



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Libya

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 215th session (Tashkent, 9 April 2025)



© 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 complainants, more than a dozen masked, armed men raided her house at 2 a.m. During the attack, Ms. Sergiwa's husband was shot in the legs, while one of her sons was beaten up. The abductors allegedly confiscated the telephones belonging to members of Ms. Sergiwa's family to prevent them from alerting the media.

The complainants claim that the abductors are members of the 106th Brigade of the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Mr. Khalifa Haftar, an assertion based on the modus operandi of the abductors and the SUV vehicles used. The perpetrators allegedly spray-painted the message "the army is a red line [not to be crossed]" and the name of the Brigade responsible for Ms. Sergiwa's abduction, "Awliya al-Dam" (Avengers of Blood) across her house. The complainants explained that the attackers allegedly arrived in cars belonging to Libya's Criminal Investigation Department of the interim government in eastern Libya.

Ms. Sergiwa's abduction was allegedly 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. The complainants believe that Ms. Sergiwa's

Case LBY-01

Libya: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Female independent member of the House of Representatives

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1)(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: July 2019

Recent IPU decision: March 2023

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing: Hearing with the Libyan delegation to the 146th IPU Assembly (March 2023)

Recent follow-up:

- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Speaker of the House of Representatives (July 2020)
- Documents provided during the delegation's hearing in March 2023
- Communication from the complainants: February 2025
- Communication to the authorities: Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives (March 2025)
- Communication to the complainants: February 2025

abduction was not a random act of violence, given her vocal criticism of Mr. Khalifa Haftar and the circumstances in which the attack took place. They added that several Libyan officials living nearby, including the mayor of Benghazi, could have intervened with their armed guards to prevent or at least thwart the attack, but deliberately refrained from doing so.

In a statement issued on 18 July 2019, the Libyan House of Representatives in Tobruk strongly condemned Ms. Sergiwa's abduction by unknown individuals and called on the Ministry of the Interior, as well as all security forces, to scale up their efforts to find Ms. Sergiwa, ensure her prompt release and hold to account those responsible for her abduction. In a hearing held with the Libyan parliamentary delegation in October 2019, the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians learned that the Minister of the Interior of the interim government in eastern Libya had indicated that terrorist groups might be responsible for Ms. Sergiwa's abduction, that the House of Representatives continued monitoring the case, which was still under investigation, and that it could well be that Ms. Sergiwa would turn up alive.

In its report of October 2021, the United Nations Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, set up to investigate human rights violations committed in the country since 2016, concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that Ms. Sergiwa was a victim of enforced disappearance and found that the relevant authorities in Libya had failed to protect her life. The mission's report also stated that the evidence indicated that Ms. Sergiwa was abducted by either the LNA or affiliated armed groups. On 24 January 2022, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Libya, Ms. Stephanie Turco Williams, publicly expressed her concern about Ms. Sergiwa's case and called on the "concerned authorities to provide information on her whereabouts".

During a hearing with the Libyan parliamentary delegation at the 146th IPU Assembly in March 2023, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians gathered information about the steps taken by the Libyan authorities to investigate Ms. Sergiwa's abduction. While several steps have been taken, Ms. Sergiwa's case is still under criminal and judicial investigation by the Attorney General and the House of Representatives is monitoring the case through its Legal Affairs Committee. The lack of progress could be attributed to the fact that the Ministry of Justice does not have executive power.¹

The Libyan delegation reiterated that the House of Representatives had done everything possible to find out what had become of Ms. Sergiwa. Based on the preliminary findings of the investigations, it appears that the 106th Brigade which, according to the delegation, is not under the command of the LNA, is the primary suspect in this case. This rogue brigade took advantage of the fragile security situation in Libya between 2018 and 2019 to carry out several crimes that have remained unpunished. The delegation called on the Committee, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the entities of the United Nations system, including its Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, to denounce and condemn similar violations and to scale up their efforts to end division and violence in Libya and protect the lives of all Libyans, including members of parliament.

In 2025, the complainant reported that the case of Ms. Sergiwa was at a standstill, with no progress achieved so far.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Deplores* the continued lack of progress of the investigation into Ms. Sergiwa's abduction and the authorities' inability to shed light on her fate and establish accountability, which is largely due to the formidable challenges to law and order in the country;
2. *Urges* the Libyan authorities, in particular the Attorney General, to make all possible efforts to hold those responsible for Ms. Sergiwa's abduction to account and to obtain and provide information on what has happened to her;

¹ Further details on the information gathered by the Committee during its hearing with the Libyan parliamentary delegation about the investigations into Ms. Sergiwa's abduction can be found in the IPU's decision of March 2023, available at https://www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/libya-e_4.pdf.

3. *Reaffirms*, once again, the long-lasting effects of impunity on the integrity of parliament and its ability to fulfil its role as an institution – even more so when leading figures of parliament are targeted for their political views, as in the present case; and *stresses* that, when they go unpunished, crimes of this nature are bound to recur;
4. *Reiterates* its support to all members of the House of Representatives in Libya, in particular women parliamentarians who are primarily targeted because of their gender and their political work, both online and offline; and *emphasizes*, once again, that the human rights of a member of the Libyan House of Representatives should be upheld at all costs;
5. *Reiterates* its wish to learn more about the work of the United Nations Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya and the newly appointed Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Libya with a view to exploring avenues of cooperation to help resolve Ms. Sergiwa's case;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the Attorney General in Libya, the Minister of Justice, the United Nations Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, the Special Representative for Libya, the complainants and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
7. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.