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## The Show Trial of Saif Qaddafi: a Manufactured Death Sentence

By Stephen Lendman

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In 2007, candidate Obama said “(t)he president does not have the power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to the nation.”

Straightaway after entering office, he expanded drone attacks against Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. He increased troop strength in Afghanistan after pledging to end war by yearend 2009.

US-led NATO aggression on Libya followed. Obama lied claiming Gaddafi “attack(ed) his (own) people. (So) we took...swift steps...to answer his aggression.”

A litany of Big Lies followed. “Innocent people were targeted for killing,” Obama blustered. “Hospital and ambulances were attacked.”

“Journalists were arrested, sexually assaulted and killed...Water for hundreds of thousands of people...was shut off. Cities and towns were shelled. Mosques were destroyed.”

“Gaddafi declared he would show no mercy to his own people” – willful Obama deception. He tried justifying the unjustifiable, adding “I authorized military action to stop the killing and enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1973.”

International law is clear. Nations may not attack others except in self-defense – and only if UN Security Council authorized.

America wasn't attacked, nor other NATO countries. Gaddafi threatened no one, including his own people. The longer war raged, the more popular he became. Libyans rallied around him for safety and security – hoping he'd be able to restore peace and stability.

At war's end, he was brutally sodomized and murdered in cold blood. On November 19, 2011, his son Saif was arrested trying to flee Libya to safety, held captive by Zintan rebels, tortured, until he was tried in absentia in Tripoli and convicted by kangaroo tribunal proceedings affording him no chance for justice.

He was declared guilty by accusation – sentenced to death by firing squad along with eight other former Gaddafi officials, including former intelligence chief Abdullah Senussi, and two former prime ministers, al-Baghdadi and Abuzaid Dorda.

A total of 32 defendants were tried – 23 got lesser sentences and fines. Attorney John Jones represented Saif. “It was clearly a show trial” for all defendants, he said. “It was basically a trial by militia” lasting two days – conducted by an illegitimate Islamist regime controlling Tripoli after ousting the US-installed one operating from Tobruk.

“Lawyers were intimidated,” said Jones. “The judges were intimidated. Lawyers had to leave the case.” Controlled proceedings excluded the right to a proper defense. Only two intimidated witnesses for Saif were allowed. No evidence against him was presented.

Prosecutors relied solely on torture extracted information – what no legitimate tribunal permits. Transitional Justice and Rule of Law Division of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) human rights director Claudio Cordone said:

“Concerns over the trial include the fact that several defendants were absent for a number of sessions. The evidence of criminal conduct was largely attributed to the defendants in general, with little effort to establish individual criminal responsibility.”

“(I)t is particularly worrisome that the court handed down nine death sentences. International standards require that death sentences may only be imposed after proceedings that meet the highest level of respect for fair trial standards. The United Nations opposes the imposition of the death penalty as a matter of principle.”

Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ravina Shamdasani, added:

“We had closely monitored the detention and trial and found that international fair trial standards had failed to be met. Among the key shortcomings is the failure to establish individual criminal responsibility in relation to specific crimes.”

Other serious issues included lack of access to lawyers, torture and other forms of ill treatment, as well as illegitimate trials conducted in absentia.

An UNSMIL press release said “(d)uring their pre-trial detention defendants were denied access to lawyers and family for prolonged periods, and some reported that they were beaten or otherwise ill-treated, but UNSMIL is not aware of any investigation into these allegations.”

“Many defendants were not represented by a lawyer during the pre-trial process, which deprived them of a crucial opportunity to establish their defence. Defence lawyers said they faced challenges in meeting their clients privately or accessing the full case file, and some said they received threats.”

“They were constrained by the court to two or three witnesses per defendant and some said that witnesses were reluctant to appear in court due to fears about their safety. The court did not respond to defence counsel requests to examine prosecution witnesses.”

US-led NATO turned Africa’s most developed country into a cauldron of endless violence, deprivation and despair.

Tens of thousands were murdered in cold blood. Multiples more were injured and/or displaced. Violence, instability, insecurity and chaos reflect daily life. No end in sight looms. Millions of Libyans live in constant fear.

Obama bears full responsibility for raping, ravaging, destroying, and plundering a nation threatening no others. Anarchical charnel house conditions replaced it.

Dystopian harshness persists. Libya is a failed state. Central authority is absent. Public services aren't provided. Corruption and criminality are rampant. Conditions are in free fall. Human misery is extreme.

Libya is one of many high crimes on Obama's rap sheet. Perhaps he plans Libya 2.0 for Syria, Iran, Lebanon and Yemen. Longstanding US/Israeli plans to redraw the Middle East map suggest it.