



Lawyers  
for Justice  
in Libya

# Universal Periodic Review

## Libya 2025

### Factsheet

DEFENDER CENTER - ENSAF - I AM LIBYAN AND MY SON IS A FOREIGNER - LAWYERS FOR JUSTICE IN LIBYA - TAHRA

### What is the UPR?



Every 4–5 years, the UN reviews each country's human rights record.



States recommend actions to one another on key human rights issues.



Civil society organisations also contribute reports and perspectives.

### Libya's Performance

Libya participated in three full UPR cycles

2010 ..... 2015 ..... 2020

Recommendations accepted in the last cycle:

186

— out of —

285

However, in reality **Libya has failed** to deliver meaningful reforms, and **the situation has further deteriorated** amid political fragmentation, weakened judicial institutions, and entrenched impunity for serious human rights abuses.

### What now?

APR-  
2025

Undersigned organisations submitted assessments focusing on **civic space, women's rights, enforced disappearances, impunity, and disaster response.**

AUG-  
2025

Libya submitted its national report.

NOV-  
2025

UPR Working Group will review Libya's human rights situation since the last cycle, evaluate progress and present new concerns based on civil society, UN reports, and Libya's national report.

### Why is this important?

The 2025 UPR presents a crucial juncture: a structured opportunity for Libya to re-commit to human rights reforms, rectify critical systemic failures, and re-engage with international monitoring mechanisms.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

This factsheet outlines the key points of concern from the undersigned organisation's assessments and recommendations for Libya to consider in this critical period.

## CIVIC SPACE – Progress report: **Failed**

### Key facts

- Civil society organisations (CSOs) and human rights defenders (HRDs) in Libya continue to face severe restrictions and systematic violations, including arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, harassment, and intimidation by state-affiliated actors and militias.
- Law No. 19 of 2001 severely restrict CSO operations. Decree 5803/2023, issued by the GNU, revoked licenses of all post-2011 NGOs. Although a partial reversal (Decree 7/2023) allowed temporary operations, CSOs must re-register under the outdated and restrictive 2001 law.
- The Supreme Judicial Council's March 2023 legal opinion further endangered civil society by declaring NGOs not registered under Law 19/2001 as illegal. The Internal Security Agency and Administrative Control Authority use these provisions to criminalize independent activism.
- Law No. 5 of 2022 on Combatting Cybercrime is used by authorities to criminalise online expression deemed critical of the state, restrict digital activism, and prosecute activists under vaguely defined offenses related to undermining public order or morality.
- Security agencies frequently conduct raids of CSO offices, seize sensitive materials, and use defamation campaigns to intimidate activists, driving many to leave Libya, to self-censorship or ceasing operations entirely.

### Recommendations to Libya

1. Repeal all laws criminalising freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, including Law No. 19 of 2001 and Law No. 5 of 2022 on Cybercrime. Enact legislation guaranteeing CSO independence, removing mandatory approval for funding and international cooperation, and protecting freedom of association.
2. Establish an independent oversight body for CSOs with a clear legal mandate, operational autonomy, and an independent budget. This body must be in line with the principles set out by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
3. Immediately cease harassment, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and torture against CSOs and HRDs.
4. Ensure accountability and justice for victims of the above violations through transparent, independent judicial processes.
5. Create a supportive operational environment for CSOs, enabling them to operate safely and independently, free from undue interference or intimidation.

# RIGHTS OF WOMEN – Progress report: **Failed**

## Key facts

- Libyan women continue to face significant legal and societal barriers impacting gender equality and protection from gender-based violence.
- Women activists face harassment, threats, and marginalisation, severely limiting their public participation. Online violence has increased since 2020, exemplified by activist Hanan al-Barassi's assassination.
- In November 2024, authorities announced compulsory veiling for girls from the age of nine, enforced gender segregation, and restrictions on interactions between men and women. These measures were to be implemented under a newly established "morality police" a force tasked with monitoring and controlling public behavior, attire, and social norms, particularly targeting women and girls.
- Libyan nationality laws discriminate against women, preventing them from equally conferring citizenship upon their children when married to non-Libyan nationals.

## Recommendations to Libya

1. Create a secure environment free from reprisals for women.
2. Fully adopt and implement the draft law on combatting violence against women, which was developed in 2021 through consultations with Libyan civil society and legal experts. The draft criminalises all forms of gender-based violence, including honour-based crimes, physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence.
3. Enact comprehensive legislation specifically addressing online violence against women, ensuring clear mechanisms for reporting incidents, providing effective legal protections, and enforcing accountability measures against perpetrators.
4. Fully implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to ensure women's participation in peace and security processes.
5. Implement and enforce electoral laws that guarantee a minimum of 30% representation for women in all legislative and executive bodies, aligning with international standards and previous commitments.
6. Abolish policies that restrict women's freedom of movement, such as requiring male guardian permission for travel.
7. Reform discriminatory nationality laws such as the Law No. 24 of 2010 on the Provisions of Libyan Nationality to allow Libyan women married to non-nationals to pass citizenship to their children equally.

# ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Progress report: **Failed**

## Key facts

- Libyan authorities and affiliated militias systematically use enforced disappearances to silence political opposition, HRDs, activists, and individuals perceived as critics of the government.
- Victims are commonly detained without access to legal representation or family communication.
- While in arbitrary detention, victims commonly endure torture, inhumane treatment, and extrajudicial executions
- The number of enforced disappearances remains high, with insufficient governmental action to prevent or prosecute these acts.

## Recommendations to Libya

1. Immediately release all individuals detained for exercising their rights, end the practice of arbitrary arrests, torture and enforced disappearances and disclose the fate of all forcibly disappeared individuals.
2. Ensure all detainees can exercise their rights to due process, including access to healthcare, sanitation, legal representation, and family visits.
3. Ratify and fully implement the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and align domestic legislation accordingly.
4. Amend national laws, including provisions in the Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, that facilitate enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention.
5. Provide unhindered access to international monitoring and investigative bodies to thoroughly examine enforced disappearances, unlawful detention, and associated abuses.



# ACCOUNTABILITY IN DISASTER RESPONSE

## Progress report: **Emerging concern**

### Key facts

- In 2023, two dams in Derna collapsed due to neglected maintenance, despite multiple warnings, causing catastrophic flooding, over 4,300 deaths, and tens of thousands displaced. Approximately 8,000 people are still missing.
- Libyan authorities distributed humanitarian aid and compensation following the floods unfairly, systematically excluding migrants, refugees, stateless persons, Libyan women married to foreigners, journalists, activists, and displaced persons.
- Following public protests for justice after the disaster, the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) arbitrarily arrested activists, journalists, and peaceful demonstrators.
- Investigations conducted by Libyan judicial authorities focused solely on lower- and mid-level officials, failing to hold high-ranking political and military leaders accountable.

### Recommendations to Libya

1. Ensure equitable and transparent disaster response, eliminating discrimination based on political affiliation, ethnicity, nationality, gender, or migration status, providing equal support to all affected groups.
2. Immediately establish maintenance and oversight of critical infrastructure, implement effective emergency preparedness plans, and ensure transparent budgeting and regular audits to mitigate climate-related disaster risks.
3. Conduct impartial investigations into the Derna flood disaster, hold senior officials accountable, protect survivors and witnesses from reprisals, and establish independent mechanisms for victims to seek reparations.