

# URGENT ACTION

## WOMAN DETAINED AFTER ALLEGING RAPE IN LIBYA

**A Libyan woman has been detained, mostly incommunicado, after alleging that she was raped by members of Colonel Mu'ammr al-Gaddafi's forces. She is at serious risk of torture and has reportedly been charged with defamation by the officials she accuses of raping her.**

**Eman al-Obaidi** was forcibly dragged out of the Rixos Hotel in Tripoli by plain clothed Libyan security officials on 26 March 2011 when she tried to speak to foreign journalists and alleged that she had been detained and raped by members of Colonel al-Gaddafi's security forces. She shouted: "Look what they have done to me", pointing to bruises on her body, as she was forced into an unmarked car and driven to an unknown destination. Amnesty International is greatly concerned for her safety; she may be tortured to force her to withdraw the allegations.

The Libyan government has not disclosed the reason or legal basis for her detention. Rather than investigating her allegations of rape and other torture or ill-treatment they have sought publicly to discredit her, claiming that she is mentally unbalanced and accusing her of being a prostitute. They say that they are not investigating her rape allegations because, they claim, she refused to undergo a medical examination.

According to the authorities, the men in the security forces accused of rape deny it and are bringing a charge of defamation against her; it is unclear whether this is a civil claim or a criminal case backed by the government.

Eman al-Obaidi's father has rejected the government's claim that she suffers from mental problems. He said his daughter is a law school graduate who has been pursuing a higher degree at a Tripoli university. Her mother, also in eastern Libya, said: "I am not ashamed of my daughter. I hold my head up high with what she has done, because she broke a barrier that no man was able to break... my daughter is a hostage in the hands of Mu'ammr al-Gaddafi and his followers." In Libya, women are said to fear to report rape because of the associated shame. Eman al-Obaidi's mother said she had received a call from Libyan officials who said that her daughter would be immediately released and the family rewarded if she withdraws her rape allegations, but when permitted to speak directly to Eman al-Obaidi, her daughter told her that she would not withdraw them.

### **PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, French, Arabic or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Eman al-Obaidi, to guarantee her safety and allow her safe passage to her.
- Urging the Libyan authorities to conduct an immediate, full and thorough independent investigation into her alleged rape and other torture and ill-treatment by members of the Libyan security forces and to bring those responsible to justice.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 MAY 2011 TO:**

#### Leader of the Revolution

Colonel Mu'ammr Al-Gaddafi  
Office of the Leader of the Revolution,  
Tripoli, Great Socialist People's Libyan  
Arab Jamahiriya

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Gaddafi Development Foundation

#### Executive Director

El Fatah Tower, 5th Floor B No.57  
PO Box 1101, Tripoli  
Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab  
Jamahiriya

Fax: +218 21 3350263

Email: [media@gdf.org.ly](mailto:media@gdf.org.ly)

**Salutation: Dear Sir**

#### Waatassimu Charity Association

Omar Almkhtar Street

Tripoli - Libya

+218 21 334 3329/7/6 (please keep  
trying)

Email: [info@waatasemu.org](mailto:info@waatasemu.org)

**Salutation: Dear Madam**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date..

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 27 March, al-Libiyya TV aired voice recordings and footage of Eman al-Obaidi speaking with what the anchor said were (voices of) a female guard and Eman's sister who was visiting her in custody at the General Security Directorate and urging her to agree to an examination by a state doctor; it is unclear whether her sister was acting voluntarily or under duress.

Gross and systematic human rights violations have been committed with total impunity throughout the more than 40 years of Colonel Mu'ammarr al-Gaddafi's rule in Libya, including arbitrary arrest and detention without trial, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, unfair trials and extrajudicial executions. The Libyan authorities have not tolerated dissent, including peaceful criticism of calls for change, and have routinely locked up those who have sought to exercise their right to freedom of expression.

Women are subject to discrimination in both law and in practice. Women who are victims of rape and other sexual violence are generally reported to be reluctant to report these crimes to the authorities both because this can lead them to being accused of adultery – a "crime" punishable up to five years imprisonment or flogging- and because it might be considered shameful to be a victim of such crime and an affront to family honour.

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