



### [Senior U.S. Diplomat Criticizes the European Union's Enforcement of the Arms Embargo on Libya](#)

A senior American diplomat has criticized the European Union over its enforcement of a United Nations arms embargo on Libya. David Schenker, the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs, criticized the E.U. during a virtual event with the German Marshall Fund while discussing the ongoing situation in Libya. Schenker told the audience that Europe could be doing more to enforce the arms embargo, and when the bloc does enforce the prohibition, Turkey is unfairly singled out despite being only one of several violators. Schenker also said that Europe should be publicly calling out Russian paramilitary organization Wagner Group for violating the embargo, in addition to the regimes in the United Arab Emirates and Egypt.

The United Nations has imposed an arms embargo on Libya since 2011, when longtime authoritarian leader Muammar Gaddafi was toppled during Arab Spring protests and the country descended into civil war. Since the arms embargo was established, the Libyan conflict has devolved into a regional confrontation with Egypt, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey all involved. Russia is also entangled in the conflict through paramilitary organization Wagner Group, although both the organization and the Russian government deny any formal links between the two. The European Union recently launched a naval mission in the Mediterranean Sea to enforce the arms embargo, and David Schenker has accused the bloc of politicizing the embargo and enforcing it erratically.

When criticizing the E.U. for its inconsistent enforcement of the arms embargo, David Schenker said that Turkey was the only country being singled out for violating the embargo, despite a clear military mission to aid the internationally-recognized Government of National Accord. Schenker accused the E.U. of being unserious in its enforcement of the embargo, and said Russian and Emirati aircraft were being allowed to pass into Libya uncontested, while Turkish military material was interdicted. One potential reason for this is France's tacit support for warlord Khalifa Haftar, who is allied with Egypt, Russia, and the UAE. France is also one of the main European nations responsible for enforcing the embargo, and there are hints that politicization is undermining a fair enforcement of the weapons prohibition. Schenker also warned that without Europe taking a more robust role in dissuading all parties from breaking the arms embargo, the conflict in Libya would likely drag on.

The comments from David Schenker come in the wake of rising tensions in Libya, as the situation threatens to descend into a full-blown battle between countries. Egypt recently pledged to deploy troops across the border in Libya if their national security was threatened, despite a phone call between President Trump and Egyptian leader Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in which the president reiterated the United States' desire for a permanent ceasefire in Libya. In the phone call, the two leaders agreed to work toward de-escalating tensions in Libya despite the recent increase of bellicose rhetoric.