

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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May 28, 2020

Field Marshall Khalifa Hiftar  
Commander Libyan Arab Armed Forces  
Al-Marj, Libya  
*Via email:* [REDACTED]

## Re: Suspected Extra Judicial Executions

Sir,

I am writing to you, in your capacity as commander of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), to request information about two cases of suspected unlawful executions by members of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces that allegedly occurred during the ongoing conflict in western Libya. We plan to publicly release our findings in a report and we will duly consider your responses to this letter in our publication as long as we receive them by June 2, 2020.

Human Rights Watch has been tracking human rights conditions in Libya since before the 2011 uprising. Our researchers were on the ground in east and west Libya to document the situation from the first days of the revolution. We continue to document human rights violations in Libya by all sides since the beginning of the current conflict in April 2019.

### *Research*

We are requesting information specifically about videos and photos that appear to show the summary execution by LAAF fighters of a detained opposing fighter linked with the Government of National Accord (GNA), and their desecration of his corpse; and the torture and subsequent alleged killing, also by LAAF fighters, of a detained man accused of being a mercenary linked with the GNA. Both incidents allegedly took place in May 2020, in the southern suburbs in Tripoli.

### *Incident 1*

Human Rights Watch reviewed material posted on social media on or around May 6, 2020. One video shows two men hitting a man's face as they shout profanities at him, while he sits immobilized on the ground, his arms and legs tied up. The armed men accuse the bound

man of being a mercenary from Nigeria. Another video appears to show the same person, this time blindfolded, being pushed down a staircase by the same two men who assaulted him in the first video, as well as a group of armed men. We have identified one of the perpetrators in the video as having ties to LAAF Battalion 646. The post that accompanies the video showing the torture claimed that the armed men subsequently killed the victim.

### ***Incident 2***

We also reviewed a video that appeared on social media on or after May 9, 2020, that shows three armed men, circling around a man who is heavily bleeding on the street and whose throat appears to have been slit. The person filming the video appears to violently shake the head of the man, and speaking directly into the camera, calls him “a cadaver.” He says, “This is what will happen to you,” in an apparent reference to opposing fighters from the GNA. We have identified this individual, who is also apparently a fighter linked with the LAAF.

The torture of detainees, summary execution of fighters who have been captured or who have surrendered, and desecrating bodies of opposition fighters are war crimes. Senior military commanders carry legal responsibility for ordering or failing to prevent serious violations that forces under their command are committing. Senior commanders of the LAAF are obligated to support steps to hold the perpetrators accountable.

### ***Request for Information***

We respectfully ask you to answer the following questions:

1. Have you ordered an investigation into these incidents and what were the findings?
2. If yes, will you ensure that the findings of any investigation are made public?
3. What will the consequences be for those who committed or contributed to these apparent killings, desecration of dead bodies, and torture?
4. What measures have you put in place to ensure that people accused of serious violations such as torture, unlawful executions, and desecration of bodies, are removed from active duty and are held accountable for their violations?

Thank you for your attention. We plan to publicly release our findings in a report and we will take into consideration your responses to this letter as long as we receive them by June 2, 2020.

In case of questions or concerns, you may contact Hanan Salah at [REDACTED], or phone [REDACTED].

Respectfully,



Eric Goldstein  
Acting Director  
Middle East and North Africa  
Human Rights Watch