

URGENT ACTION

DOZENS EXECUTED, SCORES REMAIN AT IMMINENT RISK

At least 50 men under sentence of death in eastern Libya are at imminent risk of execution as the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), the de facto authorities in the region, have resumed executions for the first time in Libya since 2010. Since 23 August 2026, the LAAF have carried out arbitrary executions of at least 30 individuals sentenced to death following grossly unfair torture-tainted and secretive trials before military courts. Some of those executed and at risk were convicted of murder and terrorism-related offences in relation to the armed conflict between LAAF and opposing armed groups between 2014 and 2018. Several of them reported being tortured upon arrest by LAAF-affiliated armed groups to extract “confessions”, which were used as “evidence” to prosecute them. The LAAF authorities must immediately halt all executions.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Field Marshall Khalifa Belqasim Haftar

General Commander of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces; Email: info@libyagov.ly, pmoffice@libyangov.info

Dear Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar,

I am deeply outraged over the resumption of executions in Libya, which involved individuals convicted and sentenced to death following grossly unfair torture-tainted trials. Currently, at least 50 other men remain at risk of execution at Gernada military prison. Many of those executed and under sentence of death were arrested in the cities of Derna and Benghazi, during or in the aftermath of armed conflicts. They include fighters as well as individuals suspected of opposing the LAAF, including due to their family or tribal affiliations. On 23 August 2026, the LAAF's military prosecutor announced that 10 people were executed by firing squad following their convictions for joining “terrorist groups” and murder. This marked the first executions in Libya since 2010. According to human rights defenders and other sources with direct information, 30 people were executed between 23 August 2026 and 9 September 2026. At least five of them were forcibly disappeared or held incommunicado following their arrests between 2015 and 2018, in some cases for up to two years. During this period, the Internal Security Agency (ISA), an armed group allied to the LAAF, subjected at least four of them to torture and other ill-treatment to extract “confessions” later used as evidence against them. ISA agents subjected them to electric shocks, infliction of burns, beatings with thick plastic pipes, and hanging in stress positions.

According to information gathered by Amnesty International, following months or years of arbitrary detention, LAAF authorities referred dozens of individuals, including the 30 men arbitrarily executed, to military trials that were conducted in secret. Several defendants were denied the right to lawyers of their choice and instead were assigned court-appointed lawyers. Defendants with lawyers of their choice could not communicate with them in private because they were denied visits before and during the trial, while held at al-Kuwayfiyah military prison. The authorities transferred the 30 executed men and about 50 others to Gernada military prison in late 2025. At least two of those executed were convicted and sentenced to death in 2019, but had their death sentences reduced to life imprisonment by a higher military court on appeal. It remains unclear to Amnesty International what was the legal basis for their execution.

I urge you to ensure that all executions in eastern Libya are halted and an official moratorium on executions declared, as first critical steps. All convictions and death sentences issued following grossly unfair trials must be quashed. Those facing internationally recognizable offences must be retried before a civilian court, in compliance with international standards for a fair trial, excluding “evidence” obtained under torture or other ill-treatment and without resort to the death penalty. The LAAF authorities also must ensure that torture or other ill-treatment allegations are independently and impartially investigated and those suspected as responsible brought to justice in fair proceedings. I finally also urge you to allow international monitors access to Gernada and other prisons and detention facilities in eastern Libya.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to human rights defenders, authorities in eastern Libya have prevented families of those executed from burying their loved ones, instead withholding their bodies and conducting the burials themselves after only allowing family members to confirm the identities of the deceased. The authorities also reportedly instructed families not to hold funeral ceremonies, depriving them of their right to mourn and give burial in line with their cultural and religious practices – a practice condemned by UN bodies also as amounting to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.

The LAAF's announcement of the executions came around two weeks after Major-General Fawzi al-Mansouri, the military intelligence chief for LAAF, was killed in a car bomb in Benghazi on 10 August 2026.

Amnesty International has documented multiple violations of the right to a fair trial in proceedings before military courts in eastern Libya, including the rights to be assisted by legal counsel before and during trial and have adequate time and facilities to prepare the defence; to remain silent during questioning; to a fair and public hearing in front of a competent, independent and impartial court; to be present at trial; to be issued with a reasoned judgment and to have a meaningful review of the conviction and sentence by a higher court, among others. According to Amnesty International's research, between 2018 and 2021, military courts have convicted hundreds of civilians in eastern Libya in secret and grossly unfair military trials, aimed at punishing real or perceived opponents and critics of the LAAF and affiliated armed groups. At least 22 people were sentenced to death amid reports of torture or other ill-treatment in pretrial detention.

Both military prosecutors and judges lack independence and impartiality, as they are affiliated with the LAAF or allied armed groups. For example, Faraj Al-Soussa, the current head of the military prosecution in eastern Libya used to represent the LAAF in the UN-mediated Libyan (5+5) Joint Military Commission talks. In turn, the judge of the permanent military court in Benghazi is subordinate to the head of General Military Judiciary Authority. Under international law, the use of military courts must be restricted to trying military personnel for breaches of military discipline. Military trials of civilians are problematic because the prosecutors and judges are serving members of the military and subject to its hierarchy and therefore lack independence and impartiality. Furthermore, verdicts by military courts can only be appealed by a higher military court.

In 2017, members of the House of Representatives (HoR), Libya's last elected parliament, passed Law No.4/2017 which established jurisdiction for the military courts over civilians accused of "terrorism" and crimes committed in "military areas." At the time, the country was divided between two competing entities, with the HoR allied with the LAAF, in control of much of eastern Libya, and at odds with the then internationally-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli.

In November 2018, a spokesperson for the LAAF stated that the 2017 amendments provided a legal basis for trying individuals accused of "terrorism" by military courts. In 2025, the Constitutional Chamber of the Libyan Supreme Court ruled Law No. 4/ 2017 unconstitutional as it provided for the trial by military courts of civilians for terrorism-related offences and crimes against the state.

Operation Dignity (Karama), launched by LAAF's commander-in-chief General Khalifa Haftar in Benghazi in 2014, marked the beginning of a military campaign against armed groups in Derna and Benghazi with the self-declared aim of eradicating "terrorism" that later enabled the LAAF to consolidate control over much of eastern Libya. Libya remains divided between rival administrations; the Government of National Unity (GNU) in the west, and the "Libyan Government", allied to the LAAF in the east and most of the south. On 30 August 2026, UN-facilitated talks led to an agreement on steps toward national elections, including addressing electoral legislation and restructuring the High National Elections Commission, with elections envisaged within 24 months.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally, in all cases and under any circumstances. Under international law, proceedings in capital cases must scrupulously observe all relevant fair trial standards. The imposition of the death penalty following unfair trials renders the sentence arbitrary in nature. The imposition of the death penalty after unfair proceedings violates the right to life.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [Arabic]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [1 November 2026]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Group (male) (They/Them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: First UA