



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Libya

Decision adopted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians under Rule 12(4) of its Rules and Practices (Geneva, 29 May 2020)



Seham Sergiwa © Courtesy of the Sergiwa Family

LBY-01 – Seham Sergiwa

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Abduction
- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity
- ✓ Impunity

A. Summary of the case

Ms. Seham Sergiwa was abducted from her home on 17 July 2019. According to the complainant, masked armed men raided her house, wounding her husband and one of her sons as they captured her. The complainant claims that the abductors are members of the 106th Brigade of the Libyan National Army led by Mr. Khalifa Haftar, an assertion based on the *modus operandi* of the abductors and the SUV vehicles used. Moreover, following her abduction, the message “the army is a red line not to be crossed” was spray-painted across Ms. Sergiwa’s house. There is growing concern about her fate since her abduction, in the absence of any signs that she is still alive.

The complainant alleged that the abduction of Ms. Sergiwa was in response to her political stance against the military operations in Tripoli, as she was taken from her home shortly after she gave an interview criticizing the military offensive and calling for an end to the bloodshed.

On 18 July 2019, the House of Representatives in Tobruk issued a statement strongly condemning the abduction of Ms. Sergiwa by unknown individuals, and called upon the Ministry of the Interior, as well as all the security forces, to scale up their efforts to find Ms. Sergiwa, ensure her prompt release and hold to account those responsible for her abduction. The first and second Deputy Speakers of the

Case LBY-01

Libya: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: female, independent member of the House of Representatives

Qualified complainant: Section I.1.(a) of the [Committee Procedure](#) (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: July 2019

Recent IPU decision: October 2019

Recent IPU Mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing: Hearing with the Libyan delegation to the 141st IPU Assembly (October 2019)

Recent follow-up:

- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Speaker of the House of Representatives: (September 2019)
- Communication from the complainant: May 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives (October 2019)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: May 2020

House of Representatives told the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians on 13 October 2019 that the Minister of the Interior of the interim government in eastern Libya had said that terrorist groups might be responsible for the abduction of Ms. Sergiwa, that the House of Representatives continued to monitor the case, which was still under investigation, and that it could well be that Ms. Sergiwa would turn up alive.

In a statement delivered by video to the United Nations Security Council on 5 May 2020 regarding the situation of Libya, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court indicated that “her Office has obtained recent information which may point to those responsible for Ms. Sergiwa’s disappearance”.

B. Decision

Pursuant to Rule 12(4) of its Rules and Practices, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

1. *Remains deeply shocked* at the brutal abduction of Ms. Sergiwa from her home close to a year ago;
2. *Points out* that, since then, the authorities have provided no information on the progress achieved in the investigation into the disappearance of Ms. Sergiwa or on any serious measures taken to shed light on her attackers, despite several leads pointing to their identity;
3. *Reiterates* that the abduction of Ms. Sergiwa, a member of parliament, allegedly for exercising her parliamentary mandate and freedom of expression, poses a serious threat not only to parliamentarians but also to the people they represent, and affects the integrity of parliament as a whole; *reaffirms* in this regard that, particularly if left unpunished, crimes of this nature against vocal figures of parliament send a chilling message to other critical voices in society and can only encourage perpetration of further serious human rights violations;
4. *Urges* the authorities, in particular the Ministry of the Interior and the House of Representatives, to ramp up efforts to locate Ms. Sergiwa without delay, as this is a matter of life and death; *calls on* the House of Representatives, as the guardian of the human rights of parliamentarians, to monitor more forcefully the investigation and to require clear answers from the government authorities about the status of the investigation and the likely identity of the perpetrators; and *wishes* to receive information in this respect;
5. *Is aware of* the formidable security challenges faced by the Libyan authorities; *stresses* nevertheless the legitimate right of Ms. Sergiwa’s relatives to know about her fate; and *considers* that the State of Libya is duty-bound to do everything possible to find her and to ensure that the perpetrators of this attack will be held to account;
6. *Calls on* all IPU Member Parliaments to take concrete actions in support of the urgent resolution of this case in a manner consistent with democratic and human rights values; and *hopes* to be able to rely on the assistance of all relevant regional and international organizations to this effect;
7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
8. *Decides to* continue examining this case.