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International Centre for Trade Union Rights

Centro Internacional para los Derechos Sindicales
Centre International pour les Droits Syndicaux

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ICTUR was founded to
defend and extend trade union rights and
to raise awareness of these rights and their violations
around the world

By email:
Salame@un.org

Attn:
Mr. Ghassan Salmah
UN Representative to Libya

CC:
Annalisa Ciampi, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom
of peaceful assembly and of association
International Transport Workers' Federation

December 2017

Dear Mr. Ghassan Salmah

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights is writing to express its
concern about the treatment of a trade union leader in Libya.

ICTUR understands that Nermin Al-Sharif, general secretary of the Dockers'
and Seafarers' Union of Libya, was recently detained for several days and that
her passport was confiscated subject to 'an investigation', barring her from
travelling to an international event of the International Transport Workers'
Federation in Morocco where she was due to address activists from across the
world. Nermin Al-Sharif is an active and renowned advocate for human,
workers' and women's rights in Libya, in the Arab region, and globally. She
has previously been subject to attacks for her work, including several attempts
on her life.

Imposing a travel ban on trade unionists for activities related to the defence of
the interests of those they represent is a serious violation of the rights
enshrined in ILO Conventions 87 and 98 which Libya has ratified. According
to the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association, "[p]articipation by trade
unionists in international trade union meetings is a fundamental trade union
right and governments should therefore abstain from any measure, such as
withholding travel documents, that would prevent representatives of workers'
organizations from exercising their mandate in full freedom and
independence". Moreover, the Committee has found that the "imposition of
sanctions, such as banishment or control of overseas travel for trade union
reasons, constitutes a violation of freedom of association" (*Digest of decisions
and principles of the Freedom of Association Committee of the Governing
Body of the ILO*, Fifth Edition, 2006, paras. 153, 755, and 756).

ICTUR requests that you to convey these concerns to the relevant authorities.
ICTUR calls on the authorities to cease this harassment of Nermin Al-Sharif,

to return her documents and close the investigation against her, and to take necessary measures to allow Nermin Al-Sharif to continue the important work she does for working people in Libya and elsewhere in safety without restriction or retaliation from any entity. ICTUR will report this incident in the journal *International Union Rights*, which was established in 1993, and which enjoys a readership in more than 100 countries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Blackburn', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Blackburn, Director