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Libya: End campaign to discredit Eman al-Obeidi

The Libyan authorities must end their campaign to discredit Eman al-Obeidi, Amnesty International said today, after the government said she was being sued by the security officials who she says raped her.

“It is simply outrageous that Eman al-Obeidi is now being targeted by the very officials whom she has accused, with the apparent approval of the Libyan authorities,” said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International’s Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

“This looks to be nothing but an attempt at face-saving by the government. Instead of carrying out this smear campaign, they should release her and independently investigate her allegations”

Law graduate Iman al-Obeidi was dragged out of a Tripoli hotel on 26 March by security forces and detained, after announcing to international journalists that she had been raped by Libyan soldiers loyal to Colonel Mu'ammarr Gaddafi.

“Eman al-Obeidi has effectively disappeared. We fear that she is being detained and put under pressure to withdraw her allegations.”

During Colonel al-Gaddafi’s long rule in Libya, critics and opponents of his government have been routinely subjected to detention, torture and disappearance.

Amnesty International has recently documented further cases of enforced disappearance by his forces since the current protests began.

“Eman al-Obeidi’s case is alarming also because of the signal it sends to other women who may be subject to rape or other sexual violence, and who may now fear to come forward and disclose what has been done to them.”

The organisation is issuing an urgent action on its members to write to the Libyan authorities and demand Eman al-Obeidi’s release.