

STATEMENT: STOP HATE SPEECH AGAINST MIGRANTS IN LIBYA

On the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Libya Crimes Watch (LCW) condemns the increasing hate speech and incitement against migrants and refugees in Libya. This surge in inflammatory rhetoric has been accompanied by misinformation campaigns that fuel public resentment, exacerbate discrimination and racism, and expose this vulnerable group to escalating violence and grave human rights violations.

LCW has been closely monitoring with concern the statements made by Libya's Minister of Interior in the Government of National Unity (GNU), Imad Trabelsi, as well as remarks by the Grand Mufti of Libya and the High Council of State (HCS). Additionally, it has observed statements from the Prime Minister of the parliament-accredited government, Osama Hamad, alongside campaigns on social media, protests, and calls from activists and local residents demanding the expulsion of migrants, claiming they pose a threat to Libya's demographic composition. These statements and incitement campaigns have led to an increase in violence and abuses, including arbitrary arrests and attacks against migrants in Libya. One victim commented to LCW, saying:

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We are trapped in a never-ending cycle of exhaustion. Burdened by constant anxiety and the fear of arrest for a crime we didn't commit, simply because we are searching for a safe place to escape the persecution and violence we face in our home countries. As campaigns of incitement, violence, and detention against us grow, we've begun to fear walking in the streets. The gaze of others follows us everywhere, and we face constant threats of being reported for arrest. We've endured detention and torture and live in constant terror of reliving those experiences. What is our crime for leaving our countries in search of safety and a better life? How long will migrants continue to be treated as criminals just for seeking refuge?”

Ahmed (a pseudonym), a migrant of Syrian nationality.

Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are entitled to inherent rights guaranteed by international law and treaties ratified by Libya, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)¹ and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Targeting them with hate speech, incitement to violence, or

¹ Libya ratified the convention on 3 July 1968, and it entered into force in 1969, thereby legally obligating Libya to implement all of its provisions, including the commitment to prohibit racial discrimination in all its forms and take the necessary measures to combat it.

blaming them for crises constitutes a grave violation of international law, threatens social peace, and fuels the spread of violence, discrimination, and racism.

LCW holds authorities in both eastern and western Libya fully responsible for protecting migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and all vulnerable groups from hate speech and violence. It urges them to take immediate and effective measures to prevent incitement, hate speech, and racial discrimination by officials and media institutions.

Furthermore, LCW calls on the Libyan Attorney General to prosecute and hold accountable those who incite hatred and violence against migrants, in accordance with national laws and Libya's international obligations. It also demands thorough investigations into attacks and discriminatory practices against migrants to ensure that perpetrators do not escape accountability.

Finally, LCW calls on Libyan civil society, activists, media outlets, and public influencers to take a responsible role in countering hate speech, rejecting racism, and promoting narratives that uphold the values of peaceful coexistence, equality, and justice.

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