



### [UNHRC Establishes a Fact-Finding Mission to Investigate Potential Human Rights Abuses in Libya](#)

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has adopted a resolution to send a fact-finding mission to Libya to investigate potential human rights abuses. The decision comes after Libya's internationally-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) recently discovered multiple mass graves in Tarhuna, the city which had been used as the supply and operation center of warlord Khalifa Haftar and his forces. Following the GNA's liberation of the city, over 150 human bodies were exhumed from the mass graves. Since Haftar launched his offensive on the Libyan capital city of Tripoli in April of 2019, hundreds of civilians have been killed and thousands more displaced due to the indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas and other violations of international humanitarian law.

UNHRC's mission aims to determine the facts and circumstances regarding the human rights situation in Libya, and will "collect and review relevant information to document alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by all parties in Libya since the beginning of 2016," according to the resolution. The African Group at UNHRC put forward the resolution during the council's 43rd session and asked Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, to immediately send a fact-finding mission to the North African country to investigate potential abuses. They also requested that evidence be preserved in order to ensure that the parties responsible for the violations are held accountable. The resolution passed by consensus without a formal vote.

In addition to the UNHRC investigation, the International Criminal Court (ICC) also stated earlier this week that they will open a probe into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Libya. ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced that her office had received credible information regarding the mass graves recently discovered in the city of Tarhuna: "My office looks forward to cooperating with the Libyan authorities, the United Nations, and all relevant partners working to investigate this evidence of potential atrocity crimes in Tarhuna." In her statement, she also urged the warring parties to "fully respect the rules of international humanitarian law...including taking all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, health facilities, and detention centers."

While armed confrontations between Haftar's forces and the GNA have quelled in the capital city of Tripoli since earlier this month, the conflict remains ongoing in Sirte and other parts of central Libya. As such, the U.N. also commented that the "last thing" Libya needs is more escalation, after its neighbor Egypt warned of increased military intervention. "It is clear that the last thing Libya needs right now is more fighting, more military mobilization, more transfer of weapons, more presence of either foreign fighters or mercenaries on its soil," stated U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric. He added that "We're alarmed by the continued military mobilization in central Libya, particularly in Sirte, and by the flagrant violations of the arms embargo...so it is important for none of the parties to do anything that would make the situation worse."

Libya's GNA, which is recognized by the United Nations and the international community at large, has been under attack by Haftar's forces since April of 2019.