

behaviors, and 2) a focus on foreign interests and potential spying for foreign actors. It can also apply to men and women in different ways. When referring to women, the phrase implies that they are disrespectful and promiscuous. When referring to men, it may be used to imply that they are weak. The negative connotation of this phrase relies heavily on who is using it and their perception of CSOs and INGOs.

Within the Libya context, many people have trouble accepting the fact that CSOs are mixed gender as this has traditionally been viewed with suspicion in Libyan society. Many Libyans have also developed an aversion towards Western organizations as a result of 40 years of Gaddafi propaganda against the international community, so the interaction of activists with the international community has typically been treated suspiciously.

Why it's offensive and inflammatory: The phrase “jamaat almojtama almadani” is considered offensive and inflammatory because it is used to imply that members of this type of group are promoting and even importing foreign and perceivably un-Islamic values to the communities in which they work. For example, as illustrated by the related references above, the term is often linked with the use of drugs and alcohol and promiscuous behavior, unacceptable traits and activities among many communities in Libya. Its use demeans the efforts of civil society activists and places a negative stigma on them. The focus groups did not provide any examples of this phrase being linked to violence, though its definition indicates that associating someone in Libya with these types of behaviors could be inflammatory depending on the target's community and beliefs.

The CSO and INGO communities in Libya have dealt with several discriminatory policies and actions connected to the use of this phrase, which has been used to justify repression of the CSO space. In 2017, the LNA's chief of staff banned women under the age of 60 from traveling abroad without a male chaperone,²⁹ impacting the population in the east of Libya. This mainly impacted female civil society workers as these were the segment of women most likely to be undertaking solo travel. The ban was later expanded to all individuals between the ages of 18 and 45; anyone traveling abroad was required to obtain permission by answering various security questions regarding travel purpose and itinerary.³⁰ Civil society activists in Libya at the time stated that this allowed the LNA to block the travel of any CSO workers they disagreed with or had bias against. Furthermore, during the civil war in 2014, several civil society activists were assassinated (notably: Tawfik Ben Saud and Salawa Boguigis, a lawyer and activist).

Note: Respondents at the Sabha focus group indicated that this phrase is not considered hate speech in their region.

Non-offensive alternative terms: نشطاء المجتمع المدني / nushata almojtama almadani (English translation: civil society activists)

Note: According to focus group participants, the alternative phrase for “jamaat almojtama almadani” de-emphasizes the group and assigns a more personal meaning, separating the person working for a CSO or INGO and their motivations from the group overall, which may have other motives. However, one Libyan consultant indicated that this phrase can also be used in an offensive manner.