

UN Human Rights Council, 15th Session
**Agenda Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**
Delivered by Kristyana Valcheva
16 September 2010

Mr. President,

I would first like to thank you for your commitment to hearing the voices of victims.

Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees that “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.”

Yet around the world, we see these crimes being committed with impunity.

For example, the UN General Assembly has expressed very serious concern about torture in North Korea.

Another example is Iran, where political prisoners are subjected to mistreatment, including those in the notorious Evin prison.

Finally, there is the example of my own suffering—from a government that now takes a seat on this Council.

I am a nurse from Bulgaria. In 1999, I was working in Benghazi, Libya. On February 9 of that year I and five others were abducted, framed on false charges, imprisoned, and brutally tortured.

For the first fourteen months they kept us at a school for police dogs. We were subjected to barbaric torture, humiliation and mockery.

They stretched me at a window frame and beat me with sticks and cables. Night after night, they forced us to stand on one leg with our hands raised. If anyone tried to put her second leg on the floor out of exhaustion, she would be beaten mercilessly.

They beat us over the soles of our feet, and then made us run with our feet swollen and black of beating, with blood flowing from them. They injected me with drugs, undressed me totally naked, and tied me to a metal bed. And then the worst started—inquisition by electrical shock. The pain was devastating.

They tried to destroy us physically, mentally and morally. We were hostages for eight and a half years. We have never received an apology or compensation for our suffering.

Mr. President, I ask: When will this Council take action to end impunity?

Thank you, Mr. President.

Draft Item 4 Statement to 15th Session of UNHRC

Delivered by Mohamed Eljahmi

16 September 2010

Mr. President,

This Council was created with the promise to elect countries that promote and protect human rights.

We ask: Does the UN's election of Libya live up to this promise?

For me, this question is not academic. My late brother, Fathi Eljahmi, was a heroic dissident in Libya.

Under the rule of Mr. Qadhafi, membership in political parties or independent labor unions are crimes punishable by death. The fulfillment of citizens' needs is tied to their absolute loyalty to Mr. Qadhafi.

Ordinary Libyans are accountable to a vast security apparatus. Their actions are scrutinized by Orwellian institutions, punishable by ruthless death squads.

Despite the danger, my brother Fathi chose to speak out for free speech and human rights. He was a courageous man. He was also my mentor and a father figure. He was an unconditionally loving and generous husband, son, and brother. Fathi was blessed with a great mind and a passion for equality and justice.

In 2002, he publicly set out his vision for a constitution, free speech, free enterprise, and an investigation into the massacre of 1200 prisoners at Abu Slim.

As a result, the government imprisoned Fathi for 17 months, until then-Senator Biden interceded on his behalf. As soon as he was released, Fathi spoke out for freedom and human rights. Two weeks later, he was sent back to prison, and subjected to five years of intense torture and isolation, leading to his death on May 21, 2009.

My family asks: When will this council establish an international investigation into my brother's imprisonment, torture and death?

Why is the government of Mr. Qadhafi, which tortured and killed my brother—and which is one of the world's worst violators of human rights—now an elected member of the UN Human Rights Council?

When will this council do the right thing, and stand with the Libyan people, to defend their human rights?

Thank you, Mr. President.