Zimbabwe referendum delayed to Sept

HARARE - Zimbabwe’s draft constitution is only expected to be ready for a referendum by September and not in June as originally scheduled, the constitutional affairs minister said on Thursday.

The new charter is meant to replace the 1979 constitution which was adopted last Thursday by the State Duma, or the lower house of parliament, and which expressed concern over the “double standards which emerged during the intervention "constitutes a regression."

Moreover, the Cuban government said the Western powers “contradict themselves” before “the clear limits of use of force” in Libya, where protesters and the creation of a no-fly zone “constitutes a regression."

The official statement added that those powers “are specifically responsible for the deaths of over a million civilians in Iraq and more than 70,000 in Afghanistan, which are called collateral damage.”

Arab media reported Sunday that the Western coalition forces had suspended attacks on Muammar Gaddafi’s defenses in the Libyan territory, including areas surrounding the two largest cities of Tripoli and Benghazi.

According to the reports, coalition bombs and rockets destroyed roads, bridges and a heart clinic, leaving five civilians dead and over 150 injured. (Xinhua)

military intervention in Libya

Havana, Cuba—The Cuban government issued a statement here Sunday night expressing its “strong condemnation of the foreign military intervention in Libya’s internal conflict.”

The statement also pushed for dialogue and negotiation, and supported the “inalienable right of the Libyan people to exercise self-determination without external interference.”

The Cuban Foreign Ministry also expressed strong support for the “people’s right to decide their own future, of creating the conditions conducive to this military_aggression.”

The Cuban authorities said the intervention “constitutes a gross manipulation” of the United Nations (UN) Charter and of the authority of the UN Security Council, and shows the “double standards which characterize its behavior.”

“UN Resolution 1973 adopted last Thursday by the Security Council does not authorize in any way these attacks on Libyan territory, which constitutes a violation of the international law,” the statement said.

“Cuba supports the inalienable right of the Libyan people to exercise its self-determination without foreign interference, condemns the killing of civilians in Libya and in any other places, and supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty over the resources of this nation,” the statement said.

Moreover, the Cuban government said the Western powers “contradict themselves” before “the clear limits of use of force” in Libya, where protesters and the creation of a no-fly zone “constitutes a regression."

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Southern African Development Community, which is expected to take up the issue at a summit security council next week.

President Mugabe and Tsvangirai formed the power-sharing government two years ago in a bid to stop the conflict sparked by the 2008 election and mend the economy.

The agreement included plans for a new constitution and amended media and election laws to ensure free and fair polls.

The constitution committee had originally set a date of June 30 to hold a referendum on the draft constitution.

Mugabe raps ‘callous’ attacks on Libya

Harare - Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe on Monday rapped attacks by the United States, Britain and France on Libya, saying they were using the conflict to transform its own system in the region.

President Mugabe accused Western nations of taking advantage of the unrest in Libya to gain access to the country’s oil wealth.

“Now the West is taking advantage of the fact that it has been given that power to take it to transforming its own system in its own way,” President Mugabe said.

President Mugabe accused Western nations of taking advantage of the unrest in Libya to gain access to the country’s oil wealth.

“What is happening now is the undoing of the Libyan people,” President Mugabe said.

President Mugabe was speaking after meeting with Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan, who is in Zimbabwe on a two-day visit.

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