

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Libya: Time to break the 10-year silence on Mansour al-Kikhiya**

On the occasion of the 10-year anniversary of the "disappearance" of prominent human rights defender Mansour al-Kikhiya on 10 December, Amnesty International calls on the Libyan authorities to shed light on his fate and put an end to the long suffering of his wife and children.

"As a woman and as a mother, I have had to live with the suffering of not knowing where my husband is and whether he is still alive. My children and I just want to know the truth, whatever that may be," Baha al-Kikhiya, Mansour al-Kikhiya's wife, told Amnesty International.

Mansour al-Kikhiya, a Libyan national, was last seen on 10 December 1993 in Cairo, Egypt, where he was attending the general conference of the Arab Organization for Human Rights. He had worked in the Libyan government for a number of years and resigned from office in 1980 in protest at the execution of political opponents by the Libyan authorities that year. Despite repeated attempts by his family and human rights organizations to seek clarification about his whereabouts, his family are still awaiting news about him.

In recent years, the Libyan authorities have shown signs of willingness to address the human rights situation in the country. The waves of releases of political prisoners in 2001 and 2002 were an important step in this direction. Amnesty International has received information from the authorities, stating that they have "conducted a series of investigations to determine (Mansour al-Kikhiya's) whereabouts" but that "(his) disappearance remains a mystery".

"In this spirit of tackling human rights violations in the country, Amnesty International calls on the Libyan authorities to take decisive action to clarify the fate of Libyan nationals who 'disappeared' inside and outside the country, and to provide their families with concrete information as to their fate and whereabouts."

Over the years, Mansour al-Kikhiya's family has heard numerous and sometimes conflicting allegations about his fate. One persistent rumour suggests that he may have been handed over by Egypt to Libya, where he may still be detained.

"It is cruel and inhuman that 10 years on his wife and children should still be trying to obtain an answer from the authorities on whether Mansour al-Kikhiya is held in secret detention or has died in custody," said Amnesty International. "It is high time those answers were given."

Mansour al-Kikhiya's "disappearance" is one of a number of cases of Libyan nationals who "disappeared" both inside and outside the country. Jaballah Matar and Izzat Youssef al-Maqrif, two prominent opposition activists, disappeared in Cairo in March 1990. For well over a decade, their whereabouts have remained unknown. Their families have received unconfirmed reports, suggesting that they were both handed over to the Libyan authorities immediately following their reported arrests by officers from the State Security Investigations in Cairo, and that they were detained without charge or trial in Abu Salim Prison in Tripoli.

"The Libyan authorities must open thorough, impartial and independent investigations into the cases of all those who 'disappeared' inside and outside the country and make public the findings," said Amnesty International.

The authorities must also ensure reparation for victims of "disappearance" or their families and return the remains of those "disappeared" who have died in custody to their families. They must also bring those suspected of human rights violations in connection with "disappearances" to justice in trials which conform to international standards for fair trial.

**For more information, please go to:**

**Egypt: The disappearance of Mansur Kikhiya: the truth must be revealed (October 1997)**  
**<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE120551997>**  
**<http://www.amnesty.org/>**

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