

Report: Human Rights Violations in Libya during February 2024

Introduction:

Libya Crimes Watch has been monitoring, documenting, and reporting on human rights violations committed against civilians in various parts of Libya during the month of February 2024. We have been deeply concerned by the continued arbitrary detention campaigns in the city of Benghazi, where we have documented the arrest of Sheikh Muftah Al-Amin Al-Biju, and four others affiliated with Sufi groups. Additionally, we have documented the death of a political prisoner in Benghazi due to medical negligence, and the injury of two civilians as a result of clashes in the city of Zawiya. Furthermore, the discovery of ten (10) bodies of migrants who drowned after their boat sank off the coast of Ras Lanuf city was recorded.

It is worth noting that these figures represent what has been observed and verified by the on-the-ground monitoring team and do not necessarily reflect the total magnitude of the violations.

Details:

On February 4th:

LCW reported the abduction of Sheikh Muftah Al-Amin Al-Biju, aged 74, from his farm in the Abu Atani area south of Benghazi city. This abduction took place in the evening, carried out by a group of masked individuals wearing civilian clothes and travelling in four civilian vehicles. They then took him to an undisclosed location.

According to the account provided by Sheikh Al-Biju 's family to the LCW, armed individuals believed to be associated with the Interior Ministry's Directorate Support Apparatus, which is endorsed by the Libyan parliament, forcefully raided the sheikh's farm, breaking doors and terrorizing women and children. The assailants did not identify themselves nor did they produce any warrant from the public prosecutor authorizing the arrest or search of the house. Moreover, they stole a sum of money and personal belongings.

Sheikh Muftah Al-Biju is known as the leader of the Qadiriyya Sufi

order in Libya, and his farm includes a mosque and a sanctuary for memorizing the Quran.

Additionally, the LCW recorded the abduction of four (4) other individuals affiliated with Sufi orders in early February, suggesting a systematic campaign against them by supporters of the Libyan armed forces.

On February 14th:

The LCW documented the delivery of the body of the political prisoner, Sanusi Ahmed Zidan, to his family in the city of Ajdabiya, following his death due to medication denial and medical neglect inside the Kuwayfiya military prison in Benghazi. Sanusi had been arbitrarily detained since 2017 by the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) in Benghazi.

On the same date, we recorded the retrieval of three (3) bodies of Egyptian migrants, aged between 20 and 21, by the Ras Lanuf Security Directorate. They were found near the beach on the outskirts of the city, a few days after a boat capsized off the city's coast while carrying migrants heading towards European shores.

On February 20th:

The LCW observed a man sustaining serious neck injuries due to a stray bullet near Daman Street in the city of Zawiya. This incident coincided with clashes involving light and medium firearms between fuel and drug smuggling gangs. Additionally, a teacher at the nearby Bukhnas School was injured by a bullet in the hand.

The intense clashes that erupted amidst the crowded streets instilled a sense of panic and fear among the residents of the area. As a result, officials at Bukhnas School were compelled to suspend classes and evacuate the students to ensure their safety.

On February 27th:

The LCW recorded the retrieval of seven (7) decomposed and unidentified bodies believed to be migrants by the Ras Lanuf Security Directorate. These bodies were washed ashore in the Um Al-Qandil area, approximately ten days after a boat carrying migrants heading towards Europe capsized, leading to their drowning.

Recommendations:

- The LCW calls on the authorities in Libya to disclose the fate and immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared individuals, including Sheikh Muftah Al-Biju and those affiliated with Sufi orders.
- The LCW also urges the authorities in Libya to respect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and to cease campaigns against individuals affiliated with various intellectual and religious currents.
- The LCW demands that the Attorney General in Benghazi and the Libyan Attorney General promptly and transparently investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of the prisoner Ahmed Zidan, and hold those responsible accountable.
- The LCW calls on the authorities in Libya to fulfill their responsibilities in protecting migrants and refugees from the danger of human trafficking, and to provide them with necessary healthcare, psychological support, and legal

assistance in collaboration with international organizations.

- The LCW demands accountability for those who endanger the lives of civilians and an end to impunity, as well as necessary measures to protect civilians during armed conflicts within populated areas.
- The LCW appeals to the international community to establish an independent mechanism to ensure justice for victims, enhance accountability efforts, and uphold the rule of law in Libya.