

Implementation of UN Resolution 1973, 2011 in Libya: The Medical and Ethical Concerns

Calvin Gwandure

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2050, South Africa

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ABSTRACT The aim of this paper is to highlight some of the medical and ethical challenges that could be experienced by implementers of the United Nations Security Council Resolution, 1973, 2011 in Libya. The paper is written as action research, that is, writing the paper as events unfolded during the Libyan crisis, soon after the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya. The paper relies on provisions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya, print and electronic media reports, speeches made on radio and television, and military action broadcast live on television. The paper looks at the medical and ethical concerns that can arise from the implementation of the United Nations agreement by Member States. It is argued that the civil war in Libya can have negative medical consequences, raise ethical concerns and there could be atrocious casualties among the civilian population if rebels are let loose without the United Nations Security Council controlling their military activities. This paper sees the role of the United Nations Security Council as that of being a mediator or peace-maker and not a comrade-in-arms of rebels, or confederate of rebels or partisan fighter in support of the rebels. The rebels, like anywhere else in the world and by definition, do not belong to legitimate or registered political organisations or entities recognised at international law as authentic. The rebel group in Libya is faceless and there could be criminal and terrorist elements that operate in Libya under the guise of civil protests. It is contended in this paper that NATO should not fight alongside rebels, or take instructions from rebels about which Libyan government military sites to attack because NATO is a professional military organisation that is guided by medical and war ethics. In this context, Member States implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, 2011 should seek to protect Libyan civilians and unarmed protesters. The Libyan army and armed rebels should be pushed away from civilians by NATO. Current and future studies could focus on peace initiatives, medical needs, war ethics and the investigation of factors that contribute to the escalation of civil war in Libya.