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Libya

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Massacres in Libya : The international community must respond urgently

21 February 2011

Paris, Monday February 21 – The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Libyan League for Human Rights (LLHR) call on the international community to urgently mobilize in response to the growing risk that Gaddafi will use chaos as a strategy to stifle the protest movement that has spread throughout the country.

"The threats made by Seif al-Islam, the son of President Gaddafi 'to spill rivers of blood' are shocking," said Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President. "The whole international community must speak loud and clear on the situation in Libya. Extremely serious crimes are being committed, that would fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court if it was seized. The Security Council must consider this issue urgently" she added.

The violent crackdown has killed at least 300 to 400 people since February 15, 2011 according to LLHR, an FIDH member organization. The toll is also likely to rise because of the shortage of medicine which the country is facing.

According to reports, major political and military personalities have rallied with demonstrators including some ambassadors from Libya, the interior minister and the military leadership of the Benghazi region and western Libya. Furthermore, a significant number of security forces are said to have rallied with the population in several cities and in some neighbourhoods of Tripoli.

The Libyan regime is apparently using mercenaries from Chad, Niger, Zimbabwe and some former henchmen of the former dictator Charles Taylor.

"The situation is extremely worrying. We are also concerned that migrants are being taken as scapegoats and will be subject to retaliation," said Sliman Bouchiguir, LLHR president. Indeed, migrants account for 1.3 million people, or about 20% of the population in Libya.

FIDH and LLHR urge in particular States having maintained extensive relations with the regime of Muammar Gaddafi, to use all their influence to stop the massacres and encourage a peaceful transition.

They call on the UN Secretary General to strongly condemn the massive violations of

human rights perpetrated by the Gaddafi regime, and call on the Security Council to urgently review the situation and consider its referral to the ICC.

FIDH and LLHR also call for the immediate suspension of Libya from the UN Human Rights Council.

Finally, FIDH and LLHR urge the African Commission to urgently seize the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

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