

Statement by H.E. Ms. Iruthisham Adam
Permanent Representative of the Maldives

Special Session on the Human Rights Situation in Libya

Thank you Mr President,

Events of the last few months have reminded us, once again, that human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy are universally-held values and that brave people around the world are willing to risk all in their name.

As my President, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Nasheed, made clear earlier this week: “The right not to be tortured, the freedom to speak your mind, the ability to choose your own government... these liberties are not the preserve of Western nations but universal values to which everyone aspires.”

Unfortunately, in Libya, the Government has responded to the legitimate right of the people to express their grievances and call for a better life with brute force and with clear disdain for people's rights and their well-being. Extrajudicial killings, the use of State machinery and hardware, the military, paramilitaries, and mercenaries to kill and intimidate, as well as arbitrary arrests, detentions and torture, if independently proven, would amount to crimes against humanity.

The Maldives, a fellow Muslim country which itself recently began the transition to democracy, refuses to remain silent as hundreds of our Muslim brothers and sisters are abused and killed.

The Maldives calls on the Libyan authorities to immediately cease all human rights violations against the population, to allow people to freely exercise their rights to

freedom of expression and assembly, to independently investigate all human rights violations and to hold the perpetrators to account.

We also call for comprehensive democratic and human rights reforms, culminating in internationally-monitored free and fair elections. In order for such reforms to be successful and meaningful the current leadership should step down.

If the authorities continue to renege on their responsibility to protect the lives, rights and dignity of the people of Libya, then the international community, led by the Security Council, must take immediate measures to protect civilians against such indiscriminate violence. We note that the duty to protect is the primary responsibility of the Libyan Government. However, if they fail in this duty then responsibility falls on the international community. We welcome this week's statement by the Security Council but believe that the United Nations needs to do more to protect the lives and rights of the Libyan people.

The Human Rights Council should also immediately send an independent mission to Libya to investigate all human rights abuses, including gross and systematic human rights violations.

All those responsible for human rights violations must be held legally accountable.

We also call on the United Nations to immediately suspend Libya from its membership of the Human Rights Council.