

Embassy of the United States Tripoli, Libya

NEWS FROM THE EMBASSY

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Remarks by Ambassador Gene Cretz "Inta Liby Hoor" Award Ceremony

Sunday, February 26, 2012, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Farhaty Hall, Tripoli, Libya

Al Salamu Alikum, my dear Libyan friends. Thank you so much for joining us today.

Thanks to the tremendous creativity young Libyans have demonstrated, we gather today to celebrate another milestone in this new age of media freedom in Libya.

A little over a year ago, my Public Affairs team suggested hosting a short film festival to promote freedom of expression in Libya. As a true believer in freedom of creativity, a movie fan, and a very optimistic man, I enthusiastically supported the idea. Unfortunately, the former regime disagreed with our plans, and would not permit the project to proceed. Shortly thereafter, we suspended U.S. operations in Tripoli; ironically, because Qadhafi could not tolerate the free thoughts and ideas of the Libyan people.

This past year, Libyans demonstrated courage, bravery, and heroism, overcoming 40 years of enforced silence with a deafening roar. Libya's freedom stands in stark contrast to the oppression ongoing in Syria; we join Libyans in standing with the Syrian people in their protest against tyranny. You liberated your country, and as a result, we Americans are welcome again in Libya. For this we thank you. We will do our utmost to support the exercise of freedom of expression in this new Libya.

I am truly honored to be here today to award some great artists, in cooperation with our partner Libya One TV. I have seen the videos and I am impressed with the quality of work submitted, and by the sentiment and purpose behind the messages in the films. You have shown a great deal of talent and creativity, leaving no doubt about the ability of media to convey a powerful message.

As Ambassador of the United States of America, I am committed to supporting Libya's right to develop a modern society that enshrines basic human rights for all Libyans – men and women; young and old; east, west, north, and south.

The projects represented this evening were created by individuals and teams across Libya. Libya is truly a country united by men and women who value their freedom of expression and who have demonstrated their commitment to this value through their art.

I thank you again for being here today. I have one final message to each and every single one of you, please always remember “Inta Liby Hoor.”

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