

ORAL INTERVENTION

SIDE EVENT - THE 59TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva, 17 June 2025

Distinguished participants,

Excellencies, State representatives, colleagues in non-government organisations,

My name is Nour Khalifa, Communications and Outreach Officer at Libya Crimes Watch. It is an honour to represent LCW at this important event, during a time when Libya is witnessing a rapid deterioration in its human rights situation. The near-total absence of accountability, coupled with the deepening political and institutional fragmentation, continues to hinder any genuine path towards justice and the rule of law.

Through our daily work in field monitoring and documenting violations and international crimes, our team has documented over 589 serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in 2024 alone. These violations have targeted civilians, including vulnerable groups, such as activists, human rights defenders, journalists, women, children, and migrants. They are perpetrated by the de facto authorities operating in both eastern and western Libya.

The following is a brief overview of the main patterns of violations documented by LCW:

Extrajudicial Killings

In 2024, we documented more than 35 cases of extrajudicial killings, including those of children. These deaths resulted from torture, deliberate medical neglect inside prisons and detention facilities, indiscriminate shootings, landmines, and remnants of war.

Among the most concerning cases is the death of six detainees, including one woman, in a prison in Benghazi, during an ongoing campaign targeting individuals accused of "sorcery". The victims were subjected to torture and medical neglect. Their bodies were handed over to their families without any official explanation of the cause of death. In some cases, families were prevented by the Libyan Arab Armed Forces from holding funeral gatherings, and forensic doctors were reportedly threatened to conceal the true cause of death.

LCW also documented one death resulting from torture in Al-Radaa prison in Tripoli, and the killing of political activist Siraj Dagman in the Internal Security Agency prison in Benghazi under unclear circumstances, with no investigation to date.

During armed clashes last May in Tripoli between armed groups affiliated with the Government of National Unity and other rival armed factions, at least 12 civilians, including four women and a migrant, were killed as a result of indiscriminate shelling and gunfire in densely populated residential areas.

Arbitrary Detention

Arbitrary detention is systematically practised by parties to the conflict across Libya, including in the east and west. It affects activists, lawyers, journalists, and members of religious minorities and LGBTQ+ individuals. Victims are often subjected to torture, enforced disappearance, and denied fair trial guarantees.

LCW documented more than 150 cases of arbitrary detention in 2024, including women and children. Among these were over 10 individuals affiliated with the Sufi order, detained under allegations of practising sorcery. Most remain imprisoned without charge or trial for more than a year. Lawyer Mounir Abaid also remains in detention under the Internal Security Agency in Benghazi for over three months.

Most concerning is the targeting of family members of exiled activists, as a form of collective punishment and intimidation aimed at silencing critics abroad.

Enforced Disappearance

Enforced disappearance remains a recurring pattern in Libya and is often linked to arbitrary arrest. Over the past year, LCW documented more than 70 cases of enforced disappearance, affecting activists, lawyers, journalists and minorities. To date, there has been no progress in investigations, nor any accountability for perpetrators.

Among the emblematic cases are MP Siham Sergewa, who has remained missing since her abduction in 2019; MP Ibrahim Al-Dersi, who disappeared in May 2024; activist Abdulmatloub Al-Sarhani, missing since 2017 in Benghazi; and activist Moataz Bannon, who has been missing since 2014 in Tripoli. Many others remain forcibly disappeared, leaving their families in a prolonged state of uncertainty and distress.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These documented patterns of violations point to a dangerous reality: the persistence of impunity, the lack of meaningful investigations, and the erosion of trust in Libya's judicial system. The existence of two rival governments, coupled with the collapse of institutional safeguards and the failure of domestic remedies, has created an environment where human rights are consistently violated without consequence.

These violations cannot be separated from state-led repression of civil society and international organisations, the systematic targeting of human rights defenders, and the

growing criminalisation of peaceful dissent, including through the persecution of independent voices and the instrumentalisation of legislation to silence opposition.

In this context, Libya Crimes Watch strongly puts forward the following recommendations:

- The urgent need for an independent international investigative mechanism on Libya, with a clear and robust mandate to promote accountability and justice for victims. This is not merely a technical recommendation; it is a non-negotiable demand repeatedly voiced by victims and survivors, who view such a mechanism as essential to ending impunity and restoring trust.
- Should the establishment of an independent investigative mechanism not materialise, we urge an expanded mandate for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights under Item 10, at the very least, empowering it with strengthened capacities to monitor, follow up, and regularly report on the human rights situation in Libya.
- Additionally, we view the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Libya as a realistic and actionable option. It would provide sustained, independent engagement and help fill the critical gap left by the conclusion of the Fact-Finding Mission's mandate.

In conclusion,

The systematic failure to ensure accountability in Libya continues to embolden perpetrators and deepen the suffering of victims and survivors. The violations we have documented are not isolated incidents; they are the consequence of political inaction, institutional collapse, and a deliberate policy of impunity. Libya Crimes Watch echoes the voices of victims and survivors in calling for decisive, rights-based international engagement that places justice and accountability at the centre of any response to the Libyan crisis.

Thank you for your attention,