

Press release

The situation in Libya referred to the ICC: Gaddafi could be tried for crimes against humanity, crimes must stop immediately

27 February 2011 - In a Resolution adopted on Saturday, February 26, 2011, the United Nations Security Council decided unanimously to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) welcomes the referral and hope that this action will have an immediate deterrent impact on the on-going commission of barbarian acts against the civilian population.

"It has been a bloody week for the Libyan people. We fully support the Security Council's referral to the ICC. Gaddafi and his circle must be held to account for the systematic and indiscriminate murder of hundreds of civilians. We sincerely hope that the referral will have a preventive effect on further perpetration of crimes. We call upon the Libyan government to put an end to the elimination of protestants and civilians immediately", said Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President.

Earlier this week, FIDH had alerted the international community on the extremely serious and bloody crackdown under way in Libya. Militarymen and mercenaries at the service of Colonel Gaddafi have resorted to massacres as a way to eliminate those demonstrating protest against the regime and, beyond that, to repress civilians on no grounds whatsoever. Foreign nationals, accused by Gaddafi of supporting protests against him, have been particularly targeted.

According to FIDH, the crimes committed against the civilian population could be qualified as crimes against humanity and would thus fall under the jurisdiction of the ICC. On Friday, FIDH called upon the Security Council to refer the situation to the Court without delay. Gaddafi's speeches have made it clear that the bloody repression of civilians under way has been ordered, wanted and executed by himself.

"We fear that those who have executed the crimes, have also taken measures to remove corpses in an attempt to eliminate evidence of their crimes. We call upon the ICC Office of the Prosecutor to act swiftly and to open an investigation into the crimes, so as to collect evidence allowing it to prosecute those most responsible", said Patrick Baudouin, Counsel at the ICC and FIDH Honorary President.

FIDH underlines that the decision to refer the situation in Libya to the ICC was approved by all Security Council members, including those who have not ratified the ICC Statute (United States, China and Russia).

FIDH welcomes also the decision to freeze Colonel Gaddafi's assets and to impose an arms embargo on Libya.