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Field Marshall Khalifa Binqasem Haftar
General Commander of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF)

**Email:** **pmoffice@libyangov.info**

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Dear Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar,

**I am writing to express my deep concern over the ongoing enforced disappearance of 79-year-old Sufi Sheikh Muftah Al-Amin Al-Biju (hereafter Shaikh Al-Biju), since his arbitrary arrest from his home in the area of Bouatni in Benghazi on 4 February 2024 by heavily armed men in plainclothes**. Sheikh Al-Biju’s detention is part of a larger crackdown targeting Sufis not espousing the Madkhali Salafi ideology to which many powerful armed groups allied to LAAF adhere. A year on, the family has received no official information regarding his whereabouts, fate, or legal status.

Amnesty International learned that the some 20 armed men who arrested Sheikh Al-Biju also ransacked his home and stole some 150’000 Libyan dinars (33’270 USD) before driving away in six vehicles to the Security Directorates’ Support Body base in the eastern region, located in the Ras al-Minqar area in Benghazi, and nominally under the oversight of the Ministry of Interior to the «Libyan Government» of Acting Prime Minister Ossama Hamad. Officials at the Security Directorates’ Support Body denied having him in custody, and a complaint to the Attorney General of the Benghazi Appeals Court on 15 February 2024 regarding Sheikh Al-Biju’s disappearance has gone unanswered.

Amnesty International learned that relatives were told by unofficial sources that Sheikh Al-Biju was being detained in Gernada prison, near the eastern city of al-Bayda, where his health has been deteriorating since his incarceration. Even prior to his detention, Sheikh Al-Biju had diabetes and a frail immunity system being a cancer survivor. A family member also learned of Sheikh Al-Biju’s brief transfer to Cyrenaic Teaching Hospital, located in Shahat, in September 2024, but was unable to visit or obtain more information. Concerns about his wellbeing are mounting amid reports of torture and other ill-treatment in Gernada prison. Former detainees also recount cruel and inhuman detention conditions including expo-sure to extreme cold without climate appropriate clothing or bedding, and denial of adequate healthcare.

**I urge LAAF to immediately disclose the fate and whereabouts of Sheikh Al-Biju; and release him immediately as his detention is linked solely to his exercise of his human rights, including to freedom of religion. In the meantime, the LAAF must grant Sheikh Al-Biju access to his family, lawyers and adequate healthcare, including in outside hospitals if necessary. He must be protected from torture and other ill-treatment and held in conditions meeting international standards. Finally, the LAAF must also allow independent monitors unfettered and unannounced access to Gernada prison and other prisons and detention facilities under its control in eastern and southern Libya.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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