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## **NTC must investigate death of another Tawargha man under torture**

The Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC) must act immediately to investigate and prosecute abuses against the Tawargha community of black Libyans, Amnesty International said today, after another Tawargha man was tortured to death in a Misratah detention centre.

The body of 44-year-old father of two Barnous Bous'a was delivered to his family on 16 April. It was covered with bruises and cuts, including an open wound to the back of the head.

Barnous Bous'a was a civilian who fled his home in Kararim in western Libya during the armed conflict, settling in Sirte.

After his arrest by Misratah militias in October 2011 while fleeing further fighting in Sirte, he was reportedly held at a detention facility under the control of Misratah's Security Committee, a committee created under the Misratah local council.

"This brutal death highlights the continuing dangers to detainees in the new Libya," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director at Amnesty International. "How many more victims will die from torture until the authorities realize the gravity of the situation, and deliver on their promises of investigating, prosecuting and putting an end to such crimes?"

Amnesty International has documented more than a dozen deaths in custody at the hands of armed militias since September 2011, amid widespread torture of suspected al-Gaddafi loyalists and soldiers. A high proportion of the victims were Tawarghas.

The entire population of the city of Tawargha, some 30,000 people, has suffered abuses at the hands of armed militias in revenge to for their town's perceived loyalty to the former government, and for crimes some Tawargha are accused of having committed during the siege and shelling of the neighbouring city of Misratah by al-Gaddafi forces.

Militias from Misratah drove out the entire population of Tawargha in August 2011, looting and burning down their homes. Since then, armed militias from Misratah have been hunting down Tawarghas across Libya, snatching Tawargha men from camps for displaced people, homes, checkpoints and even hospitals.

Those abducted are brought back to detention centres in Misratah, where they are routinely tortured, in some cases to death. Hundreds of Tawarghas are believed to be detained in Misratah with fresh arrests reported to Amnesty International this week.

At least two Tawargha men have been taken from Tripoli since 12 April: one was arrested shortly after he left an IDP camp and the other was captured near his workplace. Their relatives have not been able to locate their exact whereabouts, but heard that both had been transferred to Misratah. There, they are at

serious risk of torture and even death.

One relative pleaded to Amnesty International: “We are so afraid for the safety of all Tawarghas once they are taken to Misratah. We cannot bear to hear more bad news... We are not safe anywhere, we can’t leave home, we are trapped. If we go out, we risk arrest too. We can’t even leave and search for our relatives.”

On Monday, Misratah’s local leadership denied widespread reports of torture and other abuses committed by the city’s militias, signalling that “reconciliation between the two towns [Misratah and Tawargha] was probably impossible at the moment” and that “some alternative solution for the Tawargha people” was needed.

“The leadership in Misratah is turning a blind eye to the mounting evidence of abuses committed at the hands of Misratah militias, arguing that only ‘individual mistakes’ take place,” said Hassiba Hadj Saharaoui.

“It is imperative that the NTC now reins in these militias, investigates all abuses and prosecutes those responsible – on all sides - in accordance with international law. Only then will Libya begin to turn the page on decades of systematic human rights violations.”