

Press Release  
29.03.2011

## **MEPs urge High Representative to demand the immediate release of al-Obeidy**

Members of the European Parliament wrote today to the High Representative Catherine Ashton, urging her to "demand the immediate and verified release of Ms. Eman al-Obeidy", the Libyan woman who entered the Rixos Hotel, in Tripoli, on 26 March, accusing pro-government militiamen of gang-raping and beating her.

The request was signed by MEPs Ana Gomes, Standing Rapporteur on the EU-Libya Framework Agreement, Eva-Britt Svensson, Chair of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee and Heidi Hautala, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights.

*"The brutal way in which Ms. al-Obeidy was prevented to report her story to foreign journalists, pushed into a car and driven to an unknown location, is outrageous. Eman al-Obeidy must be immediately freed and her release must be verified by independent sources",* defended Ana Gomes (S&D, Portugal). *"I admire the courage of this woman to speak out loud despite the risks. The EU cannot let her go missing. This case is emblematic of the situation of dissident women in Libya",* added Gomes for whom *"respect for women rights must be a crucial pillar in the construction of a new democratic Libyan state".*

Ms. al-Obeidy reported that she had been arrested at a checkpoint in Tripoli because she was from the city of Benghazi, the bastion of the insurgency against the Gaddafi's rule, and had been raped by 15 men and tortured while detained for two days. She was badly bruised.