

Libya Climate Crisis Linked to Pentagon-NATO Intervention of 2011

Western foreign policy has destroyed the capacity of Libya and the Kingdom of Morocco to coordinate relief efforts amid the worsening effects of climate change

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Two devastating events have struck the North African states of the Kingdom of Morocco and Libya leaving thousands dead and tens of thousands more unaccounted for by international humanitarian agencies.

The flooding from Storm Daniel and two dam bursts in the North African state of Libya in and around the city of Derna is clearly related to the destruction of the country in 2011 at the aegis of the United States, Britain, France and their allies within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Since February 2011, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), State Department and the White House under former President Barack Obama set out to overthrow the ruling Jamahiriya socialist system led by the martyred statesman and Pan-Africanist Col. Muammar Gaddafi. Hillary Clinton, the then Secretary of State under Obama, laughed publicly about the assassination of Gaddafi which occurred amid the blanket bombing of the country by Pentagon and NATO forces.

After the overthrow of the Jamahiriya government there has been complete chaos in Libya as the imperialist states have attempted to remake the oil-rich nation in a framework of neo-colonial subservience to the leading western industrial states. There has been the absolute failure to form a unified administration with at least two centers of purported authority. One in Tripoli, the dysfunctional "Government of National Unity", and yet another putative regime in the northeast of the country in Tobruk.

The capital in Tobruk, the so-called "House of Representatives" of the eastern region which claims to be the legitimate regime as well, was set alight during protest in 2022. Mass demonstrations occurred across the country in reaction to the disunity which has become

institutionalized since the 2011 U.S.-NATO engineered counter-revolution.

These divisions and the lingering impact of the imperialist-instigated war of 2011 has left Libya defenseless in regard to preparations for the severe weather events which are plaguing areas all across Africa and the world. The necessary maintenance of two dams in the northeast areas of Libya have not taken place due to the lack of uniformity and the ongoing clashes between the western-backed factions which continue to battle over the ruins of the Libyan state.

At present the flooding and mass deaths are being reported in a distorted manner by the corporate and government-controlled media outlets based in the imperialist countries. One source, [CBS News](#), said of the present situation:

“More than 2,000 bodies had been collected as of Wednesday (Sept. 13) morning. More than half of them were quickly buried in mass graves in Derna, according to Othman Abduljaleel, the health minister for the government that runs eastern Libya, the Associated Press reported. But Libya effectively has two governments – one in the east and one in the west – each backed by various well-armed factions and militias. The North African nation has writhed through violence and chaos amid a civil war since 2014, and that fragmentation could prove a major hurdle to getting vital international aid to the people who need it most in the wake of the natural disaster. Coordinating the distribution of aid between the separate administrations — and ensuring it can be done safely in a region full of heavily armed militias and in the absence of a central government — will be a massive challenge.”

Obviously, the clashes over the control of Tripoli in 2014 were a direct result of the imperialist war some three years earlier. The balkanization of Libya is a clear by-product of the massive bombings by NATO and its allies along with the imposition of a neo-colonial regime which had no basis for the governance of the country. The so-called civil war in Libya is a manifestation of the failure of imperialist foreign policy in North Africa.

With the destruction of Libya, instability has spread throughout North and West Africa. This level of social disruptions has drained national resources and impeded any efforts to foster national and regional development.

Derna, a city of approximately 100,000 people, has been left in complete ruins. The actual number of those killed cannot not be accurately calculated due to the massive amounts of flood waters and rubble from collapsed buildings.

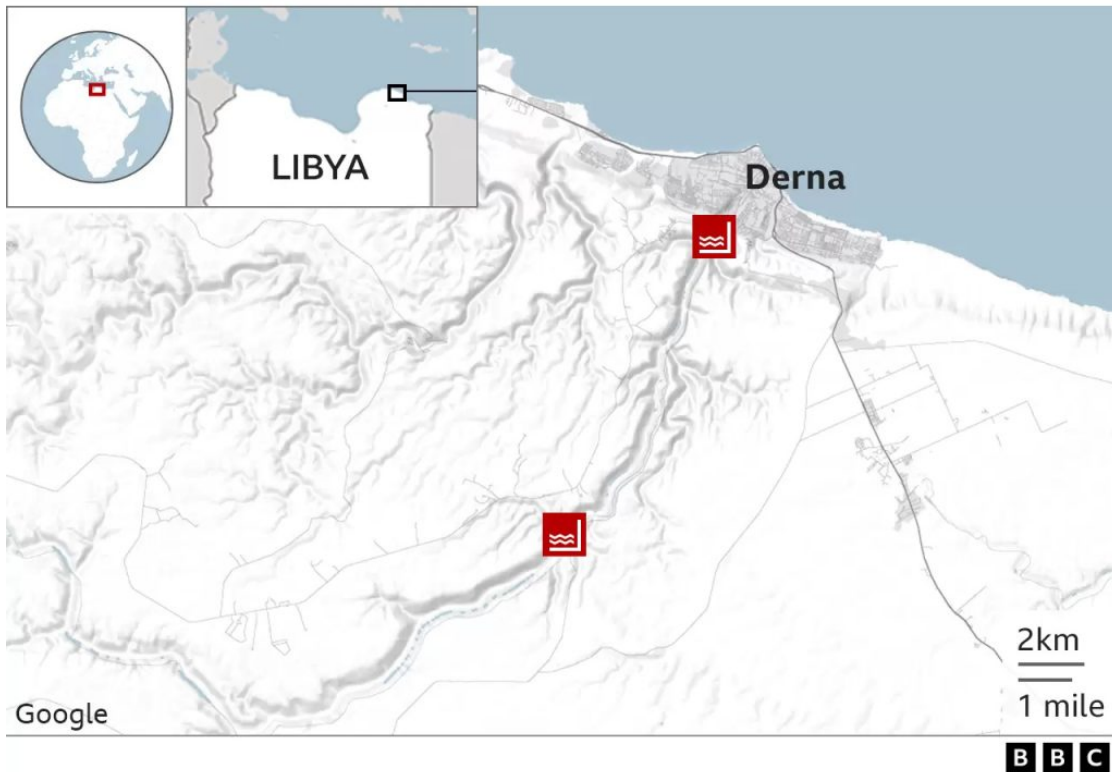


One scientist in the U.S. reflected on the causes of the current disaster in Libya, [noting](#):

“‘Although Storm Daniel caused the devastating flood, a combination of factors exacerbated the nation’s vulnerability to natural hazards, resulting in enormous casualties,’ says Virginia Tech geophysicist Manoochehr Shirzaei. He points to poor infrastructure, years of civil war, under-investment in flood protection, rising sea levels, and land subsidence. The worst damage is in Derna where neighborhoods have been washed away after two dams broke. ‘The heavy rain in Libya appears to have overwhelmed the dams, leading to catastrophic flooding and devastating loss in the city,’ says Jennifer Irish, professor of civil and environmental engineering in the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech. ‘This situation is similar to the catastrophic levee failure and flooding in New Orleans in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina’s storm surge overwhelmed the city’s levee system.’”

This comparison between the Derna floods and the Katrina disaster of 2005 is quite appropriate since it is the capitalist and imperialist system emanating from the U.S. which has set the standard for privatization of state resources and deliberate disinvestment in infrastructure. The refusal to take serious action to halt the impact of climate change is only a continuation of this same program of profit maximization and the disempowerment of the majority of people within society.

Two dams burst near Derna



Morocco Quake and the Incapacity of the Monarchy

A large earthquake struck the High Atlas Mountain range some 70 kilometers southwest of the historic city of Marrakesh has killed at least 2,800 people. As in Libya, the complete number of those killed and injured cannot be properly assessed until the rubble has been cleared away by relief workers.

Morocco is one of the three last remaining monarchies on the African continent. What makes Morocco unique is that the government—with the backing of the U.S. and former colonial power of Spain—has refused to allow the people of the Western Sahara to hold an election on the future of the territory. In essence, the Kingdom of Morocco is an occupying force stifling the independence of the self-declared Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) which is recognized by the African Union (AU).

The failure of the Kingdom to modernize its governance structures leaves the state open to the worst outcomes from natural disasters. Its close alliance with imperialism reinforces its lack of democratic practice and the denial of the right to self-determination for the Western Sahara.

[Nature Magazine](#) wrote on the current situation south of Marrakesh pointing out that:

“However, the biggest contributor to the disaster has been lack of preparedness, says disaster researcher Ilan Kelman at University College London. ‘Earthquakes don’t kill people, collapsing infrastructure does,’ he says. ‘This was so devastating simply because people were not ready for it.’ Even moderate earthquakes can be lethal if societies are not prepared, says Kelman. He highlights the magnitude-5.9 quake that struck Agadir in Morocco on 29 February 1960. About one-third of the city’s population was killed and another third injured, mostly by collapsing buildings. Although this was

not a huge tremor, the US Geological Survey calls it “the most destructive ‘moderate’ quake (magnitude less than 6) in the 20th Century. Kelman says it is also crucial to think about earthquake resilience as part of sustainable development. As a result, he says, building earthquake resilience means tackling broader societal problems such as poverty and lack of education. ‘All aspects of disasters are political,’ says Kelman. ‘All disaster risk reduction is about development.’”

Consequently, the recently held Africa Climate Summit in Kenya must seriously consider embarking upon a new path in its relations with the western countries. It is not even debatable that the industrial capitalist states and their imperialist war drives are largely responsible for the environmental degradation in Africa and other geopolitical regions internationally.

African unity around the question of “system change and not climate change” must become the rallying cry of the people. Until the capitalists are halted in their drive to maintain political and economic hegemony, the peoples of the world will be further endangered as extreme weather events and geological disasters increase in frequency and severity.

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