

## CIVIL SOCIETY PETITION

# General Assembly Should Suspend Libya's UN Human Rights Council Membership Rights

As nongovernmental organizations from all regions of the world working in the field of human rights, we call upon the United Nations General Assembly to immediately suspend the rights of membership of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC).

The General Assembly contemplated the possibility that suspension of a member's rights in the Human Rights Council might be necessary in the event of serious deterioration in the human rights situation that state. Resolution 60/251, which created the Council, provides, in operative paragraph 8, that "the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, may suspend the rights of membership in the Council of a member of the Council that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights."

The Libyan government of Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, is committing "gross and systematic violations of human rights." A variety of sources report numerous repeated attacks by the Libyan authorities on the civilian population of Libya, including by firing live ammunition at demonstrators. Many hundreds of demonstrators have been killed by Libyan state authorities.

Colonel Gaddafi has admitted the systematic intent behind the violence unleashed on the Libyan population and has given cause for substantial concern that further violence will occur. On February 22, Colonel Gaddafi spoke of protestors as "cats and dogs" and threatened to "cleanse Libya house by house." His son Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi said on February 20 that the authorities would "fight to the last man and woman and bullet" in combating the protests and threatened that "rivers of blood" would flow.

The League of Arab States on February 22 denounced the acts of violence being committed against civilians as severe violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in particular the hiring of foreign mercenaries and the use of live ammunition and heavy artillery against protestors, and banned Libyan delegations from participating in all bodies affiliated with the Arab League until the Libyan authorities met the League's demands to guarantee the security of its people.

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union on February 23 strongly condemned "the indiscriminate and excessive use of force and lethal weapons against peaceful protestors" and called for an immediate end to all acts of violence.

United Nations institutions and authorities have also spoken out regarding the deplorable situation in Libya. On February 22, the UN Security Council expressed grave concern about this situation and "condemned the violence and use of force against civilians, deplored the repression against peaceful demonstrators and expressed deep regret at the deaths of hundreds of civilians." The Security Council also called on Libya "to meet its responsibility to protect its population and to act with restraint, to respect human rights and international humanitarian law, and to allow immediate access for international human rights monitors and humanitarian agencies."

Both UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay have condemned the attacks on demonstrators, with Secretary-General Ban expressing outrage at the situation and Ms. Pillay noting explicitly that the attacks against the Libyan population are both widespread and systematic, and may amount to crimes against humanity. Ms. Pillay's concern was

echoed by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Francis Deng, and the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Edward Luck, who also stated that if the reported nature and scale of the attacks by Libyan authorities are confirmed, they may well constitute crimes against humanity.

It is time for the UN General Assembly to follow without delay the lead set by the UN Security Council, UN officials and the concerned regional institutions. It is exactly for situations such as this that the General Assembly provided for the suspension of membership rights of a member of the Human Rights Council. Failure to act in the face of the gross and systematic violations committed by Libya would seriously undermine the credibility of both the Human Rights Council and of the General Assembly itself. In the face of the extreme deterioration in the human rights situation in Libya and the risk of further violence, we urge the General Assembly to adopt a resolution suspending Libya's membership rights in the Human Rights Council immediately.

24 February 2011

Signatories:

1. Accountability Watch Committee, Nepal
2. Advocates for Public Interest Law, Republic of Korea
3. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
4. African Democracy Forum
5. Ain o Salish Kendra, Bangladesh
6. Al Mezan Center for Human rights, Gaza/Palestine
7. Amnesty International
8. Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies
9. Arabic Network for Human Rights Information
10. The Arab Organization for Human Rights, Syria
11. ARC International
12. Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers
13. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
14. Asian Legal Resource Centre
15. Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression, Egypt
16. Association for Human Rights Legal Aid, Egypt
17. Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights
18. Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha, India
19. Burma Centre Delhi, India
20. Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies
21. Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee
22. The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), Cambodia
23. Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
24. Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance
25. Center for Trade Union and Workers' Services, Egypt
26. Centre for Human Rights and Development, Mongolia
27. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, Argentina
28. Chin Human Rights Organization, Thailand
29. Chin National Front, India
30. Christian Development Alternative, Bangladesh
31. Christian Solidarity Worldwide
32. The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Indonesia
33. Committees for the Defense of Democracy Freedom and Human Rights, Syria
34. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
35. Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies
36. Democracy Coalition Project, United States

37. DEMOS, Indonesia
38. Dignity International
39. Droits Humains Sans Frontières, Democratic Republic of Congo
40. East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project
41. Egyptian Association for Enhancing Community Participation
42. Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights
43. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
44. El Nadim Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims, Egypt
45. Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network
46. Ezra Ministries of Tanzania, Tanzania/Democratic Republic of Congo
47. Fahamu Refugee Programme, United Kingdom
48. Health Equity Initiatives, Malaysia
49. Hisham Mubarak Law Center, Egypt
50. HRWG - Indonesia's NGO Coalition for International Human Rights advocacy
51. Human Rights Defenders' Alert, India
52. Human Rights Education Institute of Burma, Thailand
53. Human Rights First Society, Saudi Arabia
54. Human Rights Now, Japan
55. Human Rights Organization in Syria - MAF
56. Human Rights Watch
57. The Indonesian Human Rights Monitor (IMPARSIAL)
58. INFORM Documentation Centre, Sri Lanka
59. INHURED International, Nepal
60. International Commission of Jurists
61. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
62. International Service for Human Rights
63. The Iraqi Human Rights Association in Denmark
64. Journalist for Human Rights, Sudan
65. Judicial System Monitoring Programme, Timor Leste
66. Khmer Kampuchea Krom Human Rights Association, Cambodia
67. Korean House for International Solidarity, Republic of Korea
68. Korean Public Interest Lawyers Group (GONGGAM), Republic of Korea
69. Kurdish Committee for Human Rights in Syria
70. Kurdish Organization for the Defense of Human Rights and Public Freedoms in Syria
71. Luta Hamutuk Institute, Timor Leste
72. Maharat Foundation, Lebanon
73. MARUAH - Working Group for ASEAN Human Rights Mechanisms, Singapore
74. Migrant Forum in Asia
75. National Commission for Justice and Peace, Pakistan
76. National Council of Liberties, Tunisia
77. New Woman Foundation, Egypt
78. The New Zealand National Refugee Network
79. Odhikar, Bangladesh
80. Open Society Foundations
81. Palestinian Human Rights Organization, Lebanon
82. Partners for Law in Development, India
83. Pax Romana - International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs
84. Pax Romana - International Movement of Catholic Students
85. People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, Republic of Korea
86. People's Watch, India
87. The Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
88. Programme Against Custodial Torture & Impunity, India

89. South India Cell for Human Rights Education and Monitoring
90. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), Malaysia
91. Thai Committee for Refugees
92. Think Centre, Singapore
93. West Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
94. World Forum for Democratization in Asia
95. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)