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Le Bureau du Procureur

The Office of the Prosecutor

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The Role of the Revolutionary Committees⁹⁵

The establishment of the first formations of the Revolutionary Committees goes back to 1976. Gaddafi commissioned these formations to crush the student movement at the universities and schools and control it⁹⁶. As from the declaration of the alleged establishment of People's Authority (2 March 1977), the formation of the Revolutionary Committees continued. On 6 November 1977, the establishment of the first Revolutionary Committee was announced at the University of Tripoli. Its tasks were extended to include⁹⁷:

- 1- Inciting the masses to exercise power.
- 2- Consolidating the people's power.
- 3- Exercising revolutionary control.
- 4- Stirring People's Congresses.
- 5- Rationalising People's Committees and Congresses' secretariats.
- 6- Protect, defend and advertise the Revolution.

It becomes very clear from the list of these tasks that all of them are concerned with the structures of People's Authority, including Congresses, People's Committees, trade unions, associations, federations and the General People's Congress.

With the growing powers of the Revolutionary Committees, the year 1978 witnessed their proliferation and infiltration in all People's Congresses and People's Committees (as in the faculties of the university, colleges and secondary schools, and then in the military establishment, police and security services since 1979).

The manifestation of this infiltration was that Gaddafi commissioned the Revolutionary Committees to oversee the 'escalation' process [choosing - electing] for the leaders of People's Congresses, which was conducted as from 6 February 1978, and that was the first time in which the 'escalation' process was conducted under the alleged mass regime.

Gaddafi has talked about this commission in the speech he delivered via visual and audio broadcast on the evening of 7 February 1978, in which he stated⁹⁸:

⁹⁵ In this study, we are interested in the role of the Revolutionary Committees concerning the structures of People's Authority, which includes the People's Congresses, People's Committees and the General People's Congress. For more information about the movement of the Revolutionary Committees and the rest of their other tasks, refer to the research titled "Gaddafi and the Revolutionary Committees... the origin and the reproduction", the book is under preparation.

⁹⁶ Refer to Gaddafi's speech on 6 April 1976 and 19 April 1976.

⁹⁷ See book titled "The Revolutionary Committees", published by The International Centre for the Studies and Researches of the Green Book, Tripoli, and first edition 1985. See also, "Explanations of the Green Book", third volume, section 16 – The Revolutionary Committees, the same centre, second edition, 1986.

⁹⁸ National Register, volume 9, 77/1978, pages (425-440).

“...what will oversee the re-selection of the leadership of the People's Congresses in all parts of the Jamahiriya is the Revolutionary Committees... so, in order for you to understand the value of the Revolutionary Committees and their mission as well, these committees are not governmental or official bodies, as the government and formalities had ended by the formation of the People's Authority, and the people are doing these things to pull themselves together, as the People's Authority has been established... It is the people who created the People's Congresses, and it is the people who are now re-selecting the leadership of the People's Congresses, and it is the people who have shaped the Revolutionary Committees⁹⁹ in order to carry out this job for the first time, as the Revolutionary Committees are newly formed, and it is the product of the Revolution and is consistent with the statement of the Green Book; Committees are everywhere, from the People's Committees to the Revolutionary Committees¹⁰⁰.”

Then, Gaddafi once again reiterated the task entrusted to the Revolutionary Committees:

“... the Revolutionary Committees are going to oversee the re-selection of the leadership of the People's Congresses in all parts of the Jamahiriya... and the Revolutionary Committees must mobilise all their forces everywhere in the Jamahiriya and be up to this great, revolutionary task...”

“...and those who will be selected in the leadership of the Basic People's Congresses should understand now that there is no sensitivity from the Revolutionary Committees¹⁰¹, and everyone who is sensitive towards the Revolutionary Committees is not with us and is sick, and has faults, and must correct himself... The Revolutionary Committees are from the people; they emerged from the popular masses¹⁰², which are the forces of Revolution... on the other hand, these (The Revolutionary Committees) help you and guide you. They do not have the authority to make decisions on dismissal, or suspension from work, or salary deduction... They are, rather, here to assist you in how to lead the congress and how to convene the congress and how to motivate the congress ... they also help the People's Committee in how to carry out its administrative duty and be accountable before the People's Congress... they also help the People's Congress on how to hold the People's Committees accountable, and how it carries out its political responsibilities, as it is the one that holds power¹⁰³ ...”

⁹⁹ This is a sheer lie; the people have nothing to do with the formation of the Revolutionary Committees. Gaddafi and his regime made them.

¹⁰⁰ This is another lie. What is meant by ‘the committees are everywhere’, according to the context in which they were mentioned in the Green Book, is “People's Committees” and not “Revolutionary Committees”, which was not mentioned at all in that book.

¹⁰¹ This statement confirms the existence of an early sensitivity by the citizens towards the role played by the Revolutionary Committees, and even rejecting them.

¹⁰² Once again, the Revolutionary Committees were not introduced by the popular masses, but by Gaddafi.

¹⁰³ So, what power is left in the hands of these congresses?!

Then, once again, Gaddafi reiterates the same arguments by saying¹⁰⁴:

“...any person who is sensitive about the Revolutionary Committees has to come out and review his position, because there is no justification for sensitivity to the Revolutionary Committees... Thank God, people now are competent; they establish congresses and People’s Committees, and hold them accountable. They also choose the Revolutionary Committees to oversee this work. We used to think of how to control these Committees and who will oversee these Committees? What is the authority that has the right to oversee the re-composition of the People’s Committees or the leading committees of the People’s Congresses and now the Revolutionary Committees have emerged¹⁰⁵, a popular tool among the people. It means that it is the people who oversees, monitors, forms the People’s Congresses and committees, chooses the leadership of the People’s Congresses, holds accountable, dissolves and do everything¹⁰⁶.”

On 21 October 1978, Gaddafi gave a speech in which he talked about **the task of setting the agenda for the People’s Congresses** and how he would carry out the task temporarily, and that the Revolutionary Committees will assist the People’s Congresses in preparing and discussing their agenda. Among what was stated in that speech includes¹⁰⁷ :

“Now we start to simplify or clarify the points of the agenda in a way that makes it easier for you (i.e. People’s Congresses) to discuss. In addition, everyone must understand that this is a temporary issue. In the future, no one will set an agenda for you. However, we help you to assume the responsibility of governing, politics and power, which was in the hand of the Revolution Command Council, and now turned over to the people. We are helping you with it. But, in the future, no one will set an agenda for congresses, Trade Unions and People’s Committees; they will set their own agendas.”

Then Gaddafi adds in the same speech:

“The only assistant is the Revolutionary Committees, which help as a conscious revolutionary force that is spread everywhere; it helps the congresses, committees and Trade Unions in setting and discussing their own agendas ...”

¹⁰⁴ This statement is full of fallacies and fabrications, and like Gaddafi’s previous statements, indicates Gaddafi’s real goal behind the formation of Revolutionary Committees.

¹⁰⁵ Gaddafi used this phrase intentionally to suggest to the listener that the “Revolutionary Committees” have emerged spontaneously and without previous arrangement by him, and this is a pure lie and fabrication.

¹⁰⁶ There is nothing far from the truth than this phrase, and in any case, as far it describes Gaddafi’s confusion, it describes the weakness of his logic in defending the idea of the “Revolutionary Committees”.

¹⁰⁷ National Register, volume 10, 78/ 1979, page (90).

Of course, the “**future**” that Gaddafi was talking about has not come, and he kept, along with his committees until 2005, dominating this task and monopolising the setting of the agenda for the People’s Congresses.

When Gaddafi announced in March 1979 the so-called separation between “**power**” and “**revolution**”, and between “**formal regime**” and “**revolutionary regime**”, and between “**official authority**” and “**revolutionary authority**”¹⁰⁸, the Revolutionary Committees had become part of the of the revolution, the revolutionary regime, the revolutionary authority and revolutionary institutions.

“...the Revolution, from the ninth anniversary onwards, must be different from the power... We were forced in the previous years to integrate Revolution with power and perform them together, and this constitutes an abuse to Revolution, as Revolution is not power ... but, henceforth, power should be exercised separately...”

Gaddafi adds:

“For me, personally, as leader of this Revolution... I will not exercise power anymore. However, I will exercise revolution with the revolutionary forces, with the Revolutionary Committees and Revolutionary Formations. Masses will exercise power alone...”¹⁰⁹

But, what is the separating line between revolution and power? And what stems from revolution and from power? And where does revolution begin and where does it end? And where does power begin and where does it end? What is the nature of the relationship between the two? And who is the entity that owns the right to set and lay these lines? And under which authority?

Gaddafi has, intentionally, left all these questions without answers, surrounded with total ambiguity to form the “gap” through which he and the Revolutionary Committees, in the name of revolution and revolutionary powers, can control all the structures of the alleged ‘people’s power’. And, to strip these structures of whatever powers he wishes on the grounds that they are in the heart of the jurisdiction of the “revolution” and “revolutionary power”, which he and the revolutionary forces and the Revolutionary Committees possess.

Since the Revolutionary Committees started holding their annual general meetings in 1979, their recommendations and resolutions relating to the infiltration and control of the people’s power structures, including People’s Congresses, People’s Committees, associations and federations, have continued. The examples include:

¹⁰⁸ See the chapter titled “The Game of Separating Power from Revolution” in this section

¹⁰⁹ National Register, volume 10, 78/1979, pages (23-39).

The “Revolutionary Statement” issued by the second meeting of the Revolutionary Committees, held in Al-Darsiya (23-27 September 1979), included a paragraph that states:

(The Revolutionary Committees pledge to form Revolutionary Committees at each People’s Congress ... and they confirm that they will not stand idle in any People’s Congress that has no Revolutionary Committee).

- The “**Revolutionary Statement**” issued by the **third meeting** of the Revolutionary Committees, held at the University of Qarinos in the city of Benghazi (2-3 February 1980), also included the following items:
 - Each Revolutionary Committee performs its revolutionary tasks within the scope of its mass centre, the People’s Congress.
 - From the structure of people's power, the People's Congresses create People's Committees. However, People’s Committees lose their rationale or become a danger to people's power if they don’t make the decision they implement, **and the Revolutionary Committees are the instigators of the People's Congress to pass the decision.**
 - Secretariats of the People's Congresses, from the Basic Congress to the General Congress, pose a direct threat to the authority of the people if they acquire any capacity other than an administrative capacity. **And the Revolutionary Committees, during the revolutionary transformation and the assertion of people’s authority, have the duty to empower the masses to discover the revolutionary laws through the controversial relationship between things.**
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- The “**Revolutionary Statement**” issued by the **fourth meeting** of the Revolutionary Committees, held in the city of Sabha (1-3 March 1981), included the following paragraphs:
 - Persuade the masses at the People's Congresses to follow-up the implementation of revolutionary-transformation decisions taken by them, and blocking any attempt to circumvent them.
 - The daily exercise of rationalisation and persuasion of People's Congresses and People's Committees, as these are considered the most important duties and functions of the Revolutionary Committees.

Gaddafi has reinforced the “Revolutionary Statements” issued at the meetings of these committees by statements issued by him. We just refer to what he has said in a number of occasions.

- On **5 January 1982**, Gaddafi said in front of the General People's Congress¹¹⁰:
- "From now on, we will not rely on any congress unless it has a Revolutionary Committee. The reason for this is that **the Revolutionary Committee must be relied upon** at this stage of transformation towards a full mass regime, and in persuading the masses to seize power and then exercise power after it has been seized."
- On 7 February 1983, Gaddafi said in front of the General People's Congress¹¹¹:

"The real reliance at this primary stage is on the revolutionary forces, and the Revolutionary Committees in the Basic People's Congresses, and on Professional Congresses, to prove the direct people's democracy, and to work day and night to persuade the masses to exercise power..."

- On 1 September 1985, and during the sixteenth anniversary of the coup, Gaddafi said, and I quote:

"The Revolutionary Committees in the People's Congresses can decide anything, and when they make decisions, no one can annul them."

The facts relating to the years since the establishment of the Revolutionary Committees, confirm that **Gaddafi had used these committees to achieve two basic and important goals concerning the structures of people's power**:

First: The use of these committees **to predominate and control the performance and formulation of decisions and recommendations made by the structures of direct people's power**, which he planned and intended to use as a **first front** to hold them fully responsible for any serious consequences resulting from the choices and policies that he imposed on the Libyan people through these structures and in its name since March 1977.

Second: The use of these Revolutionary Committees as **an additional front and a second safety belt for him to evade any responsibility for these choices, policies and the dire consequences** that could result from them.

The facts also confirm that **the "Revolutionary Committees" exercised all of their activities based on the idea of "revolutionary legitimacy" and the directives and instructions issued to them directly from Gaddafi.**

¹¹⁰ National Register, volume 13, 81/1982, pages (390-391).

¹¹¹ National Register, volume 14, 82/1983, page (459).