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One Hundred and Twelfth Congress

## Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

February 14, 2012

Chairman Mustafa Mohammed Abdul Jalil  
Libyan Interim National Transitional Council  
Embassy of Libya  
2600 Virginia Avenue NW  
Suite 705  
Washington, D.C. 20037

Your Excellency:

We write to express our deep concern over recent reports of torture and abuse of prisoners held in Libyan detention facilities. Such practices, if true, would severely discredit the promises made by the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC) to prove itself different from the Gaddafi regime by respecting and protecting human rights. We urge the NTC to fully investigate these allegations and to hold accountable anyone found responsible for committing them.

According to recent media reports and statements issued by human rights organizations, there has been an alarming increase in torture and abuse in Libyan detention facilities. The abuses are allegedly being committed both by Libya's new National Military Security agency, as well as by former rebel groups that are, according to the United Nations, holding an estimated 8,500 prisoners in secret detention centers.

Prisoners have reportedly been suspended in contorted positions, and subjected to rape, electric shock and prolonged beatings involving the use of whips, cables, plastic hoses, metal chains and bars and wooden sticks. This abuse has reportedly led to the deaths of several detainees in custody, including Libya's former ambassador to France, Mr. Omar Brebesh, who was detained by former rebels on January 19 and died the next day, allegedly as a result of torture. There have also been reports of prisoners being subjected to extrajudicial killings, raising further concerns about the NTC's commitment to protecting human rights. The victims include Libyans as well as foreign nationals, mostly from sub-Saharan Africa.

According to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), detainees have been brought, in the middle of interrogations, to the organization's medical staff for urgent medical care in order to make the detainees capable of undergoing further interrogation and abuse. MSF

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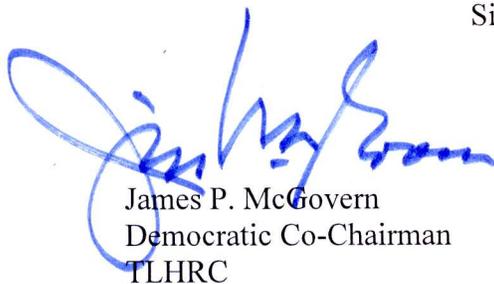
JANICE KAGUYUTAN  
Democratic Staff Director

workers have also been asked to treat detainees inside the interrogation centers, which the organization refused to do. Despite reporting these incidents to authorities, MSF indicated that detainees continued to be subjected to torture in Misrata. These events led MSF to take the highly unprecedented step of suspending its operations in a Misrata detention facility two weeks ago.

We are deeply disturbed by these reports. These abuses contradict the NTC's stated commitment to protecting human rights. Article 7 of the NTC's Constitutional Declaration, issued in August 2011, proclaims that "[h]uman rights and ... basic freedoms shall be respected by the State." Article 6 of the declaration enshrines respect for fundamental freedoms such as non-discrimination based on race. We believe that Libya's long-term interests will be best served by upholding its commitments to these principles.

As Libya seeks to transition to a democratic form of government, we urge the NTC to reaffirm its commitment to human rights by immediately initiating an investigation into alleged incidents of torture and holding accountable any individuals found responsible for committing them.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern  
Democratic Co-Chairman  
TLHRC



Frank R. Wolf  
Republican Co-Chairman  
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