



ARTICLE 19 and Lawyers For Justice in Libya

Item 6 UPR Outcome Adoption for Libya

Aml El Houderi – delivered by ARTICLE 19

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Mr. President,

ARTICLE 19 and Lawyers for Justice in Libya (**LFJL**) welcome Libya's acceptance of all 14 recommendations directly relating to free expression, association or assembly.

We welcome the acceptance of Latvia's recommendation to "Repeal all provisions in the Penal Code and other laws and regulations criminalizing defamation, libel and slander, and ensure that any restrictions on freedom of expression are in line with the ICCPR". Implementing this recommendation would require substantial legal reform, including repealing Law 15 of 2012 and Law 5 of 2014 which prevent the media from discussing religious opinions issued by the National Council of Islamic Jurisprudence, criminalise actions "which may harm or prejudice the February 17 Revolution" and criminalise insult to the executive, judiciary or legislature.

We welcome Libya's acceptance of the UK's recommendation to "ensure all human rights violations, including assassination of journalists and human rights defenders, are investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice". Prominent women's rights activist, **Salwa Bughaighis**, was killed in her home by gunmen in June 2014. Youth activists **Tawfiq Bensaud** and **Sami Elkawafi** were assassinated by armed gunmen in Benghazi. From mid-2012 to November 2014, there were **at least 91** threats or assaults against journalists. The systematic nature of these attacks led to self-censorship and selective news reporting.

Libya must ensure independent, speedy and effective investigations and prosecutions in response to threats and attacks. Protocols should be established to collect and safeguard evidence and to protect witnesses and lawyers. This is essential to ensure that those responsible for violent crimes are held accountable, as well as those who command, conspire to commit, aid or cover up such acts. Libya should ensure supportive mechanisms are in place, such as safety, risk awareness and self-protection trainings, to protect freedom of expression stakeholders from future attacks.

We call on Libya to put in place a national plan for implementation of the recommendations it has accepted, in cooperation with civil society and to make this document publically available.

Thank you.