

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

"Dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights"

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The National Transition Council must put an end to violent attacks against, and protect, Sub-Saharan Africans in Libya

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The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) today expressed its deep concern at the recurrence and persistence of attacks against Sub-Saharan African migrants in Libya. The ICJ called upon the National Transitional Council (NTC) to take swift and decisive action to condemn and put an end to these apparently xenophobic attacks, to protect all victims and to bring to justice the perpetrators of such violations.

Since the end of August 2011, there have been reliable reports of widespread and indiscriminate attacks against Sub-Saharan African migrants in the areas under the effective control of the Libyan National Transitional Council. These attacks, which include unlawful killings, torture and ill-treatment, as well as arbitrary arrests, constitute a second wave of violent acts targeting vulnerable African migrants perpetrated in May 2011 and well documented by the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

While allegations have arisen regarding the possible participation of some Sub-Saharan Africans as mercenaries in support of the regime of deposed leader Muammar Al-Gaddafi, most of the victims appear to be migrants who were not in any way participating in the armed conflict.

The ICJ observes that such abuses, even when committed by forces under the command of the NTC, constitute serious violations of international human rights law, breaching Libya's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

'Not only are such xenophobic attacks in clear contravention of Libya's international and regional human rights obligations, but they also contradict the African Union's vision of a strong Africa united by "the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among [all] peoples"', Said Martin Masiga, the Deputy Director of the ICJ Africa Regional Programme.

The International Commission of Jurists urges the Libyan National Transition Council and all competent authorities to act decisively to bring a swift and definitive end to all forms of xenophobic or racial violence in Libya. The ICJ calls for impartial and thorough investigations into these allegations, which would result in holding accountable those responsible for those abuses and affording full reparation for the victims.

For further information, please contact at the ICJ: +27 11 024 8268: Martin O. Masiga, Deputy Director of the Africa Regional Programme

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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