



## Security Council authorizes 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians in Libya

17 March 2011 –The Security Council today effectively authorized the use of force in Libya to protect civilians from attack, specifically in the eastern city of Benghazi, which Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi has reportedly said he will storm tonight to end a revolt against his regime.

Acting under [Chapter VII of the UN Charter](#), which provides for the use of force if needed, the Council adopted a resolution by 10 votes to zero, with five abstentions, authorizing Member States "to take all necessary measures... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamhariya, including Benghazi, while excluding an occupation force."

The abstentions included China and Russia, which have the power of veto, as well as Brazil, Germany and India.

Expressing grave concern at the deteriorating situation, the escalation of violence, and the heavy civilian casualties, the Council established a no-fly zone, banning all flights – except those for humanitarian purposes – in Libyan airspace in order to help protect civilians. It specifically calls on Arab League states to cooperate with other Member States in taking the necessary measures.

The Arab League last weekend requested the Council to impose a no-fly zone after Mr. Qadhafi was reported to have used warplanes, warships, tanks and artillery to seize back cities taken over in what started out a month ago as mass protests by peaceful civilians seeking an end to his 41-year rule.

The resolution further strengthens an arms embargo that the Council imposed last month when it unanimously approved sanctions against the Libyan authorities, freezing the assets of its leaders and referring the ongoing violent repression of civilian demonstrators to the International Criminal Court ([ICC](#)).

The Council called on Member States today to ensure strict implementation of the embargo, including through inspection of suspect ships on the high seas and of planes going to or from Libya, deplored the flow of mercenaries into Libya whom, according to media reports, Mr. Qadhafi has recruited.

Demanding an immediate ceasefire and a complete end to violence and all attacks against and abuse of civilians, and condemning the "gross and systematic violation of human rights, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances and summary executions," the Council noted that the attacks currently taking place may amount to crimes against humanity.

ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo has already opened an investigation into Mr. Qadhafi, some of his sons and members of his inner circle for such crimes in repressing peaceful protesters. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said Mr. Qadhafi lost his legitimacy when he declared war on his people.

Mr. Ban spoke with Libya's Foreign Minister Musa Kusa by phone yesterday and, through him, urged the authorities to immediately halt the violence against civilians.

In its resolution, the Council condemned acts of violence and intimidation committed by the Libyan authorities against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, and the head of the UN agency entrusted with promoting the right to freedom of expression today urged the authorities to respect human life and ensure that citizens are not denied their rights, notably the right of children to education in a safe environment.

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Director-General Irina Bokova reiterated her previous call to the Government to respect freedom of expression and ensure that journalists can carry out their duties freely without fear of intimidation or attack.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP), meanwhile, has boosted aid delivery to people fleeing the violence in Libya with the provision of more than 15,000 daily hot meals cooked in a transit camp along Libya's border with Tunisia. Some 300,000 people, mainly migrant workers, have fled over the borders to Tunisia and Egypt in the past month.

Over the past week, WFP and its partner humanitarian organizations have been running the two largest food distribution points in Choucha transit camp on the Tunisian border. The centre hosts between 15,000 and 18,000 people, mainly Bangladeshi and African migrant workers, waiting to depart for their home countries.