



For immediate release – 22 February 2011

**PRESS RELEASE**

**States Should Support Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council on Libya, Hold International Investigation**

**London, 22.02.11: ARTICLE 19 urges the international community to ensure accountability and justice for the grave violations of human rights – including freedom of expression and the right to information – currently taking place in Libya. ARTICLE 19 calls on the UN Human Rights Council to immediately hold a Special Session to address the human rights situation in Libya.**

*“The Libyan government is suppressing the speech of legitimate protestors and opposition groups,” says Dr Agnes Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director. “Libyan authorities and their agents have reportedly used machine guns, snipers and military planes against peaceful protestors.”*

The government has placed severe restrictions on independent media, access to the internet and mobile phone services which limit independent review of their activities. They also present significant obstacles to the foreign media and human rights monitors, both inside and outside the country, who wish to access information about the demonstrations and the human rights abuses that have occurred during this period. As a result, both Libyan citizens’ and the international community’s right to know about the situation inside Libya is severely restricted.

The actions of the Libyan state are in flagrant violation of international human rights and international criminal law. They engage an array of rights including the rights to life, liberty and security – as well as the rights to freedom of expression and the right to information. The human rights abuses that have allegedly taken place constitute serious international crimes.

We therefore urge the international community to:

- Demand an immediate cessation of the grave human rights violations committed by the authorities
- Support the proposal for an independent international investigation into the violent suppression of protests in the country as called for by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We also urge Member States of the Human Rights Council to hold a Special Session on the Situation of Human Rights in Libya as soon as possible.

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- For more information please contact Sejal Parmar, Senior Legal Officer, +44 20 7324 2500 [sejal@article19.org](mailto:sejal@article19.org)
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.