

URGENT ACTION

WOMAN DETAINED AFTER RAPE CLAIMS IS RELEASED

A Libyan woman, Eman al-Obaidi, who was detained after alleging that she was raped by members of Colonel Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi's forces, has been released. She is still concerned for her own safety, however, and has said that she has been prevented from leaving Tripoli.

On 3 April, video footage appeared on the newly established Libya Channel, carrying two interviews with **Eman al-Obaidi**.

During one of the interviews, Eman al-Obaidi recounts that she was detained for three days by the Libyan authorities. She says that during her detention she was interrogated by various government bodies including the Internal Security Agency, the External Security Agency, and General Intelligence. She was eventually brought to the Department of Public Prosecutions, who promised to open an investigation into her rape allegations.

During the second interview, Eman al-Obaidi says that she was forcibly taken from her home by armed men in plain clothes for "criminal investigations", and released within hours without being provided with an explanation for her arrest. This incident appears to have occurred after her release, but the exact details are unknown.

During the interviews she expressed fears regarding her safety in Tripoli, and said she wishes to return to Tobruk in eastern Libya to be reunited with her family. She mentioned that she had been prevented by the Libyan authorities from leaving Tripoli.

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

- Ensure that Eman el-Obeidi's right to freedom of movement is guaranteed; and that clear instructions are issued to all pro-Gaddafi forces not to obstruct her safe passage to eastern Libya.
- 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 16 MAY 2011 TO:

Leader of the Revolution

Colonel Mu'ammar 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

Salutation: Dear Sir

And copies to:

Waatassimu Charity Association
Omar Almkhtar Street
Tripoli - Libya
+218 21 334 3329/7/6 (please keep
trying)
Email: info@waatasemu.org
Salutation: Dear Madam

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 98/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE19/013/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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.

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.

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.

Gross and systematic human rights violations have been committed with total impunity throughout the more than 40 years of Colonel Mu'ammar 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.

Further information on UA: 98/11 Index: MDE 19/015/2011 Issue Date: 04 April 2011

