



**AN INCONVENIENT GENOCIDE:
ETHNIC CLEANSING AND RACIAL LYNCHING IN LIBYA**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 10-20-11, p.A7

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

It is, perhaps, part of our self-focused consciousness and convenient forgetfulness as a country and our not wanting to know or acknowledge the real suffering of others and especially our role in it, that most Americans have little or no knowledge or memory of or moral concern for the people of a town and region called Tawargha, which stands as a symbol and sign of the widespread ethnic cleansing and racist lynching in the wake of the US/NATO aggression against Libya. Indeed, with the exception of the 9/11 attack, Americans have not experienced a major attack and cannot imagine the daily, destructive and deadly violence visited upon the vulnerable peoples of the world, not only by their own governments, but often by the U.S. and its allies who, as a matter of policy prop up and protect these brutal governments.

And so the racist killings, torture, rapes, dispossession, dispelling, detention and brutal oppression of African Libyans as distinct from Arab Libyans or mixed Libyans, as well as Africans from other countries, are seen as unfortunate occurrences and an embarrassing knowledge not to be placed or discussed on the nightly news. For as horrible and as horrifying as it might seem to the moral mind sensitive to human suffering, for the imperial powers, the compelling concern is to cover up this “inconvenient genocide,” rather than admit, expose or halt it. It is to control the damage to the illusion of humanitarian intervention, hide the role the U.S., Britain and France (NATO) had in arming, advising, unleashing and supporting the racist rebels who initiated this genocidal campaign, wipe out remaining resistance, and keep the imperial project of conquest, recolonization and resource plunder relatively uncomplicated and on course.

It is important to assert here that the use of the word “genocide” is no exaggeration, but is meant to call rightful attention to the targeting, killing and brutal treatment of

Africans which fits under Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It defines as genocide “acts committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.” These acts include: “killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (and) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.” Thus, no one can deny that the generalized, deadly and sustained assault on African Libyans and other Africans in Libya represent a genocidal campaign. Likewise, the campaign to remove them from various towns and cities in Libya represent a form of genocide called in more recent times “ethnic cleansing.”

It is also important to note that Article 4 of this Convention provides for punishment for such acts of genocide, stating that “persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall be punished, whether they are constitutional rulers, public officials or private individuals.” Thus, these leaders, middle level officials and others who ordered, supported and participated in this genocidal campaign must be punished. There is also a need to hold accountable in international forums and venues the leaders of the U.S. and NATO. For, not only is their aggression against the Libyan people, a violation of international law and human morality, they are also complicit in the rebels racist campaigns, having created, encouraged and coddled them, and thus liable under Article 3.

The U.S. and NATO had come to bomb Libya under the pretext and pretention of humanitarian concerns, of saving the Libyan people from their previously embraced, now demonized leader, needing to be captured and killed as a savage lesson to others in opposition and offered up repeatedly as

**AN INCONVENIENT GENOCIDE:
ETHNIC CLEANSING AND RACIAL LYNCHING IN LIBYA**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 10-20-11, p.A7

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

spectacle-entertainment on the nightly news. But there is no visible or voiced humanitarian concern now about saving the Libyan people from the racist thugs that the U.S. and NATO have installed as a transitional government. There is no reference to Rwanda now, no expressed horror at the hideous pictures and reports of decomposing, decapitated and mutilated bodies of African Libyans and migrants, or others, seized and killed in their homes, in hospitals, on stretchers and in streets and alleys and in jails, prisons and make-shift detention centers. There is only the silence that seeks to hide criminal complicity, shield the guilty and continue the plunder at all costs, especially to vulnerable others.

Call it what you will or want, the events still unfolding in Libya do not resemble a revolution and have only cosmetic media-created characteristics of a popular rebellion. After all, how does a group lynch its way to liberation? Indeed, the so-called rebellion was cultivated and conducted from the beginning by imperial outside forces with the conscious collaboration of selective inside allies, often returned exiles, whom the U.S. and NATO grew and groomed, manipulating the rightful will of the Libyan people for sovereignty, self-determination and control of their own resources.

The aim was never to protect civilians or develop democracy, but rather to seize and control Libya's vast oil fields, its extensive water resources and secure strategic African space for a major military base. And African Libyans and immigrants became targets in a war campaign that used them as pawns to create a focus for an anonymous "movement," play on historical and recurrent racial hostility, realign Libya with Europe instead of Africa, and reinforce a racial hierarchy in the new European-oriented Libya.

Indeed, the armed groups under U.S. and NATO control took the lead in attacking and

lynching Africans—citizens and migrants; took up the corporate media rumors of African mercenaries; identified hatred of Africans with the cultivated hatred for Muammar Qaddafi's government; and refused to intervene to save the lives of, perhaps, thousands of innocent persons.

The need, then, is not to betray our African brothers and sisters by silence or acceptance of the myths and mystification of the U.S. and NATO so-called "salvational" role. This means calling for and urging our government representatives to work for an immediate halt to racial assault and lynching and the establishment of security for African Libyans and African immigrants; visits by representatives of the African Union, the Red Cross and human rights organizations to determine the status and secure humane treatment of Africans, citizens and immigrants; reaffirmation of the rights of African Libyans in their own country to all protection, opportunities and benefits; safe passage and humane treatment for immigrants and refugees returning to their home countries; release of all Africans rounded up in mass arrests and clearly held for racial, racist and political reasons; trial and punishment of those responsible for genocide and war crimes; and of course, the end of this criminal intervention in Libya.

Surely, if we honor our most ancient and yet ongoing ethical tradition, we must stand up in the midst of this culpable and sinister silence, "bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place among those who have no voice," the vulnerable and innocent, those whose lands are laid waste and whose lives are disrupted and destroyed without pity or justifiable purpose. Anything less is unworthy of the history and name African.