

Call for Action & Damage Assessment

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Introduction

There can be no action without a robust and well thought of comprehensive plan. Libyans in general are looking to the United Nations (UN) to take the lead in implementing a like “Marshal Plan” to address the destruction caused by the civil war. Such a plan, or similar if implemented, should include not only humanitarian relief but to include sustainable development projects that covers education, healthcare, rebuilding infrastructure and renovate buildings that suffered moderate damage during the war as observed by UN-HABITAT, RCPMS Libya [Part 1, Context]⁽¹⁾.

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Societies enduring and emerging from armed violence may not have the financial capacity nor the technical know-how to rebuild. Therefore, the Global community must find the needed funds for the rebuild effort. The funding can be funneled to institutions that can immediately start rebuilding. Sirte and for that matter Libya should learn from the experiment in recovery of Rwanda ⁽²⁾. It is a long journey to recovery since there will be some pockets of resistance along the way.

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The funding the local government namely the municipality should seek come from many avenues, to name a few, World Bank-International Development Association, World Bank-International Finance Corporation, US Agency for International Development (USAID), these funds can be used to support the City of Sirte demobilization, reintegration of combatants, resettlement and reconciliation. It is expected and anticipated that the International funding should include providing expertise for public sector management support and help the private sector chart a strategy to improve or create new investor agency. City council should review and update data information in in UN report “Sirte FLASH APPEAL September-December 2016” ⁽³⁾

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The Challenge ahead, the following are a list of few but not all constrains in implementing a recovery plan:

- 1) Centralization Constrain, decentralization of certain sectors should be studied and implemented specifically when it comes to elementary and secondary education and establishing or improving healthcare centers. Constrains to Develop Sirte are due to lack of support of the “central government”, it is proposed here that the local government develop and adopt a mechanism to ensure a sustained flow of resources from the central bank.

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2) Infrastructure Constrain, just like most Libyan cities, infrastructure deficiencies, particularly in the energy sector and mass transportation are a great hinder to any sustainable development. Alternative energy resources such as solar technology is a must, as far as transportation sector more resources should be allocated to upgrade the existing grid in addition to building new roads.

This paper will also address methods of damage assessment phases to be followed by local authority and supported by the UNDP ⁽⁴⁾.

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Background on War-Torn Economics

The recent Libya civil war has several characteristics including but not limited to the following:

1. Even though they tended to be of short duration compared to other civil wars without end
2. They were hard to predict after the fall of the old regime, at least from the vantage point from when they erupted
3. The breakdown of the government
4. Having an ethnic and religious dimension that was not predicted
5. Meddling of outside players, both great powers and regional, exacerbated and prolonged the conflict

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Early Economics Development and Institution Building

1. Economic institutions such as the Central Bank and NOC need serious attention and reform in a post war scenario.
2. The traditional assumptions of donors, in post-conflict environment may not work for Libya. The authors propose that economic development is complementary and in support to the political and security of peacebuilding and peacekeeping, economic recovery must start with the prospect of peace.
3. Donors so far namely the EU and the UNDP have focused their attention on political reconstruction. We are arguing here that political reconstruction did not and would not lead to lasting peace.
4. Politicians, academics, diplomats and economists must think in each other mindset in taking a different approach, there is no economic/physical reconstruction without security.

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Post War ASSESSMENT AND RECOVERY PLANNING:

PHASE 1: CONDUCTING THE PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT (PDA)

This preliminary damage review was requested by local official. The National Council on US Libya Relations is committed to assisting in the efforts to rebuild the city of Sirte and hopes that this effort will lead to a broader and more detailed understanding of this enormous task.

From February 2015 until December 2016, Sirte was the site of heavy fighting between forces of the GNA and the so called “Islamic” Terrorist (ISIS).

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Tanks, airstrikes and artillery were used during the fighting leading to substantial devastation to Sirte's central urban area, airport, down town and district 2.

The first step in rebuilding from this devastation is to conduct a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) a methodological survey and evaluation of the damaged area used in the aftermath of natural or human made disaster. The methodology according to the Applied Technology Council (ATC 20⁽⁴⁾) is to inspect each war-affected building and, applying criteria used by the Structural engineering communities in the US, the criteria assign and tag structures according to one of three categories:

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INSPECTED and cleared for use (green placard); RESTRICTED USE (yellow placard); or UNSAFE (red placard).

The PDA ⁽⁵⁾ is conducted by qualified engineers/architects who are capable of assessing the damage by, surveying sites equipped with digital notebooks and software available in the market at a reasonable cost ⁽⁶⁾. It has been determined and is general practice in the United States that if a building repair/retrofit estimate exceeds 50% of the cost of constructing a new structure, the structure should be replaced; others can be renovated and strengthened to withstand future disasters, natural or man-made. To achieve a productive PDA; it is recommended that the following should be addressed in any evaluation:

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1. How the human element/environment has been affected
2. Damage to physical infrastructure
3. Assessing the possibilities of incorporating green building applications and standards
4. Impact on business and economy
5. Number of people displaced and in urgent need of permanent shelter/housing
6. The estimated, itemized total cost to rebuild.

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The following three critical areas of assessments must be completed at once as a first step to gauge future plans and the required support needed for the city and its BRRA:

- a) Concentration of damage (Downtown, Hay 2)
- b) Trauma measured in deaths, injuries and disruption of normal life and loss of business
- c) Capacity of the local authority, NGOs, and private sector, coupled with the engagement of the Red Crescent, to address what is necessary to lead to a healthy recovery.

It is worth noting the important work in assessing the damage to the city of Sirte conducted by the UN-Habitat, satellite map of the extent of the damage as of June 2017.

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PHASE 2: CREATING THE MASTER REBUILDING & DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The magnitude of the destruction to the city and the size, scope and cost of Recovery/Rebuild, is beyond the capacity of the limited resources available to local Sirte authority, NGOs and the Red Crescent cannot be construed solely and simply by calculating the number of damaged dwellings and businesses but by a comprehensive evaluation of a major comprehensive new city reconstruction plan.

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The local government must establish a unified credible and experienced authority to be given the task of developing a master (general) plan to build and reconstruct Sirte in honor of and for its resilient citizens. This “Sirte Recovery/Rebuild Authority” (SRRA) should obtain all approvals by all levels of governments in Libya so to commence its essential functions promptly.

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To move from assessment to recovery requires comprehensive analysis of the PDA data measured alongside the needs of the local population and the vision for the city's reconstruction and development. The Master Rebuilding Plan identifies the priority structures for rebuilding in the context of the city's overall new vision. It is possible that some badly damaged buildings will be demolished instead of being reconstructed according to the new vision. Creating a Master Plan will require skilled leadership, outside expertise including from international donors, and the active involvement of a range of local stakeholders.

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PHASE 3: FUNDRAISING

It is highly unlikely that Sirte will be able to raise the funds it needs to rebuild and implement its development plan purely from private investors. The city will have to approach international donor, including USAID, UN-HABITAT, UNDP and EuropeAid in addition to the World Bank. A successful fundraising strategy must include:

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- 1) Build a coordinated multi-phase campaign
- 2) Establish a sense of urgency
- 3) Craft a short clear call to action

PHASE 4: COMMENCEMENT OF REBUILDING

Once adequate initial funding has been secured, rebuilding can commence. Demolition, renovation and reconstruction will proceed according to a priority list set out in a Master Plan.

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PHASE 5: RECOVERY

In any post war scenario, recovery is a complex and demanding ordeal. It is of extreme importance that the damage assessment address not only physical damage to property, but also human trauma and psychological damage. It is of vital importance that any master plan reflects careful consultation with stakeholders and experts on how to reach the human spirit of the citizens, inspiring optimism and inviting participation in the effort to build a modern, peaceful city.

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The financial costs of the civil war may reach \$3+ billion⁽⁷⁾, my estimate based on damage observed from official documents; the human suffering on the other hand cannot be measured in currency. The widespread availability of weapons is one of the most enduring logistical challenges stemming from this conflict. It is of great importance to avoid the spread of violence, particularly as “active” combatants are demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life. The rule of law must overcome the rule of guns. Despite the limitations faced, it is important to choose an economic model that will integrate the private sector and local government to establish a plan to meet the needs of society to rebuild from the ashes of war.

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Engineers/architects in collaboration with emergency “managers,” with expertise from prior post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction and urban planning should be invited to assist and should coordinate with SRRA in gathering and storing data and estimating the cost of the rebuild, including the cost of temporary housing and all other needs on a case by case basis.

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During periods of post-war recovery and rebuild, domestic and foreign aid and loans are to be the main sources of funding. At the same time, increases in unnecessary military spending divert and waste funds required for recovery. Additionally, if not monitored, funds are subject to potential misuse by lobbyists, corrupt individuals, and war lords. A system of transparency must be established to ensure that monies raised are well spent and lead to peace.

The Libyan civil war has damaged the human spirit, infrastructure, and most of the economic assets of Sirte. Health care reconstruction is a crucial step on the road to psychological and economic recovery.

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OUTLOOK AND OBSERVATIONS

The process of recovery and rebuilding takes time; in Sirte's case the authors estimate at least 10 years. Lack of government funding, combined with the need to regain the confidence of local and international investors, lengthens the process.

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The New Sirte I envision, is to be a distinctive modern city with an active urban edge, dominated by green building applications, environmentally friendly technology and functionality and includes an efficient compact central business district, a corridor of parks and open spaces, “light rail” efficient public transportation, pedestrian walkways and cycle lanes. Central to the rebuild is a return to the “village concept of everyone is involved and everyone has a stake”. NGOs working hand-in-hand with the private sector and local government will be integral to moving forward.

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Images of War Damage

Image 1



Complete Collapse

Image 2



Damage Beyond Repair

Image 3



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References:

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