



## PUBLIC STATEMENT

### **LIBYA: OMCT and HRS call on the international community to urge Libya to put an end to the violent repression of peaceful demonstrations**

**Geneva, 22 February 2011. The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and Human Rights Solidarity (HRS) condemn the unlawful killings of protesters by Libyan security forces amidst protests calling for change that have started on 15 February 2011 and urge the Libyan authorities to immediately cease the violent repression.**

OMCT and HRS are gravely concerned about reports of mass killings of protesters by security forces supported by foreign mercenaries, and special security battalions using live ammunition, including machine gun fire and large-calibre weapons, in Benghazi and other cities. According to information received, at least 200 people have been killed and many injured in Benghazi but the exact situation in the country remains difficult to assess given the fact that the authorities have restricted internet communication and freedom of the press.

In light of the aforementioned events, OMCT and HRS support the call of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for an independent international investigation into these events.

OMCT and HRS further call on the UN Human Rights Council to hold a special session on the current human rights violations in Libya as a matter of urgent concern. The Council has to live up to its own mandate by responding promptly to human rights emergencies.

OMCT and HRS also call on all States that have relations with Libya to urge the Libyan authorities to immediately put an end to the unlawful killings of protesters and the excessive use of force.

Finally, OMCT and HRS call on the Libyan authorities to

- Immediately put an end to the violent repression of the peaceful protests and issue clear instructions to the security forces to refrain from using excessive force against the protesters in accordance with international standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials;
- Guarantee freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression;
- Carry out prompt, effective, thorough, independent and impartial investigations into the security forces abuses and violence, including the unlawful killings, the results of which must be made public, in order to bring those responsible before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal and to apply penal, civil and/or administrative sanctions as provided by law; and provide the victims with adequate compensation, reparation and rehabilitation;
- Ensure the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the country in accordance with national laws and international human rights standards.

#### **Contact:**

**Eric Sottas, World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT): +41 22 809 49 39**

**Khaled Saleh, Human Rights Solidarity (HRS): +41 76 570 19 63**