



Neoliberal democratic reforms in post-gaddafi era: implications for political stability in libya, 2011-2016

Okey Oji¹ Raymond ADIBE² Chukwuemeka Ejiofor³ Ikemefuna Nwoke⁴ Chikwado Ezugworie⁵

¹PhD Director of Research National Boundary Commission, Nigeria

drokeyoji@yahoo.com

²PhD Department of Political Science University of Nigeria

raymond.adibe@unn.edu.ng

³Department of Political Science University of Nigeria

Chukwuemeka.ejiofor@unn.edu.ng

⁴Department of Political Science University of Nigeria

Ikemefuna.nwoke@unn.edu.ng

⁵Department of Political Science University of Nigeria

Chikwado.ezugworie@unn.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the neoliberal democratic reforms in post-Gaddafi era and its implications for political stability in Libya. Specifically, the study examined the contradictions of the ruling class project of democratization in Libya and their implications for political instability in the post-Gaddafi era. The study found that the democratic project as propagated by the ruling class in post-Gaddafi's Libya is an intrinsic feature of modernization, a transition from authoritarian to more open political systems, a process linking economic reform and political liberalization perceived as not expressing an organic unity, but separate and either consecutively or concurrently linked. By viewing political instability as an inevitable pendulum of the cyclical transition from authoritarian to more democratic system, neoliberal democracy in post-Gaddafi's Libya legitimizes authoritarianism in so far as it promotes modernization and liberal system of free market economy. The implication of the study is that the adoption of a new economic system, as well as western-style political institutions in post-Gaddafi Libya, relegating the consultation and active participation of the Libyan people undermined the democratic project. The exclusion of Libyans in the democratization process ultimately gave rise to political instability in post-revolution Libya. We therefore, recommended a referendum as a preferred option for Libyans to decide economic and political organization of Libya

Keywords: Neoliberal Reforms, Democratization, Political Instability, Post-Gaddafi Government

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1. INTRODUCTION

A critical review of Libya before the Gaddafi era showed that the non-democratic monarch of Libya enjoyed cordial diplomatic relations with the West, prior to the 1969 coup. Libya was colonized by Italy and like most African States, integrated into the global capitalist economy (Vandewalle, 2006). Libya's proximity and direct linkage to Europe by sea were further marketing advantages and made it of strategic importance to her colonizers. The colonial government relied on existing traditional institutions of authority to govern Libya and when the United Kingdom of Libya came into existence upon independence on 24th December, 1951, monarchy was adopted as the system of government (Vandewalle, 2006). Libya under monarchy was largely dictatorial, with the monarch, *King Idris*, regarded as both the supreme and political head of the state. Under the constitution of 1951, succession to the throne was to his designated heirs and he had the exclusive power to veto any parliamentary legislation and dissolve parliament (Villard, 1956). Under King Idris's reign, Libya had close diplomatic ties with the West. For instance, the monarch granted the U.S government, military base rights in Libya in exchange for economic aid to Libya. The United States' government also provided funds for the establishment of the University of Libya in 1955 and U.S oil firms were granted operating licenses when Libya began commercial exploration of oil in 1959 (Abadi, 2000). Vandewalle (2006) noted that the popularity anti-American orientation among Arabs made the U.S government to support the conservative traditionalist style of leadership in Libya in the early years of post- independence. This style was characterized by repression of public opinions considered radical or anti-west, outlawing all forms of political associations and outright use of the coercive apparatus of the state to violate citizens' rights (Vandewalle, 2006).

Under King Idris, Libya did not play an important role in Arab politics. According to Abadi (2000), this was as a result of Libya's close ties with the West (particularly the United States government) that supported Israel during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. Although Libya became a member of the Arab league in 1953 and pledged to support the Arab cause in general, it refused to place an oil embargo on the United States' government during the war. The war aroused a strong reaction in Libya, where dock and oil workers, as well as students were involved in violent anti-government demonstrations. The demonstration was however met with violent recrimination by government forces when demonstrators attacked U.S and British oil companies' offices and embassies Tripoli and Benghazi (Abadi, 2000).

After the Muammar Gaddafi led coup of 1969, Libya's relations with the West became increasingly strained and on December 29, 1979, the United States' government designated Libya a state sponsor of terrorism (Mary, 2012). Relations got worse with the outbreak of the 2011 Libyan civil war, in which Gaddafi attempted to first crush protests and then an armed rebellion against his rule. The U.S government, along with several European and Arab nations, then began to call for the United Nations to authorize military intervention in the conflict (Doug, 2011). The U.S military played an instrumental role in the initial stage of the intervention, suppressing Libyan air defenses and coordinating international forces in the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya, before handing command responsibility to NATO and taking a supporting role in the campaign for air strikes against pro-Gaddafi's forces. The intervention severely weakened the Gaddafi's regime and aided the Libyan rebels to victory with the fall of Tripoli in August 2011. The fall of the Gaddafi regime led to the recognition of Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC) as Libya's legitimate authority (Doug, 2011). The aftermath of the Libyan civil war has been characterized by marked change in the social and political order of Libya after the overthrow and killing of *Muammar Gaddafi* in the Libyan civil war (Tefiani, 2013). After the interim National Transitional Council (NTC) declared that the country had been liberated in October 2011, it began a process to form a new government, prepare for elections and prosecute former Gaddafi officials. Elections were held in July 2012 to a General National Congress (GNC), which took power a month later. The NTC was dissolved and in November 2011, Ali Zeidan was sworn in as Prime Minister. Zeidan listed his government's priorities as security, defense, health, public services, and the economy. He also promised to start the process of national reconciliation.



Since the end of the cold war era, democratization has been a major precondition for most Western states' continued support for developing countries, particularly in the area of economic aid and assistance. As noted by Bangura (1991), while the closing years of the 1980s witnessed a dramatic fall of communist regimes in most countries of East and Central Europe and their replacement by fledgling democracies, it took the threat of aid withdrawal to African states for the ruling class in these states to take the democratization project serious. In its liberal form, Africa's democratic project propagated by the West involve the establishment of an institutional arrangement in which individuals at political decision, acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples' vote, independent judiciary, bill of fundamental human rights, free market economy, and a two or more party system (Schumpeter, 1960). Thus, liberal democracy and economic reform have emerged as the dominant ideas shaping the political and economic structures of most African States since the closing years of the 1980s (Bangura, 1991).

With regard to the democratic project in post-Gaddafi's Libya, the West has a strategic interest in a stable and prosperous Libya, and supported Libya's democratic transition in cooperation with the U.N. and other international partners. Recognizing Libyan's own substantial resources, the United States government for instance, focused on building Libyan institutions and increasing its capacity to govern effectively, hold free and fair elections and manage public finances transparently and respectively (U.S Department of State, 2012). The U.S government also provided targeted assistance to support the development of Libyan civil society and its security forces to help advance Libya's democratic transition, promote stability and strengthen the U.S–Libyan relations (U.S Department of State, 2012). Since February 2011, the United States' government has provided over U.S\$ 170 million in assistance mostly in response to urgent humanitarian and security challenges in the immediate aftermath of the beginning of the conflict. In the post–Gaddafi era, the U.S government has also focused on supporting capacity building efforts within government institutions and developing civil society.

Following formal recognition of the NTC as Libya's legitimate government by the international community, the NTC named its interim officials on November 22, 2011. The interim government was saddled with the responsibility of ushering in a democratically elected government in Libya. With financial and technical supports from many western nations, the NTC supervised Libya's first parliamentary election on July 7, 2012. The election, in which more than 100 political parties registered, formed an interim 200 member national assembly that replaced the NTC. Renewed cordial diplomatic relations between Libya and the West is no doubt geared towards promoting and strengthening democratic values in Libya. This study examined the implication of neoliberal democratic reforms in Libya on political stability in the post–Gaddafi era-

1. SCHOLARLY EXPLANATIONS ON POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN POST-GADDAFI LIBYA

Since the end of the Libyan revolution, various scholars have tried to explain why post– Gaddafi government has struggled with democratic consolidation. However, these discerning views can be grouped into two. The first group of scholars associate political instability in post– Gaddafi Libya as well as the unpopular support for democratic reforms on Gaddafi tyrannical legacy in Libya in which there were no functioning democratic institutions to act as agents of political socialization. Hence, most Libyans still see government reform as alien. For instance, Laremont (2014) noted that Gaddafi created a void for his exercise of power, since there were no institutions, no army, no electoral tradition, and as a result, the period of transition had been difficult. This view is also supported by Mikail (2013) who noted that the fall of Gaddafi's regime left an institutional vacuum in Libya that was quickly filled by people and groups not trained or socialized in that tradition. Tefiani (2013), supporting this view made reference to the Libyan army. He noted that because Gaddafi relied on a decentralized army for so long, particularly mercenaries, the democratically elected government has struggled to reform the security sector that will place the army under the central control of the government. Also, Gaddafi's legacy of ruling Libya without the existence of any political institution organized in the form of opposition undermined electoral credibility in the post–Gaddafi era. Antonov (2013) noted that decision to review the electoral law in order to make two-third of the 200 seats in the constituent assembly go to candidates of political parties was done to discourage candidates from running as independents. Earlier on, candidates showed high distrust to political parties, which they considered western agents, and preferred to



contest as independents. The unpopularity of western-style party system among Libyans also meant that political parties were formed across ethnic lines and influenced voting across ethnic lines. As noted by Antonov (2013), the inability of establishing political parties with popular support across ethnic lines meant that more than 100 political parties registered and presented candidates for the July 7, 2012 parliamentary election to elect only 200-member national assembly.

Gaddafi's non-reliance on established political institutions to govern Libya has also been implicated in the underdevelopment of Libya's judicial system in the post-revolution era. For instance, Shah (2013) noted that the absence of an independent judiciary during Gaddafi's regime means that the prosecution of Gaddafi loyalists in the post-revolution era has been unpopular due to reports of human rights abuse of political detainees. Shah (2013) noted that despite claim to reform the judicial system, post-Gaddafi government have repeatedly adopted the same 'selective' justice style of the Gaddafi era. While Gaddafi's legacy in Libya no doubt left a huge vacuum needing urgent transformation, attributing unpopular support for democratic reforms in Libya to such legacy of governing the country without any stable political institution contradicts the essence of the 2011 civil war. Records show that the aim of the popular protest was to oust the Gaddafi-led government for a more institutionalized government that will create functional political institutions that will outlive the government. Thus, unpopularity of democratic reforms in post-Gaddafi's Libya cannot be associated to Gaddafi's forty-two year rule without functioning democratic institutions since the institutionalization of political structures was at the root of the protest movement.

The second groups of scholars who have tried to explain why democratic reforms remain unpopular in post-Gaddafi's Libya blame it on ethnic/tribal differences that have undermined the adoption of a central unifying ideology in the country. Khalifa (2013) for instance criticized the NTC for not formally recognizing the *Berber* people and not doing enough to mediate the *Tuareg* nomad tribes and Arab Libyans in the aftermath of the war. Smaller tribal groups complained they had been neglected in the interim government announced by the NTC on November 22, 2011. Members of the Benghazi-based *Awagi* and *Maghariba* ethnic groups protested that their representatives were not selected for key posts (Khalifa, 2013). Khalifa (2013) further noted that a group calling itself the Libyan *Amazigh* Congress called for a suspension of relations with the NTC until the government agreed to the demands of *Amazigh* Libyans. The inability of the post-Gaddafi government to effectively manage ethnic tensions also influenced the formation of political parties across ethnic lines in the post-revolution era (Azikiwe, 2013). The inability to build trust across ethnic groups gave rise to Islamic movements, including the Muslim brotherhood, which refused to take part in the interim government (Khalifa, 2013).

As noted by Azikiwe (2013), the same armed militia groups that united in ousting Gaddafi from power, have refused to surrender to a centralized command, preferring allegiance to tribal leaders. Mikail (2013) observed that militia groups, organized across ethnic lines have proliferated in Libya, resulting in intra-group fighting. Most militia groups now vie for control of oil and gas resources in their regions and government inability of sovereign control over Libyans' resources emboldened these ethnic affiliated militias to play a disproportionate role in influencing the trajectory of Libya's transition (Mikail, 2013). Mikail (2013) noted that the rule of these militias involves the use of violence and coercion to influence legislation and undermine the central government. Violent acts seem indiscriminate and incoherent, a situation that has undermined popular support for the post-Gaddafi government (Azikiwe, 2013). As observed by Laremont (2013), as long as these militia groups remain under the payroll of the Libyan government, dissociating their actions from that of the government becomes difficult, and it further undermines the popularity of the post-Gaddafi government in Libya. However, lack of unifying ideology in post-Gaddafi's Libya is an effect of the unpopular government reforms and should not be confused as its cause. The inability of the new government in Libya to carry out a people-oriented reforms have made the call for national unity and the need to surrender to a centralized authority difficult, as most local leaders continue to maintain armed militia groups within their tribes, using it to launch violent attacks against the central government as a means of coercing and influencing government policies in their favour. No doubt, the process of rebuilding Libya into a democratic society is a huge task since most political institutions associated with democratic societies have been missing for more than four decades



in Libya. However, attempts by scholars to account for the poor reception of democratic reforms by the Libyan people in terms of their lack of trust for a western-style system of government is vitiated by the fact that the popular uprising was influenced by Libyans' desire to make their country a democratic society with equal opportunities for all. Also, ethnic division in the post-Gaddafi era remains an aftermath of government inability to usher in a popular reform accepted by all, and therefore, ethnic resistance to centralized control should be understood as a consequence of this failure and not the cause of it.

Generally, writers on the crisis of the post-Gaddafi Libyan democratic project tend to account for political instability and incoherence of the democratic project under the new democratic government in terms of economic and political policies and authoritarian legacies. Writers therefore fail to locate the crisis within the dialectics of neoliberal politics of democratization. The politics of democratization in Libya, in which democratization constitute a government and ruling class project, relegates the popular participation of the people in the political process. This is yet to be given systematic analysis by writers.

2. The Politics of Democratization and Political Instability in Post-Gaddafi Libya

Libya was officially declared "liberated" on October 23, 2011, when the last government holdouts in *Sirte* finally fell to anti-Gaddafi forces three days earlier. The NTC promised to transform Libya into a modern democracy with a democratically elected government that will reform the Libyan society. However, political instability has been the hallmark of post-revolution Libya. Two months after the collapse of Gaddafi's government, a group of armed men dragged Libya's attorney general, *Abdul-Aziz al-Hassady* from his car in broad daylight in Tripoli, threatening to kill him if he failed to release one of their friends who had been arrested on suspicion of murder. Days later, a group of gunmen attacked the convoy of a top army officer, Gen. *Khalifa Haftar*, as it was speeding through a check-point (Khalifa, 2013). On December 16, 2011, Haftar's son was also abducted by an armed group at an airport. Reports suggested sporadic clashes between rival militias, and vigilante revenge killings. Gunfire broke out between the army and rebel brigade at the Tripoli International Airport in December, 2011.

In a bid to manage the situation in post-revolution Libya, the interim government officially announced a transition programme and Ali Zeidan elected Prime Minister on October 14, 2012. His government promised to expedite actions on socio-economic and security reforms in Libya as well as promote democratic participation of all Libyans in the political process (Mikail, 2013). Libya's western-backed liberal democratic reforms have continued to be met with popular resistance, resulting in political instability in the post-revolution era (Shah, 2013).

Table 1: Anti-Government Protests in Post-Gaddafi Libya between 2012 and 2016

Date	Events
January 19, 2012	The Vice-President of the NTC, <i>Abdul Hafiz Ghoga</i> , was surrounded and jostled by a mob of protesters at the University of Benghazi where he was attending a memorial ceremony for those killed during the civil war.
January 22, 2012	Ghoga was pressured to resign from the NTC by the Libyan people who questioned his integrity to reform the country owing to his past relationship with the Gaddafi regime. He was accused of opportunism.
January 21, 2012	Hundreds of protesters stormed the NTC headquarters in Benghazi, protesting the speed of reforms and lack of transparency in the government.
March, 2012	The UN support mission in Libya reported that intermittent clashes between armed brigades, who have refused to surrender command to the government, and government forces occurred in the month of March, frustrating government's efforts to contain the



	overall security situation.
July 1, 2012	Owing to lack of trust in the reform process in Libya, protesters calling for an autonomous eastern region stormed the headquarters of the national election commission in Benghazi.
November, 2012	Minority ethnic groups in Libya protested against neglect by the government and threatened to suspend relations with the central government as a result of marginalization of their ethnic groups in the political process.
August 2013	Petroleum Facilities Guard militia begins blockade of oil export terminals.
February 2014	Protests erupt in response to the General National Congress refusal to disband after mandate expires
March 2014	GNC sacks Prime Minister Ali Zeidan after a tanker laden with oil from a rebel-held port breaks through a Libyan navy blockade, elects businessman Ahmed Maiteg prime minister in heated scenes
April 2014	Petroleum Facilities Guard militia lifts closure of two oil terminals
May 2014	Libyan National Army" renegade general Khalifa Haftar launches military assault including airstrikes against militant Islamist groups in Benghazi; tries to seize parliament building, accusing Prime Minister Maiteg of being in thrall to Islamist groups
June 2014	Prime Minister Maiteg resigns after supreme court rules his appointment illegal.
July 2014	UN staff pull out, embassies shut, foreigners evacuated as security situation deteriorates. Tripoli international airport is largely destroyed by fighting. Ansar al-Sharia seizes control of most of Benghazi
*October 2014	UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visits to continue UN-brokered talks between the new parliament and government based in Tobruk and Islamist Libya Dawn militias holding Tripoli. UN says 100,000s displaced by clashes. Islamic State extremist militia seizes control of port of Derna in eastern Libya
*January 2015	Libyan army and Tripoli-based militia alliance declare partial ceasefire after UN-sponsored talks in Geneva
*February 2015	Egyptian jets bomb Islamic State targets in Derna, a day after the group there released a video showing the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians. Libyan Army offensive to retake Derna in March fails to dislodge the group. IS establishes control over port-city of Sirte, halfway along coast between Tripoli and Benghazi
*July 2015	A Tripoli court sentences Gaddafi's sons Saif al-Islam and eight other former officials to death for crimes committed during the 2011 uprising against his father.



*January 2016	UN announces new, Tunisia-based interim government, but neither Tobruk nor Tripoli parliaments agree to recognise its authority. Islamic State group attacks Ras Lanuf oil terminal, threatens to move on to Brega and Tobruk.
*March 2016	New "unity" government arrives in Tripoli by boat after opposing forces block airspace
*April 2016	UN staffs return to Tripoli after absence of nearly two years.
*September 2016	Libyan National Army (LNA) of General Khalifa Haftar seizes key oil export terminals in the east
*December 2016	Pro-government forces oust Islamic State militants from coastal town of Sirte, which they had seized 18 months previously.

Source: Compiled by the Authors from www.wikipedia.com/aftermathofthelibycivilwar and * from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13755445> (Assessed on 30 April, 2017).

The lack of support for the democratic reforms of the post-revolution government have worsened the human rights situation in the country with the new government reportedly implicated in series of extra judicial abuse. Hundreds of suspected Gaddafi supporters have been rounded up by Government's Revolutionary Brigades, often on the basis of only rumour and accusation (*Human Rights Watch*, 2012). According to a report by the Secretary-General of the U.N, up to 7000 people including women and children, are being held in private jails without access to due process in the absence of a functioning police. Many of the prisoners are being subjected to torture and systematic abuse, and there are reports of women held in detention in the absence of female guards and under male supervisions and of children detained alongside adults. Schell (2012) noted that international doctors working in Libya suspended its operations in detention centres due to detainees there being tortured and denied urgent medical care. According to the U.N, about 8,000 people, mostly anti-government protesters, were still being held in Libya's detention centres as at October 2013. In May, 2012, the post-revolution government in Libya adopted laws that further questioned her credibility to democratically reform the Libyan society. According to Schell (2012), the laws were aimed at criminalizing any form of criticism against the revolution that installed the new government as well as banning publication of any propaganda or public glorification of Gaddafi's legacy in Libya. Some of the outrageous laws also gave immunity to rebels who fought in favour of the NTC during the revolution. *Human Rights Watch* (2012) stated that it will oppose these laws in conjunction with a group of Libyan human rights lawyers and NGOs operating in Libya. Governments' determination to hoist an unpopular liberal market reform in Libya also led to increased violent attacks against government officials and pro-government supporters in the post-Gaddafi era.

Table 2: High Profile Attacks against Pro-Government Supporters and Foreign Targets in Post-Gaddafi Era in 2012

Date	Events
May2, 2012	General <i>Albarrani Shkal</i> , the former military governor of Tripoli and a Gaddafi government defector, was killed by unknown militias.
May15, 2012	<i>Khaled Abu Salah</i> , a pro-revolution supporter and a candidate for the constituent Assembly, was assassinated near the Oasis town of <i>Ubari</i> , South-West of the country.
May 20, 2012	<i>Mukhtar Fernana</i> , Head of the Military Council for the Western Region survived an attempt on his life.



May 22, 2012	Attacks were carried out against the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Benghazi
June 11, 2012	A convoy carrying the British Ambassador to Libya was hit by a rocket propelled grenade.
June 22, 2012	A high profile judge was assassinated in Libya after he was appointed by the government to investigate the killing of a pro-revolution military commander, <i>Abdel Fattah Younis</i>
July 28, 2012	Former military intelligence officer, Colonel <i>Suleiman Buzraidah</i> was killed enroute to a mosque in Benghazi, with commander of the Libyan ground forces, General <i>Khalifa Haftar</i> narrowly surviving an attack on his life only a day later.
July 29, 2012	A large bomb was discovered and diffused near Tibesti Hotel – a hotel popular with visiting foreign dignitaries and businessmen.
July 31, 2012	Gunmen kidnapped a seven member foreign delegation of individuals heading to Tibesti.
August 5, 2012	Another ICRC building was attacked in Misrata with rockets and grenades. The ICRC announced it was suspending operations in Benghazi and Misrata after the incident.
September 11, 2012	Gunmen attacked and firebombed the U.S liason office/mission in Benghazi, killing 4 Americans, including Ambassador J.C. Stevens.

Source: Compiled by the Authors from www.wikipedia.com/aftermathofthelibycivilwar (Assessed on 14 February, 2014).

Government reform programmes have been unable to address ethnic tension in Libya with citizens showing more allegiance to ethnic leaders. Government inability to use its reform programmes to promote a unifying ideology in post-revolution Libya have exacerbated incidence violent clashes in the country. Ethnic militias refused to surrender to a central authority and in most cases continued to lay independent claims to oil fields in their areas. The security reform agenda of the new government aimed at integrating ethnic militia groups into the nation's armed forces remain unsuccessful as ethnic groups continue to see such reform as a strategy for the government to gain access to their oil resources (Mikail, 2013). The unpopularity of government reforms have increased the influence of ethnic militia leaders who now vie for power over oil and gas resources in the region. One of the most powerful militias in the East, the federalist militia under *Ibrahim al-Jathran*, has closed oil fields and ports, claiming to protect Libya's oil from the corrupt elites in Tripoli (Mikail, 2013). *Al-Jathran's* militia now controls facilities that account for 60 percent of Libya's oil wealth and copycat movements have emerged in the West and South, causing production to drop from 1.13 million barrels per day in June to around below 300,000 barrels in October 2013 (Mikail, 2013).

The privatization programme of the new government that aimed at reducing the influence of the NOC in the Libyan oil industry remain the major cause of the lack of support for the reform programme of the government. It is widely considered to be a pro-western reform that will grant unhindered access to Libya's oil by foreign oil giants, mostly Anglo-American oil companies, under conditions less favourable to Libya's interest. As part of popular reaction against reforms aimed at increasing Anglo-American oil giants' influence in the Libya oil industry, attacks have also been directed against foreign interests in post-revolution Libya.

The militia-led abduction of Libyan Prime Minister, Ali Zeidan, in October 2013 is also a stark reminder of the failure of the new government to restore peace in Libya. More than three years after the collapse of Gaddafi's regime, the central government failed to extend complete control over Libya's vast territory or reign in the



various armed groups that emerged during the revolution. The lack of security according to Mikail (2013) is as result of government inability to 'sell' its reform package to the general public who see the whole reform process as pro-west and anti-Lybya. Tefiani (2013) also noted that Libya's commercial cities are characterized by broken institutions and lawlessness. Assassination attempts on government and security officials as well as kidnappings are common occurrences. The General National Congress (GNC) was stormed by protesters and militiamen on a number of occasions, and its President, *Mohammed Magarief* survived an assassination attempt on January 4, 2013 (Tefiani, 2013).

Table 3: Libya After the Arab Uprising: In Numbers

Approximately 2.5 million	People need humanitarian assistance and protection, including asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees.
435,000	Internally displaced people living in makeshift camps, schools and warehouses.
0	Militia members held to account for human rights abuses.

Source: Compiled by the Authors from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13755445>

Regime change in Libya has not guaranteed democratization in the post-Gaddafi era. Governments low approval rating, coupled with its inability to exercise sovereign control over its resources allowed militias to play a disproportionate role in influencing the trajectory of Libya's democratic project. The kidnap of the Prime Minister and forced passing of the Political Isolation Law serve as stark example of the security challenge facing Libya in the post-Gaddafi era. The use of violence and coercion to influence legislation further diminishes the credibility of the new government as 'reformer' and militias are threatening the territorial integrity of Libya as a consequence of this (Mikail, 2013). Oil which remains the lifeblood of the Libyan economy is at the heart of the crisis in post-revolution Libya. Most Libyans prefer the nationalist oil industry reforms of the Gaddafi era to the privatization of Libya's oil which seeks to foster western interest as proposed by the new government. In fact, Eastern militias have announced the creation of their own oil company to sell crude oil from the fields they currently occupied. Nasir (2014) noted that Libyan rebels, acting with the support of tribal chiefs, are now locked in rivalries with the central government as they continue to lay claim to oil fields across Libya. The unpopularity of the democratic reforms of the new government has increased the call for greater autonomy from the centre as demonstrated by Libyans in their protests against the government during the yearly anniversary of the Libyan revolution.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the link between the neoliberal democratic reforms in Libya and political stability in the post-Gaddafi era and contended that the emphasis on the politics of democratization, in which reforms become a ruling class or an elite project, undermined democratic reforms in Libya. This was found to result in incessant anti-government protests and other forms of activities that have disrupted the democratic project in Libya. The implication of this is that free market reforms propagated by the West for post-Gaddafi Libya is aimed at institutionalizing liberal capitalist system of organizing the state that guarantee private (foreign) ownership and control of oil fields and production in Libya. Such neoliberal reform proposal remains unpopular among Libyans who see such reform agenda as anti-Lybya. Data on popular protests and attacks on Libya government officials, reported militia clashes with government forces, sabotage of oil production and attacks on diplomats of foreign allies were presented as evidence of lack of popular support for the



democratic reforms in Libya. The result is endemic instability and crisis in Libya. In view of the foregoing, we put forward this recommendation for policy implementation:

- That there is need for the democratic government in Libya to conduct a referendum or sovereign conference for Libyans to decide on which reforms they consider to best protect their welfare and national interest. The future of current Libyans was decided in Paris during the Libyan civil war, with only the participation of western government officials and only Libyan rebel officials.

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