



COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSAIRE AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME



Ref: CommHR/GC/sf 143-2010

Mr Franco FRATTINI
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

Strasbourg, 2 July 2010

Dear Minister,

I am addressing you about a number of reports that I received in the last two days concerning the alleged ill treatment of a group of Eritrean migrants, including asylum seekers, in detention in Libya and their possible, impending forced return to Eritrea.

According to these reports, on 30 June approximately 250 Eritreans detained in Misratah were forced into trucks and moved to a detention centre in Sebha. Prior to their removal, they were reportedly subjected to violence by the Libyan military police, which left several of them seriously injured.

There are fears that the persons concerned may be sent back to Eritrea, where they would be exposed to a serious risk of human rights violations, or possibly deported to Sudan.

According to the reports, the Eritreans subject to deportation from Libya include persons who had attempted to reach Italy to seek international protection and have been returned to Libya without being given a possibility of doing so.

Given the recent decision of the Libyan authorities to discontinue UNHCR's activities in the country, it is increasingly difficult to confirm the exact accuracy of these reports. However, given their consistency and the seriousness of the allegations, I hope that I can count on your co-operation to urgently clarify the situation with the Libyan authorities and be kept informed about the results of your investigations.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Hammarberg

cc. Mr Roberto MARONI, Minister of Interior of Italy