Minister of Justice and Human Rights
Salah Marghani
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights

State of Libya

**For delivery via Embassy of Libya in London**

April 2013

Your Excellency

**Denial of fair trial for newspaper editor Amara Abdalla al-Khattabi**

I am extremely concerned to hear that Amara Abdalla al-Khattabi, editor of the newspaper al-Umma, who is in jail in Tripoli on charges of defamation following publication of an article about judges allegedly involved in corruption, is being denied a fair trial because his lawyer has been prevented from representing him in court.

Amara Abdalla al-Khattabi has been on hunger strike since 28 February, and his wife has also begun a hunger strike against his continued detention.

My understanding is that the Tripoli Criminal Court decided at a hearing on 1 April to bar Amara Abdalla al-Khattabi’s lawyer from representing his client, and appointed a state lawyer instead. This amounts to denying Amara Abdalla al-Khattabi a fair trial.

He is charged with offending the judiciary, and could face up to 15 years in prison under a provision of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Article 195) that was often used in the al-Gadaffi era to suppress free speech.

Please use you authority to secure the release of Amara Abdalla al-Khattabi immediately and unconditionally. If he is not released immediately, I urge you to grant him his right of access to a lawyer of his choice.

Thank you for taking note of this urgent matter.

Minister of Interior
Ashur Shuwail

Ministry of Interior

State of Libya

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