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ANNEX 8.44



DEATH TOLL MOUNTS AS LIBYAN SECURITY FORCES TARGET PROTESTERS

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Amnesty International has accused the Libyan authorities of recklessly shooting at anti-government protesters after the organization learned that at least 46 people had been shot dead by security forces in the last 72 hours.

Sources at al-Jala hospital in Benghazi today told Amnesty International that patients' most common injuries were bullet wounds to the head, chest and neck.

"This alarming rise in the death toll, and the reported nature of the victims' injuries, strongly suggests that security forces are permitted use lethal force against unarmed protesters calling for political change," said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International's director for the Middle East and North Africa

"The Libyan authorities must immediately, rein in their security forces. Those responsible for unlawful killings and excessive force – both the direct perpetrators and those who gave the orders – must be identified and brought to justice."

Sources at al-Jala hospital have reported 28 fatalities from yesterday's protests in Benghazi with more than 110 people injured, and at least three further deaths in today's protests.

At least 15 people are reported to have been killed yesterday during "Day of Rage" protests in the city of Al Bayda, 100 km east of Benghazi.

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