



The Libya Situation:

Suggested Project on Fact-Finding - Information Support - Counselling

Background

Quite certainly, dramatic changes occurred in Libya since February 2011 and the everyday situation will not just return to the prior-February-2011 status. Hence, a commonly shared understanding of what has happened during the time of violent conflict will be crucial for peace-making and peace-keeping. This is particularly true regarding the answer to the question ‘Who did what to whom?’ in terms of alleged violations of international laws. Moreover, such an understanding is inevitable for designing the proper judicial and non-judicial responses to deal with that past in order to heal and harmonise the Libyan society.

As known from other post-conflict situations a societal discourse, involving the (then former) conflict as well as third parties, will rely on reliable and objective information about the facts of the armed conflict including large scale victimisations. Yet, conflicting views and interpretations, myth production and even falsification of historical realities are not unusual in order to justify political interests and should be countered by substantial efforts for an unbiased situation analysis.

Therefore the suggested project on “Fact-Finding, Information Support and Counselling” aims to provide a substantial contribution to that peace-making process in Libya. It will attempt to build up an independent knowledge base which provides valid information needed to evaluate the history of the conflict and support efforts for justice, be it criminal prosecution or restorative justice, and victims’ support.

Objectives

The central aim of the project is two-sided, on the one hand to systematically collect, archive and analyse significant information regarding the relevant facts of the violent conflict in Libya, and to provide that information in an easy to access way to the public and to the stakeholders and players in the peace-making and stabilisation process on the other. The following list of possible approaches to gain reliable information is rather complex, yet open for enhancement.

Open Source Analysis

Media, social networks, crowdsourcing (see e.g. USHAHIDI), IGO and NGO reports as well as judicial activities (e.g. international criminal justice) constantly produce information and analytical evaluations related to the situation in Libya. The suggested project should monitor and record this data and knowledge production as comprehensively as possible and facilitate access to information sources.



Fact-finding Missions and Empirical-Victimological Research

If sufficient funding can be provided independent fact-finding missions (e.g. to investigate certain incidents or allegations) and research projects (e.g. victimisation surveys) should be conducted to collect additional data in particular relevant for the evaluation of the impact of the armed conflict on the civil population.

Knowledge Base: Public Access to Information

All important information should be made accessible on the Internet. Workshops, publications and other forms of communication should be organised to discuss the methodological approach of the project and its output and findings.

Counselling

There is a strong need for support in conflict and post-conflict situations e.g. to help victims or rebuilt capacities in the post-conflict period. In the course of this complex project major actors and experts in the peace-making process will be known or even involved. These experts might be available for practical assistance or counselling and providing advice on how to solve certain issues. The project aims to produce an authorised online “Who is Who?” categorised by certain subjects.

Partners and Cooperation

First and foremost, the project is a non-partisan enterprise and only committed to objective and reliable fact-finding and analysis.

Experts from IGOs, NGOs, academia, think tanks or others, following this principle, are cordially invited to join the network of partners of the project; volunteers are very welcome.

There is, of course, a strong need for experts with an in-depth understanding of the historical, cultural and language background related to the subject matter of the project.

Support and Funding

Quite obviously, the complexity of the planned project requires stable and long-term organisation, institutional partnership and appropriate funding. The temporal as well as topical scope of the project will inevitably depend on sufficient funds for a longer period, at least three to five years.

Therefore donations will be very helpful, if not inevitable, to get the project started.

Financial support should also be attracted through research and other funds from national, EU or international sources without any prejudice or limitations to the set goal of objective analysis.

September 2011