

Lawyers for Justice in Libya Condemns Continued Attacks against the Tawergha People

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Lawyers for Justice in Libya (LFJL) strongly condemns the forced displacement and continued attacks against the people of Tawergha. Expelled from their city during the conflict following the 17 February revolution under the suspicion of having supported the Gaddafi regime and having committed crimes in the city of Misratah, the Tawerghans have subsequently been the target of indiscriminate reprisal attacks, arbitrary detention and torture by militias.

Approximately 35,000 Tawerghans were displaced during the conflict, with thousands having subsequently sought refuge in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps across Libya. Despite calls to ensure their protection, the Tawerghans living in the camps have been subject to regular raids and have been the target of systematic episodes of violence. In February 2012, the Janzur camp was raided by militias, resulting in the death of seven Tawerghans, including three children. The most recent attack against the Tawerghan people occurred on 19 July in a camp in Benghazi, where it has been reported that a Tawerghan IDP was deliberately run over by a car, instigating violent clashes within the camp.

“The continued attacks against Tawerghans are an affront to efforts at re-building Libya on a foundation of respect for the rights of all its citizens,” said Elham Saudi, director of LFJL. “Regional and political affiliations can never be justification for brutality and violence. These attacks against civilians constitute a travesty against the rights and freedoms of Libyans and a stain on the country’s transition to peace and democracy,” she added.

While LFJL applauds the government’s commitment to ensuring that citizens in the Tawerghan camps were able to vote in the recent elections, more must be done to protect the camps’ populations. All attacks must be fully investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. According to the Commission of Inquiry on Libya, the vicious treatment of the Tawerghans by rebel militias amount to a crime against humanity. The government must ensure such reprisal attacks are prevented by guaranteeing Tawerghans physical protection and security. Committed and genuine efforts must be made to ensure the safety and well-being of the Tawerghan people and all citizens at risk of acts of revenge and reprisal.

“As Libya inches towards becoming a constitutional democracy, it is vital that revolutionary legitimacy be replaced by the rule of law. Justice should not be the preserve of only the perceived victors of Libya’s conflict and should be guaranteed for all Libyans. It is important that the Gaddafi regime’s legacy of oppression and vengeance be replaced by a Libya where the inalienable rights and freedoms of all citizens are guaranteed and protected. Achieving peace, justice and reconciliation requires building trust between communities. Without this trust and equality of treatment for all citizens, we risk repeating the worst atrocities of the previous regime,” said Saudi.

<http://www.libyanjustice.org/news/news/post/81-lfjl-condemns-continued-attacks-against-the-tawergha-people>