Desert Storm

A lingering Libyan nightmare

May 1, 2007 By Lucile Scott

In the latest installment of a nine-year courtroom saga, five Bulgarian nurses and one Palestinian doctor accused of deliberately injecting 400 Libyan children with HIV were sentenced to death last December. It was the second capital sentence for the children's hospital employees; the country's Supreme Court overturned the first in 2004. The new judgment came despite evidence from internationally renowned scientists that poor hospital safety practices were the true culprit. "Libya wants to deny that HIV was even present in Libya," says Richard Roberts, a Nobel-winning scientist who delivered a letter signed by 114 Nobel Laureates to Libya's UN mission last fall. The European Union has threatened to interrupt trade with the country. Libyan leader Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi said he might release the medics—for cash. The case is under appeal. And the film rights remain up for grabs.

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