Libya, Illegal Migration and War Crimes

According to information released by the UN, about 60,000 Africans have tried to cross the Mediterranean Sea in as little as this one year, sometimes in boats that are completely unsuitable for such activities, more than 1,800 of them have drowned. Illegal migrants are fleeing from Libya, Syria, Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia where they face poverty, hunger and death. According to the data from the Italian police, about other 200,000 people are preparing to reach the European shores in a similar way in the nearest future.

In the face of illegal migration that has incredibly increased for the last year, according to Brussels' estimates, close to catastrophic, at its extraordinary summit at the end of April with the participation of the European presidents and prime ministers the European Union expressed its intention to solve this problem with drastic means and applied in the UN for the permission to use military force against the African illegal immigrants. A nineteen-page strategy report prepared by the EU on this issue that was recently presented by the European Commissioner Mogherini at a meeting of the UN Security Council in New York, according to The Guardian, suggests conduct of aerial and naval operations in the Mediterranean Sea and Libyan territorial waters. These are the operations, according to European politicians, that can help to detain or destroy ships carrying illegal migrants. No less than 10 EU member states are already prepared to take part in the planned military operation on a voluntary basis, including Italy, Spain, France and the UK.

The UN accuses armed groups in Libya of organising the smuggling of illegal migrants from this country to Europe, qualifies their actions as "war crimes", that was announced on May 15 this year in the communique of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

However I would like to remind international and European officials who are actually guilty of this situation of illegal migrants leaving Libya in droves as well as of the involvement of the USA, France and Great Britain in "war crimes" in this country.

It is well-known that Libya was plunged into anarchy after the military intervention of France and Great Britain in 2011, resulting not only in the removal from power of M. Gaddafi hated by Washington, but also in uncontrollable distribution of weapons in the region, the participation of various armed groups and extremist formations in the fight for control over national wealth of this country which was followed by gangster actions against the population.

However as far back as 2014, in the Human Rights Watch report, the organisation noted the participation of France and Great Britain in war crimes in this country as they, according to the confirmed information, used weapon forbidden by the UN, in particular, bombs with depleted uranium, in bombardments in Libya, including bombardments of civil targets. The contamination of crops, animals and water sources resulted in the fact that the newborn citizens of this country have serious deformities. Thus, at present the World Health Organization has registered in Libya the highest level of deformities in newborns, affecting 23% of all newborns, and also revealed a high incidence of new cancers that were not previously known among Libyans and now occupy 18% of the total number of cancers diagnosed by the WHO in Libya.

We should not forget the fact that it was France and the United Kingdom as a part of NATO's military intervention in Libya that deliberately destroyed Libyan water resources and infrastructure. In particular, under the false pretext of
the presence of military technology in two plants (in Sirte and Brega cities) participated in the creation of a perfect system of artificial water supply and irrigation of the Libyan desert and arid areas (the so-called "Great Man-Made River" project), NATO aircrafts almost completely destroyed these plants. When NATO representatives were asked to provide convincing evidence to justify the necessity of these bombings, they could not provide any. According to the senior officials of the United Nations, as a result of the bombings, providing the Libyan population with water in most parts of the country is impossible, making it an emergency situation, according to UNICEF estimates, more than 4 million people (i.e. 70% of the population) in this country are left without drinking water.

The above examples demonstrate the guilt of France, Britain and other NATO countries in Libya in creating intolerable living conditions for its citizens and numerous representatives, who came from other African countries seeking to leave the country in droves as illegal migrants.

At the end of 2011 there were publications about a possible International Criminal Court impartial investigation of NATO's actions Libya, however, due to concerns of a number of countries directly involved in the intervention and prevention of violations of international law, such an investigation has not been conducted to date, whereby the perpetrators remain unpunished, and the lawlessness they generated continues in Libya. And instead of finally pointing at themselves as being guilty of armed aggression against Libya (and, above all, France, the UK), now the guilty countries offer no humanitarian assistance to the country, but new military operations, including in Libyan territorial waters. So, one crime prepares a new one and is served to the international community as a "recipe" to combat lawlessness - that is, illegal migration.

Valery Kulikov, political analyst, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.