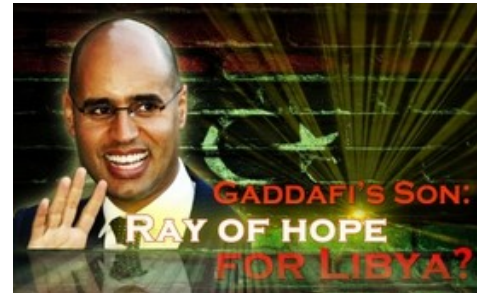




## Gaddafi's son: Ray of hope for Libya?



**Six years ago, on October 20th, 2011, the then Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi was brutally murdered by rebels who were supported by the NATO. The resulting civil war in the country is still going on.**

**But now, in the midst of Libya's chaos, a new ray of hope begins to shine. It is Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam that the Libyan people put new hope in. He only is said to pursue a real peace policy.**

Gaddafi's son: Ray of hope for Libya?

Six years ago, on October 20th, 2011, the then Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi was brutally murdered by rebels who were supported by the NATO. The resulting civil war in the country is still going on. Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj officially governs the country, but ex-general Khalifa Haftar is in control of the East. In-between, countless militias fight each other, and the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda are also involved. There are reports of slave trading, torture, abductions. The political system is fragile and inflation is so high that food becomes unaffordable. In short, as even the German Berlin daily newspaper "Der Tagesspiegel" concluded: "It is a disaster that allows the question of whether it was a good idea to overthrow the hated head of state and thus to plunge the country into chaos." One thing is for sure, Muammar al-Gaddafi knew how to hold together the Libyan people consisting of traditional tribal societies, Arabs and various minorities. Libya achieved economic independence under Gaddafi and was considered the richest country in Africa. Gaddafi introduced in Libya the so-called "Jamahiriya" (in English: "people's mass republic"), a form of direct democracy. This allowed the Libyan people to exercise power directly through popular congresses and people's committees. British journalist Lizzy Phelan who visited Libya twice in 2011 and spoke with local people concluded that 90 % of the population had supported Gaddafi. US economist and publicist Paul Craig Roberts quoted the former US Secretary of State Colin Powell as follows, "We thought we knew what would happen in Libya ... and we were wrong. We need to consider that in each of these countries there is a structure that holds society together. And as we learned, especially in Libya, everything falls apart when you remove the head ... and you will harvest chaos." But now, in the midst of Libya's chaos, a new ray of hope begins to shine. The Libyan people don't await anything anymore from the previous peace talks in Libya. It is Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam that the Libyan people put new hope in. He only is said to pursue a real peace policy. These statements published by the news portal SPUTNIK on October 18th, 2017, were made by Khalid al Zaidi, the lawyer of the Gaddafi family. As a reminder, Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi (hereafter referred to as Saif Gaddafi), the second eldest son of Muammar al-Gaddafi, studied in Vienna and London and acted as a moderate, diplomatic statesman under his father. During the Libyan civil war in 2011, he regularly called on the Libyan people to resist the rebels, who had partly been smuggled into the country from abroad, in order to prevent the separation politics fueled by the West. On November 19th, 2011, Saif Gaddafi was arrested by Libyan rebels in Southern Libya. In July 2015, he was sentenced to death by shooting in a trial in Tripoli. As his lawyer reported, the trial was conducted under questionable legal standards, including confessions made under torture. On June 9th, 2017,

Saif Gaddafi was released from prison as part of a general amnesty. Shortly thereafter, in an address to the Libyan people and the international community, he called for putting an end to the fraternal feud in Libya and forming a constitutional state. Basem as-Sol, the official spokesman for the tribal association, said in a nutshell, "The overwhelming majority of the Libyan society would welcome Saif al-Islam's return to big politics and the presidency. He is a significant figure capable of leading the country to national reconciliation." The Gaddafi family lawyer Khalid al Zaidi is also convinced that Muammar al-Gaddafi's son could reach a political settlement. In the current situation, where no real dialogue takes place, Saif Gaddafi's return to politics would be necessary because he is said to have the support of the ordinary people. Khalid al Zaidi literally says, "Saif Gaddafi travels across the country, meets with the people, the tribes and local leaders (...), tries to appease the conflicting parties and stabilize the situation. [...] For most of the Libyan tribes, Saif Gaddafi is the last hope." Let's hope that the Western community of nations will learn from the mistakes of the past. For the sake of the Libyan people, this "last hope" of Libya should be considered valuable and worthy of support. It would be fatal if the West destructively interfered again for the sake of the Western "understanding of democracy" and particularly because of its own interests.

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