Vice Chairperson of Africa Forum
13. HE Antonio Manuel Mascarenhas Monteiro, Former President of the Republic of Cape Verde
14. HE Aristides Maria Pereira, Former President of the Republic of Cape Verde
15. HE Flt Lt Jerry John Rawlings, Former President of the Republic of Ghana
16. HE John Kufuor, Former President of the Republic of Ghana
17. HE Henrique Pereira Rosa, Former President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau
18. HE Prof Amos Claudius Sawyer, Former President of the Republic of Liberia
19. HE Dr Elson Bakili Muluzi, Former President of the Republic of Malawi
20. HE Gen Dr Yakubu Jack Dan-Yumma Gowon, Former President of the Republic of Nigeria
21. HE Miguel dos Anjos Trovoada. Former President of the Republic of Principe
22. HE Manuel Pinto da Costa, Former President of the Republic of Principe

23. HE Benjamin William Mkapa, Former President of the Republic of Tanzania
24. HE Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Former President of the Republic of Tanzania
25. HE William Eteki Mboumoua, Former Secretary General of OAU
26. HE Boutros Boutros Ghali, Former UN Secretary General
27. HE Prof Adedeji Adebayo, Former UN Under- Secretary General and Executive Secretary of UN Economic Commission for Africa(UNECA)
28. HE Chief Eleazar Chukwuemeka Anyaoku, Former Secretary General of the Commonwealth
29. H.E. Dr Babacar N'Diaye, Former President of the African Development Bank
30. HE Salim Ahmed Salim, Former Secretary General of the OAU