

Libya Crimes Watch Briefing in the United Nations Security Council

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen Members of the Security Council,

Thank you for Granting me the opportunity to address you today. I am **Ali Omar**, a Libyan Activist, human rights defender, and former prisoner of conscience. I speak to you from exile as the Director of **Libya Crimes Watch (LCW)**, an organization dedicated for over 5 years to monitoring and documenting human rights violations in Libya and advocating for accountability. Today I stand before you to convey the voices of victims and survivors — those who endure in silence under the weight of daily violations and crimes in Libya.

Since the beginning of this year, LCW has documented **281 grave human rights violations** perpetrated by both eastern and western authorities in Libya. These figures are not mere statistics but reflect harrowing stories and real tragedies of victims, including the most vulnerable groups, such as women, and migrants, as well as activists, journalists, lawyers and others.

these violations include torture in prisons, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings. Such practices not only destroy the lives of individuals and their families but also sow fear throughout society and undermine any hope for peace.

These heinous crimes are not isolated acts but **systematic and recurrent**, carried out and overseen by security agencies and military groups affiliated with all parties to the conflict in Libya, including the **Libyan Armed Arab Forces, the Government of National Unity, the government endorsed by the Libyan House of Representatives in the east, and the Libyan Presidential council.**

Madam President,

Prisons and unofficial detention centers represent a dangerous and ongoing phenomenon. In these places, human dignity is stripped away, and individuals are treated as mere numbers without value. For instance, in November last year, **LCW documented the death under torture of 3 detainees** in an unofficial detention centre in Benghazi, including a woman and two followers of the Sufi sect, one of the religious minorities subjected to systematic violations for years.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen Members,

Civil society in Libya continues to face systematic repression and ongoing intimidation. This year alone, LCW documented the arrest of over **50 female and male activists** by security and military agencies in eastern and western Libya on vague charges justified by repressive laws such as the Anti-Cybercrime Law. Numerous decisions and regulations have further restricted the work of local and international organizations, making civil work from within Libya nearly impossible, forcing many activists to flee and operate from exile.

In October 2023, LCW documented the **arbitrary detention of 5 political activists** in Benghazi by the Internal Security Agency for **10 months without trial**. In April of this year, one of these detainees **died under mysterious circumstances in the prison**, with no investigation conducted.

To this day, freedom of expression in Libya remains a crime. **In September**, security forces in the east arrested **16 individuals, including 4 children**, for participating in a demonstration supporting the former regime. Following the catastrophic collapse of the Derna dams in September 2023, demonstrators were arrested for expressing their opinions and demanding accountability for the corruption and negligence that led to the deaths of thousands of innocent people in Derna.

As this Council mandates the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to oversee elections, ensuring a safe and conducive environment for free elections has become an urgent priority. This includes protecting the fundamental right to freedom of expression and involving all groups, including vulnerable communities, minorities, and civil society, as a prerequisite for guaranteeing the integrity of elections in Libya.

Madam President,

the persistence of these violations poses a serious threat to social peace and stability in Libya. The political division and the continuation of illegitimate bodies deepen the crisis and hinder accountability.

The failure of past political processes has not only prolonged the conflict but also created a breeding ground for impunity. The Security Council must now act, by shifting its focus to one where accountability is prioritized as the cornerstone of its approach.

How can a country where individuals accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity hold senior positions of power organize fair and transparent elections? Libyan civil society and the human rights movement in exile demand that accountability takes precedence over any electoral process. No political process can succeed when justice is obstructed and impunity reigns.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen Members,

We urge the Security Council and member states to take decisive action to end the prolonged conflict and political division in Libya. **Accountability must be a top priority before any political or electoral process.** We, therefore, call for the establishment of an **independent international mechanism to investigate violations and hold perpetrators accountable.** Such a mechanism is essential for identifying individuals who exploit impunity to obstruct the political and transitional justice processes. It will also ensure an environment conducive to enabling the Libyan nation to determine its future through free and fair elections that reflect the aspirations of all.

We further call on the Security Council to **enhance UNSMIL's mandate**, with a greater focus on **protecting human rights and monitoring violations.** UNSMIL should work directly with Libyan authorities in both the East and West to end arbitrary detentions, halt torture in prisons and unofficial detention centers, release all arbitrarily detained individuals, and reveal the fate of those forcibly disappeared.

Finally, we stress the need for the Security Council and member states to collectively press Libyan authorities and all parties to the conflict to cease ongoing violations and international crimes, protect civil society, and end campaigns of repression against human rights defenders and activists. A stable and secure future for Libya cannot be built without respecting fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

In conclusion,

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen Members,

I urge you to look into the eyes of the victims and listen to their voices. Your decisions today hold the power to make a tangible difference in the lives of millions,

Thank you.