

Definition: As with phrases that include the word “dog,” “jardhan,” or “rats,” is also a dehumanizing term. Rats are particularly worthy of scorn in many cultural contexts given their reputation as harmful and dirty pests. The word in the Libyan context is widely noted as first appearing as a hateful term in a speech given by Gaddafi right after the launch of the uprising in February 2011 when he referred to supporters of the revolution as “rats” who needed to be caught. The present-day meaning has also come to be associated with the assignment of blame for Libya’s current instability and problems. Given the association of this term with the Gaddafi regime, it is not used as frequently as it was during the 2011 conflict. However, it appears that it continues to be relevant as it was one of the most frequently cited terms by respondents to the online survey on hate speech in Libya.

Why it’s offensive and inflammatory: Focus group participants argued that the use of the term resulted in more violence against protesters and supporters of the rebellion. Several respondents indicated that the term has become less common in the years since the overthrow of Gaddafi, but some—primarily from the Kufra region—stated that it is still used online and offline against supporters of the 2011 revolution by their opponents, and that it is likely to prompt violence given the origins of the term and the association with Gaddafi. It is used to imply that people who supported the 17 February Revolution against Gaddafi are traitors. Respondents from Sabha also noted that the use of the term often resulted in physical violence, which several of them had personally witnessed.

“Jardhan” is overall less inflammatory in the east compared to the south and west given the alignment between many former Gaddafi supporters and the eastern-based LNA; many of these supporters now live in Benghazi. Therefore, use of this term in the west and south is more likely to lead to violence.

Non-offensive alternative terms: الثوار / *althuwwar* (English translation: *revolutionaries*); المعارضين / *almuearidin* (English translation: *opponents / objectors*)