

Libyans deserve justice, as war crime suspects remain at large: Prosecutor

Despite an International Criminal Court arrest warrant, a Libyan war crimes suspect remains at large and could have committed further murders, the ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, told the Security Council on Wednesday.

A warrant was issued by the Court last August for the arrest of Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al-Werfalli, a Major in the Libyan National Army, accused of murdering 33 of his fellow Libyans during the long-running conflict that has destabilized the country since the fall of former leader, Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011.

The executions he is alleged to have committed or ordered, were filmed and depicted in videos posted on social media.

“Since the issuance of the warrant, I have repeatedly called on the Libyan national authorities to comply with their obligation to arrest and surrender Mr. Al-Werfalli to the ICC,” Ms. Bensouda, told Council members.

“ICC suspects who are indicted with charges of grave crimes under the [Rome Statute](#) cannot be sheltered or given refuge. They must be apprehended and face justice before the Court so that their guilt or innocence can be established.”

The Libyan people deserve answers. The victims of atrocity crimes in Libya deserve to have justice done and see that it is genuinely done – *ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda*

In January, new photographs and videos emerged on social media that appear to show Mr. Al-Werfalli brutally murdering ten people – who were blindfolded and had their hands tied behind their backs – in front of a mosque in Benghazi.

“The Libyan people deserve answers. The victims of atrocity crimes in Libya deserve to have justice done and see that it is genuinely done,” stressed the Prosecutor, reiterating her call for all States, as well as Libyan authorities, to act upon ICC warrants, authorizing the arrest and surrender of suspects.

Ms. Bensouda also informed the Council that warrants for the arrest of the former dictator’s son, Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi, and Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled, the former head of the Libyan Internal Security Agency, also remain outstanding.

“Without arrests, both the cause of international criminal justice in Libya and the very *raison d’être* of UN [Security Council Resolution 1970 \(2011\)](#) will be undermined,” she said.

Alarming human rights situation

In her briefing, the ICC Prosecutor further told the Security Council that the volatile security situation in Libya is being exacerbated by the ongoing conflict between militias in many parts of the country.

Extra-judicial killings, civilian casualties and systematic use of arbitrary detention of individuals, who are often subjected to serious violations of human rights, continue to be reported at an alarming rate, the Council heard.

At the same time, there are reports of large numbers of migrants still being held in detention centres – run either by national authorities or militia – many of whom are being killed, abused and mistreated while in detention or in transit to and from centres.

Iran deal represents ‘significant verification gain’ – UN atomic energy chief

Speaking the day after the United States withdrew from an international agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme, the head of the United Nations atomic watchdog agency made it clear that Iran has consistently stuck to its commitments.

Yukiya Amano, who leads the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)), said Iran was “[subject to the world’s most robust nuclear verification regime](#)” under the terms of the 2015 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

The JCPOA – reached by Iran, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the US and the European Union – sets out [rigorous mechanisms for monitoring](#) restrictions placed on Iran’s nuclear programme, while paving the way for the lifting UN sanctions against the country.

On Wednesday, President Donald Trump, announced at the White House that the US would be withdrawing from the deal, and unilaterally begin reinstating economic sanctions against Iran at “the highest level”.

“As of today, the IAEA can confirm that the nuclear-related commitments are being implemented by Iran.” *Yukiya Amano (IAEA)*

In a live televised address, he did not claim that Iran was in violation of the terms of the deal, but described its so-called “sunset provisions” –

which lift restrictions on the country's ability to enrich uranium within 10 to 15 years – as “totally unacceptable”.

UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said [in a statement](#) shortly after the US announcement, that he was “deeply concerned” by the decision, and called on the remaining parties to preserve the deal.

The IAEA has said repeatedly that according to the Agency's inspectors on the ground in Iran, no violations of the agreement had taken place, and there has been no evidence of any activity relating to any “nuclear explosive device”, after 2009.

The IAEA Director General said the agency would be “closely following developments related to the JCPOA, as requested by the United Nations Security Council and authorized by the IAEA Board of Governors in 2015.”

He described the three-year-old agreement as “a significant verification gain” adding that “as of today, the IAEA can confirm that the nuclear-related commitments are being implemented by Iran”.

['Gender-sensitive' trade policies help empower East African women](#)

Trade policies which better benefit women across East Africa, can pave the way for more inclusive development and prosperity, according to a new report from the United Nations trade body.

Crediting improved education, employment and other key areas, the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)) said on Wednesday that East African countries can put better policies in place to address gender inequalities and bring women further into the workforce.

In its new report, [East African Community Regional Integration: Trade and Gender Implications](#), UNCTAD analyses the impact of regional integration on women's employment and quality of life in the five East African Community (EAC) countries of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda – the sixth, South Sudan, joined in 2016.

“Gender equality is not a natural outcome of the development process and there is a need to proactively promote gender equality policies,” UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi said, adding: “The analytical work in this report is accompanied by practical ideas.”

One key recommendation is to close the education gender gap and improve skills training so women can compete more for higher-paying jobs. Another is

to create a regional credit mechanism to support women entrepreneurs.

Gender chapters could also be included in future free-trade agreements, along with uniform monitoring of how the important 2017 EAC Gender Equality and Development Bill is being put into practice.

“This new analysis is another UNCTAD contribution to the debate on how we, together, can make trade policy more gender-sensitive, and pave the way for more inclusive prosperity that leaves no one behind,” Mr. Kituyi explained.

Although the economy has already shifted away from farming towards services, and to a lesser extent, industry, 96 per cent of women in Burundi, 76 per cent in Kenya, 84 per cent in Rwanda, 71 per cent in Tanzania and 77 per cent in Uganda still work in agriculture.

Women also shoulder a higher share of unpaid care work, which, in turn, limits their availability and flexibility to do paid work.

And despite equal property rights, says the report, women’s land ownership remains low in many countries: just 35 per cent in Kenya and Uganda own their own land, and 46 per cent in Rwanda.

Based on the report’s findings, UNCTAD has also released a document designed to benefit women in the region, called [Advocating for gender-sensitive trade policymaking in the East African Community](#).

The research was funded by the Netherlands through TradeMark East Africa and conducted by [UNCTAD’s Trade, Gender and Development Programme](#).

State of emergency must be lifted for ‘credible elections’ in Turkey, says UN rights chief

Long-term restrictions on “freedoms of expression, assembly and association” are incompatible with the holding of “credible elections” in Turkey, said the United Nations human rights chief on Wednesday, calling on the Government to lift its extended state of emergency.

“Over the past two years, through successive states of emergency, the [space for dissent in Turkey has shrunk](#) considerably, with at least 29 more journalists jailed on terrorism offences in just the last week of April alone,” said Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, the UN [High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), in a statement.

During the 18-month period of emergency rule, which was declared following an

attempted coup in 2016, nearly 160,000 people have been arrested; 152,000 civil servants dismissed, many arbitrarily; and teachers, judges and lawyers dismissed or prosecuted.

“The heavy police presence and arrests during the May Day protests also demonstrated yet again the severely limited space for freedom of peaceful assembly in the country,” added Zeid.

“It is difficult to imagine how credible elections can be held in an environment where dissenting views and challenges to the ruling party are penalized so severely.” – *Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights*

On 19 April, a day after the Turkish Government called for early parliamentary and presidential elections, it announced its seventh extension of emergency laws, which suspend the country’s obligations under several articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights relating to the free expression, assembly, and association.

“It is difficult to imagine how credible elections can be held in an environment where dissenting views and challenges to the ruling party are penalized so severely,” underscored Mr. Zeid.

In a recent [report](#), the [UN Human Rights Office](#) said the state of emergency’s routine renewals were eroding civil society, the judiciary and the ability of media to hold politicians accountable in the country.

“Elections held in an environment where democratic freedoms and the rule of law are compromised would raise questions about their legitimacy, and result in more uncertainty and instability,” Mr. Zeid explained.

“It is in the interests of the people of Turkey that the country’s constitutional order is fully restored, and that human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully respected, in law and practice,” concluded the High Commissioner.

[Lebanon elections ‘vital step’ in consolidating democratic tradition – UN chief](#)

Welcoming the parliamentary elections in Lebanon, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has called on the country’s political leaders to work in a spirit of unity.

In a statement attributable to his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres urged the country's political leaders to "work in a spirit of unity and with a view to furthering the ambitious agenda set out by Lebanon and its international partners."

["The elections represent a vital step](#) in strengthening Lebanon's state institutions and consolidating its democratic tradition," added the Secretary-General.

The UN chief also said that he looks forward to the formation of the new government.

UN continues to support Lebanon and its sovereignty, stability, and political independence in accordance with the [Taif Accord](#) – the agreement which ended the decades-long civil war in the country – as well as relevant Security Council resolutions, noted the statement.

The elections, held on 6 May, are the first since 2009.

It is also the first time Lebanon went to polls since the start of the Syrian crisis, which has driven over 1.5 million desperate Syrian refugees into Lebanon.