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Centre Libanais des Droits Humains
المركز اللبناني لحقوق الإنسان
Lebanese Center for Human Rights

Activities Report

2012

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Donors

CLDH is extremely grateful for the financial support it receives from individuals, foundations, and embassies, which makes our work in Lebanon possible. Their generosity allows CLDH to respond to Human Rights violations, and to operate independently from political, economic, or religious interests.

- **AEDH** (Working Together for Human Rights) provided CLDH with funds to individually assist victims of arbitrary detention.
- **ACAT France** (Action by Christians against Torture) also funded CLDH activities directed towards victims of torture and arbitrary detention.
- **Arab Human Rights Fund** granted a core funding to CLDH for 2012-2013
- The **Canada Fund for Local Initiatives** also granted its support to CLDH projects
- The **Danish Ministry of foreign affairs** granted CLDH a funding for the years 2010 – 2012.
- The **Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF)** granted to CLDH a core bridging funding for a period of two months at the beginning of 2012.
- The **French Ministry of Foreign Affairs** supported the campaign for the ratification of the Convention for the protection of all persons against enforced disappearance in partnership with FEMED (Euro Mediterranean Federation against enforced disappearance).
- **Frontline Defenders** granted a security grant to CLDH in order to improve the office safety.
- **MEPI (Middle East Partnership Initiative)** co-funded the project entitled Media Monitoring in Lebanon to promote Democracy and Human Rights.
- **Oak Foundation / Sigrid Rausing Trust** also financially supported Centre Nassim through **IRCT** (International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims).
- **OMCT** (World Organization Against Torture) supported beneficiaries of Centre Nassim through its social assistance program.
- **Open Society Foundations** allowed CLDH to drastically develop its legal assistance program in 2012 – 2013
- **UNVFVT** (United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture) supports Centre Nassim in the rehabilitation of the victims of torture.
- **Private donors** regularly contribute to the funding of the organization's activities.

Arbitrary detention and torture in Lebanon

Objective **Contribute effectively to reducing the practice of arbitrary detention and torture in Lebanon**

Research - "Arbitrary detention and torture: the bitter reality of Lebanon" - Lawsuit against CLDH

1. Summons

In May and October 2012, CLDH representatives were summoned twice to Baabda palace of justice for investigation with judge Jean Fernaini, in the framework of the continuation of an investigation opened on the basis of a complaint filed by Amal Movement against CLDH, following the publication on February 10, 2011 of a report entitled *Arbitrary Detention and Torture: the bitter reality of Lebanon*.

The above-mentioned report contains more than 60 pages outlining patterns of arbitrary detention and torture in Lebanon, based on statistical data, testimonies and interviews, and tackling the alleged practices of most of the Lebanese security services dealing with arrests. The Amal Movement seems to have initiated its lawsuit against CLDH on the basis of 4 lines of the report, where CLDH states that it gathered testimonies of arrests by Amal Movement in which, in some cases, serious allegations of torture during investigation were revealed (page 25), while explaining in its conclusions that it was not possible to evaluate the frequency of these torture allegations specifically (page 29).

CLDH called for support of human rights organizations, activists and all concerned individuals to show the Lebanese authorities that no intimidation can stop the crucial work being carried out to make Lebanon a better place. Individuals, lawyers and organizations expressed their solidarity with CLDH through press releases, faxes, urgent appeals, emails and phone calls, and also by accompanying the organization's representatives to the summons.



2. Meeting with OHCHR

On May 24, CLDH representatives met Ms. Margaret Sekaggya, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights defenders and exposed to her the difficulties faced by the organization in terms of pressure exerted by the authorities, and more particularly regarding the lawsuit filed by Amal party.

Project development: Legal Assistance to Vulnerable Inmates in the Lebanese Prisons



The project aims at strengthening the rule of law in Lebanon through the improvement of the access to Justice for all and the prevention of arbitrary detention.

In Lebanon, the prison population is exceeding almost three times the capacities of the detention facilities. Meanwhile, large number of detainees and prisoners could be immediately released if they could avail adequate legal assistance.

The judiciary assistance provided by the Lebanese State is insufficient; the lawyers are paid insufficient amounts at the end of each calendar year, that do not systematically cover their real expenses in the cases (transportation, legal fees...). As a result, the appointed lawyers do not have the possibility to effectively defend low-income inmates who are not in a position to cover certain expenses. Moreover, the judiciary assistance system does not provide lawyers for foreigners arrested for crimes such as illegal entry or stay.

Regularly, riots break out in the Lebanese prisons due to the unfairness faced by the inmates; among them 70% should be released since they are either subjected to a prolonged pre trial detention, or have been sentenced in contradiction with their rights provided in the Lebanese and international laws, or even are foreigners who have already finished their sentence and are pending their handover to the General Security (immigration police) who will decide on their regularization or repatriation¹.

The situation in the Lebanese prisons has become unbearable and both authorities and civil society are aware of this.

Every year, CLDH provides lawyers for inmates who can not afford it and this legal assistance allows dozens of persons to be released, thus safeguarding their fundamental rights.

This project, implemented with the continuous support of AEDH (Working together for human rights) and ACAT France (Action by Christians Against Torture) and since 2012 of Open Society Foundations, Arab Human Rights Fund and the Canada Fund for Local

¹ Statistics established by CLDH in 2009-2010.

Initiatives improves access to Justice for all and helps reducing the practice of arbitrary detention in Lebanon, with a particular focus on the protection of marginalized people.

Implementation

CLDH continued during the reporting period to visit the Lebanese prisons, and to meet victims of arbitrary detention and/or torture, to document and follow up their cases in accordance with their demands and specific needs.

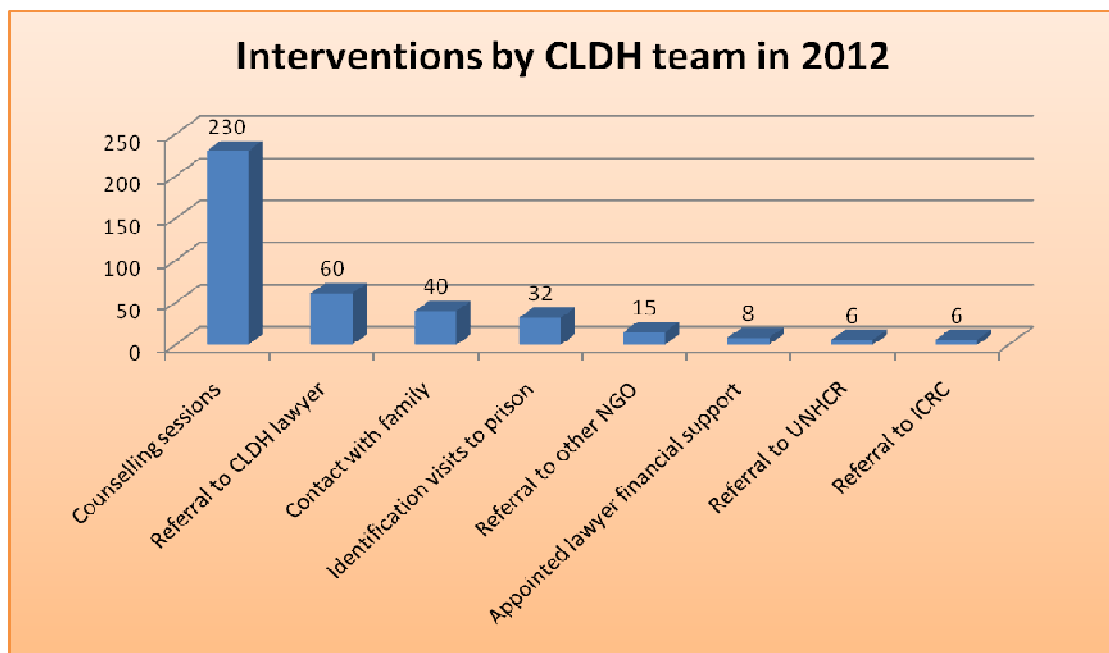
With the support of OSF, a hotline was launched in order to allow the families of the prisoners and detainees to ask for legal advice and require legal assistance when they do not have a lawyer.

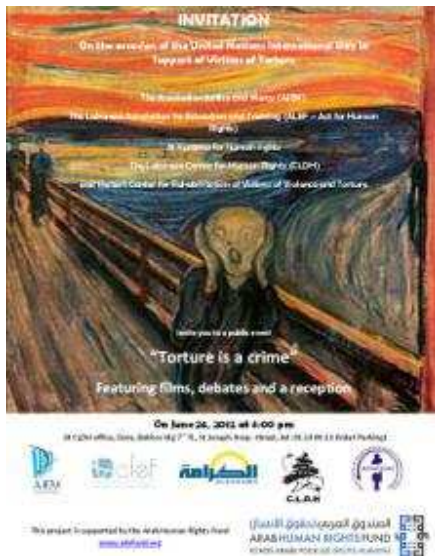
In 2012, CLDH detention team held a total of 230 counseling sessions with inmates during 32 “identification visits” to prisons, aiming at identifying the most vulnerable ones and referring them whenever necessary to CLDH lawyers.

60 inmates were hence referred to CLDH lawyers and 8 benefitted from a support in order to pay the fees of their appointed lawyers. At year end, 7 new cases were being studied by the lawyers.

In 2012, the project allowed the release of 27 vulnerable inmates, as a direct result of the legal assistance activities.

A report is to be published during a roundtable in 2013.





Event – “Torture is a crime!” - June 26, 2012

During the month of June, and in preparation of the United Nations International day in support of victims of torture, CLDH organized an online photo petition visible at the following address:

<http://lebanon-june-26.blogspot.com/>

Also, a new organization called Rights Cast produced interviews of torture victims, in Arabic with English subtitles:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNj-6KD0YLo&feature=channel&list=UL>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJg_6oqhEMY&feature=channel&list=UL

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOZwd7ImnLg&feature=channel&list=UL>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvGHxsT7cfA&feature=channel&list=UL>

On June 26, CLDH along with four fellow NGOs (AJEM, ALEF, Al Karama and Restart) co-organized an event entitled “Torture is a crime”, funded by the Arab Human Rights Fund.

This is the link to the event’s advertisement, also produced by Rights Cast:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdMHAfK0aY&feature=youtu.be>

During this event, the NGOs presented films to around 70 attendees, among whom Lebanese officials (from the Ministries of Justice and Interior), ambassadors (Denmark, Netherlands, Sudan), embassy representatives (Philippines, EU), representatives of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, journalists and civil society representatives. The films were followed by a debate and a reception.

The event was covered by: L’Orient le Jour, As Safir newspaper, Iloubnan, Lebanon files, the National News Agency, Al Markazia. It was followed by a TV interview on OTV channel during the 8.00 p.m. news.

Press release of the event



NGOs UNITED AGAINST TORTURE:

Torture is a crime!

Beirut, June 26, 2012 – To commemorate the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the signatories of this statement call on the Lebanese authorities to make every effort to banish the practice of torture in Lebanon.

According to the Convention against Torture, ratified by Lebanon in 2000, the term “torture” means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

Lebanon is failing to eradicate the practice of torture as it is still not complying with its obligations under the UN Convention against Torture. For example, torture has not been criminalized in Lebanese law and Lebanon is more than 10 years late in submitting its initial report on the implementation of the Convention in the country to the Committee against Torture.

The abolition of torture implies the establishment of oversight mechanisms over the actions of security services in all places of detention and prisons. Oversight mechanisms include the establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism, as described in the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other cruel, Inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment ratified by Lebanon on December 22nd 2008.

According to many reports, most Lebanese security services continue to resort to torture and degrading treatment during interrogation and detention of suspects.

A public event demanding the criminalization of torture is being held today at 4:00 p.m. at the initiative of AJEM (Association Justice and Mercy), Alef-act for human rights, the Alkarama Foundation, CLDH (Lebanese Center for Human Rights) and Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture. The event will bring to an end a month of campaign activities, during which individuals and organizations were called to take a stand against torture in Lebanon by participating in a photo-petition, visible at the following address: <http://lebanon-june-26.blogspot.com/>

Signatories:

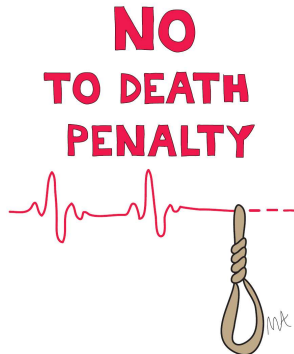
- Ajem (Association Justice and Mercy)
- Alef – act for human rights
- Alkarama Foundation
- CLDH (Lebanese Center for Human Rights)
- Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture

This project is supported by
the Arab Human Rights Fund
www.ahrfund.org

الصندوق العربي لحقوق الإنسان
ARAB HUMAN RIGHTS FUND
FONDS ARABE POUR LES DROITS HUMAINS



Participation at events



On April 3, 2012, CLDH representatives took part in a general discussion about death penalty organized by ALEF – Act for human rights and the human rights legal clinic of La Sagesse University.

On June 21, CLDH attended a workshop about arbitrary detention organized by ALEF – Act for human rights.

On October 11, CLDH participated in the conference-debate about death penalty organized by the French Embassy in Lebanon and the Beirut Bar Association.



A l'occasion de la journée mondiale contre la peine de mort

L'Ambassade de France au Liban et l'Institut des Droits de l'Homme de l'Ordre des Avocats de Beyrouth vous invitent à une conférence-débat, avec la participation de :

Son Excellence Monsieur Chakib Cortbawi, ministre de la Justice,
Son Excellence Madame Angelina Eichhorst, chef de la Délégation de l'Union européenne au Liban,
Madame Marie-Claude Najem, professeure, Université Saint-Joseph et Université Panthéon-Assas,
Monsieur Pascal Beauvais, avocat, co-directeur du centre de droit pénal et de criminologie de l'université de Nanterre,
Monsieur Wadiah el Asmar, secrétaire général du Centre libanais des droits humains.

Jeudi 11 octobre 2012 - 10h00 - Théâtre Montaigne
Espace des Lettres - Ambassade de France au Liban - rue de Damas - Beyrouth

Une pièce d'identité vous sera demandée à l'entrée. Nous vous recommandons d'arriver une demi-heure avant le début de la conférence.

Other press releases



Press Release:

ALEF – Act for Human Rights and CLDH (Lebanese Center for Human Rights) are deeply concerned by the unlawful arrest and brutality allegedly perpetrated by the military intelligence against Mr. Pierre Hashash and calls upon the Lebanese Government to investigate these alleged violations and, if proven, hold those responsible accountable.

Pierre Hashash was apprehended on November 21st, 2012, reportedly with no known formal charges or arrest warrant issued against him. He is believed to have been brutally attacked by military personnel in civilian clothes and transferred to the Kobbeh military detention facility. After interrogations, - during which ill-treatment is alleged - Pierre was transferred to the Military Police premises. His sister, who was attempting to locate him in various prisons, was also reportedly physically attacked by the military. According to his family and friends, Pierre had previously received several threats due to his criticism and activities on social media outlets. ALEF – Act for Human Rights and CLDH (Lebanese Center for Human Rights) are deeply concerned by the allegations of ill-treatment and unlawful detention of Pierre Hashash. Moreover, his apprehension for criticizing the Lebanese Army Commander violates the right to freedom of expression, provided by article 19 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This right is also enshrined in article 13 of the Lebanese Constitution, which also states that, as an active member of the U.N., Lebanon has a duty to abide by its covenants and the UDHR.

The case of Pierre comes after a series of reported unlawful arrests and excessive use of force in policing practices by governmental institutions. The most recent one was on October 7th, 2012, in Geitawi, Achrafiyyeh which allegedly involved the LAF's violent abuse of approximately seventy Syrian, Egyptian and Sudanese workers after alleged complaints from locals of migrant workers "harassing" females on the streets. In this case too, it seems that the services were dispensing justice themselves instead of acting as entities under the control of the Judiciary.

ALEF – Act for Human Rights and CLDH (Lebanese Center for Human Rights) call upon the Lebanese Government to respect its human rights obligations, specifically the duty to protect individuals from unlawful arrest/detention and ill-treatment. Furthermore, **ALEF – Act for Human Rights and CLDH** call upon the Lebanese Government to investigate these alleged violations and, if proven, hold those responsible accountable.



The Lebanese Center for Human Rights calls the General Director of General Security to show leniency in a heart's matter

In 2010, Fayez Afram, an Iraqi refugee in Lebanon meets Rihanna, a migrant domestic worker from Bangladesh. Truly in love, they decide to get married. Rihanna leaves her employer, who lodges a complaint against her for theft.

Then, the crushing judiciary system sets off. The 23rd of November 2011, Rihanna is arrested and condemned to six months of jail for « escaping » from her employer's. However, the Justice recognizes that she is not guilty for any theft. She will spend all in all around one year in jail, before succeeding to leave the safety house of Caritas where she was allegedly retained against her will.

On the 3rd of September 2012, the two lovers are arrested by the gendarmerie.

At present, Fayez serves a one month prison sentence for « complicity » in the « escape » of her wife from her employer when the General Security is ready to send back Rihanna to her country.

Nevertheless, the current « guarantee » system (Kafala) in Lebanon is against Human rights as it makes the employers the « owners » of their house employees. The proof is there, the word « escape » is used by the Justice to qualify their resignation.

However, nothing in the law specifies that the foreigners don't have the right to fall in love and decide to get married.

Thus, the Lebanese Center for Human Rights is asking the General Director of General Security, the General Abbas Ibrahim, to take the exceptional decision to authorize Rihanna to stay on the Lebanese territory, so that she will have the chance to go on with her life with the man she chose.

Beirut, September 12, 2012

For immediate release

Press Release

Beirut, 17 August 2012

Following the preliminary investigations with former Minister Michel Samaha, suspected of plotting terrorist attacks in Lebanon, carried out this past week, his case was referred to the Military Tribunal. ALEF, CLDH and Alkarama consider this to be a further case illustrating the worrying practice in Lebanon of deferring civilians before the Military Court system.

According to the Lebanese Code of Military Justice of 1968, Lebanon's Military Court is a special court competent to statute on offences against national security and crimes committed by military personnel. This court is headed by a military officer assisted by four other judges, three of which are military officers. In addition, the military judges are appointed by the Minister of Defense based on the recommendation of the affiliated military body. The appointment of the military judges does not require any previous legal studies or a law degree. The Military Court has jurisdiction over cases involving civilians in espionage, treason, weapons possession, and attempted evasion cases, as well any conflict between civilian and military personnel.

The functioning of the Military Court as described above raises several concerns with regard to the right to the right to a fair trial. This includes the right to be tried before a competent, independent and impartial court established by law and the right to a public hearing, which cannot be guaranteed by the Military Court, especially for civilians. For example, the procedure to appoint the judges clearly undermines the independence of the Military Court, which, in turn, creates an atmosphere of impunity. Indeed, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention considers that "in principle, military tribunals should not try civilians" (Opinion No. 27/2008).

More specifically, the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressed in its 1997 review of Lebanon's report "concern about the broad scope of the jurisdiction of military courts in Lebanon, especially its extension beyond disciplinary matters and its application to civilians. It is also concerned about the procedures followed by these military courts, as well as the lack of supervision of the military courts' procedures and verdicts by the ordinary courts." Since the review before the UN body in 1997, the situation with regard to the military jurisdiction in Lebanon has not changed and in addition, Lebanon failed to submit their third periodic report to the Human Rights Committee, which was due in 2001.

Finally, the nature and practice of the Military Court in Lebanon renders its justice expedient and expeditious. Therefore, Lebanese and international NGOs as well as UN bodies have regularly point out that the Military Court has failed to comply with international standards relating to fair trial. This creates a favorable atmosphere for the violation of the rights of the defendants as well as an environment of lawlessness, of impunity and blatant contempt for the rule of law. The Military Court in Lebanon has, since its establishment, proved to be a judicial system without oversight mechanisms, accountability or transparency.

ALEF, CLDH and Alkarama therefore urge the Lebanese authorities to stop referring civilians before the Military Court and to "review the jurisdiction of the military courts [restricting it to internal military issues] and transfer the competence of military courts, in all trials concerning civilians and in all cases concerning the violation of human rights by members of the military, to the ordinary courts", in accordance with the Human Rights Committee's 1997 recommendation. In addition, we call on the Lebanese authorities to respect international fair trial standards, including their obligation to investigate all allegations of torture.

- **ALEF – act for human rights**
- **Centre Libanais des Droits Humains (CLDH)**
- **Alkarama Foundation**

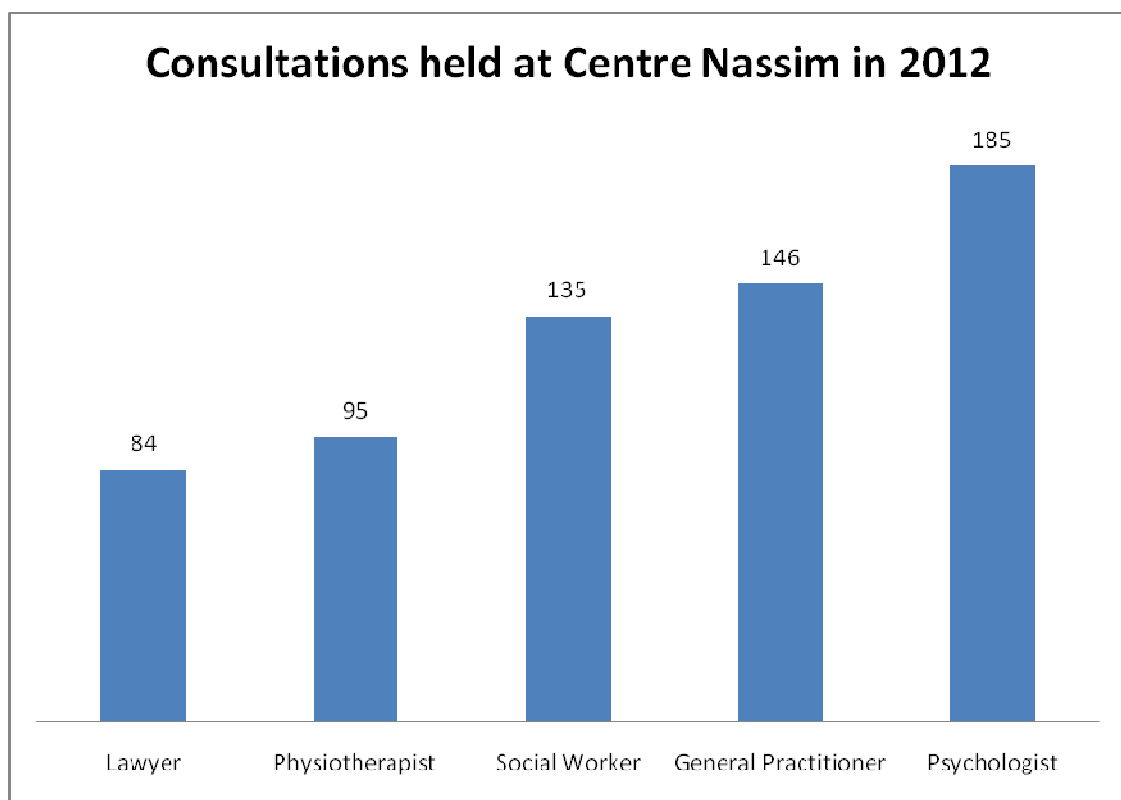


Centre Nassim for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture

Objective **Offer and provide multi-disciplinary assistance to the victims of torture**

Services

In 2012, 56 beneficiaries availed the services of Centre Nassim and a total of 645 consultations were held, as follows:



Training

In 2012, two CLDH board members participated in the IRCT regional seminar in Jordan

Challenges

The major challenge for Centre Nassim activity was related to the financial situation of the organization at the beginning of 2012. In January and February, the lack of funds did not allow the Center to provide its beneficiaries with the ordinary level of services and a priority was given to the continuity of medical treatments and the handling of emergency situations.

Fortunately, the issue was then resolved with the transfer of funding from various generous donors.

New foreseen activities

Thousands of persons are currently displaced from Syria into Lebanon in relation with the violence in Syria. Among them are victims of torture and their family members who require specific assistance in relation with their medical, psychological, social and legal situation in Lebanon.

All these victims of torture are subjected to four types of suffering associated with this traumatic event: physical (from torture), psychological (also linked to torture and degradation of self-esteem), and social distress (loss of employment, loss of family, rejection by society). They also have legal issues regarding their status in Lebanon and need urgent counselling and assistance in order to avoid further violations of their rights by the Lebanese authorities such as arbitrary arrest and forced deportation (since Lebanon is not a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention on the status of the refugees and therefore does not provide any effective legal protection to the asylum seekers and refugees on its territory).

Centre Nassim is willing to develop its assistance activity in order to better cater the needs of the victims of torture who were recently displaced from Syria through outreach activities and adequate legal assistance.

Enforced disappearance

Objective **Support the families of disappeared and NGOs working with this issue, and contribute effectively to the establishment of truth and justice for all victims of Human Rights violations**

In 2012, CLDH continued to be in the forefront of various activities undertaken in support of families of disappeared and working towards the establishment of truth and justice for all victims of Human Rights violations.

Press Conference

On March 21, 2012, on the occasion of the “Mother’s Day” in Lebanon, CLDH participated to a gathering and press conference held at the permanent sit-in of the families of disappeared in front of the ESCWA building in Beirut, in the presence of several ministers and deputies as well as several political parties and embassies representatives such as the French embassy and the EU delegation.

Press release

June 2012: A joint press release by SOLIDE and CLDH was issued to denounce the kidnapping of 11 Lebanese nationals in Syria.

Meetings

March 21: CLDH participated in a meeting with MP Ghassan Mokhaiber, Ghazi Aad (director of SOLIDE) and Waddad Halawani (Chairwoman of the Committee of the parents of kidnapped and disappeared persons in Lebanon) to figure out a solution to improve **a draft law on enforced disappearance** and the missing prepared by a number of NGOs.

CLDH representative held several meetings and had intense phone conversations with the minister of Justice regarding **a draft decree on enforced disappearance** submitted to the previous minister of Justice in 2009 by SOLIDE, the committee of families and parents of kidnapped person in Lebanon, the committee of families of Lebanese detained in Syria and CLDH and modified by the current Minister to integrate amendments coming from **another draft law on disappearance submitted by MP Hikmat Dib** to the Parliament and by the above mentioned draft law prepared by some NGOs.

Given the number of draft laws and the draft decree and the conflicts that erupted within the civil society components regarding the best approach to the issue of enforced disappearance, CLDH is closely following up the situation and is taking a stance every

time necessary in order to preserve the right to truth and justice for all the victims of enforced disappearance.

At the end of 2012, CLDH welcomed a delegation of the FEMED (Euromediterranean Federation Against Enforced Disappearance) board members and had a meeting with the Minister of Justice Mr. Chakib Qortbawi to discuss the draft decree and draft law.

Participation at events

In April 2012, a representative of CLDH attended an International Experts Meeting on 'Gender Impacts of Enforced Disappearances' organized by the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances to work on its General Comment. The meeting was co-organized by the UN Working group on enforced disappearances and UN Women in Addis Ababa.

Press coverage

The Secretary General of CLDH raised the issue of enforced disappearances on several occasions on the Lebanese television channels.

Migrant Workers, Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Objective

Raising awareness of the Lebanese society and authorities about the rights of migrants and refugees, strengthening and promoting the legal and social protection of migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees.

Teach In



CLDH team had the opportunity to conduct two trainings with children about the issue of migrant workers.

The first one took place on April 24, 2012 at CLDH office where a delegation of children from the IC, accompanied by their teacher visited the organization in a view of gathering information about this issue.

The second one took place on May 2, 2012 in Kfifan with children attending activities at Joy and Giving premises. The pictures of the event are visible on the following address:

<http://cldh-migrants-rights.blogspot.com/>

The session was a great opportunity to discuss with the children about the universality of Human rights and more particularly about the rights of the domestic workers, usually residing with them in their homes, as well as the fate of the refugees and asylum seekers in the country.



Cases follow-up

During the reporting period, CLDH team assisted individually 5 migrant domestic workers who had been abused by their employers.

Gender	Country of origin	Type of abuse	Type of intervention	Result
Female	Sri Lanka	Sexual abuse	Counselling	Ongoing
Female	Bangladesh	Physical and verbal abuse	Complaint to the prosecutor / ISF intervention	Solved with a change of employer
Male	Madagascar	Forced labour / withdrawal of ID	Case follow up in court, negotiation with former employer	Ongoing
Female	Madagascar	Non registration with the authorities	Counselling of employer/Change of employer	Ongoing
Female	Ethiopia	Unpaid salaries for 18 months	Counselling	Solved / the person was paid

In addition, CLDH documented the case of a migrant worker who allegedly fell from the 12th floor and issued the following press release:



Centre Libanais des Droits Humains
المركز اللبناني لحقوق الانسان
Lebanese Center for Human Rights

An Ethiopian domestic worker dies while trying to flee her employer's house What investigation ?

On August 9, 2012, a few media reported the death of Alani Silvo, an Ethiopian domestic worker aged 24 who fell to her death while trying to escape with a rope from her employers' apartment in Beirut.

CLDH team went to the scene and noted that in spite of the circumstances, no measure had been taken to consider the incident as a potential crime: the place had not been secured and the employers of Ms. Silvo were circulating freely in the neighborhood.

However it seems that if a person tries to escape an apartment located at the 12th floor of a building with a rope, it suggests that he/she is being held there against his/her will, and potentially abused. Art 569 of the Lebanese criminal code prescribes a prison sentence for the crime of unlawful confinement, and life imprisonment in case the deprivation of liberty lasted more than a month and/or if the person deprived of liberty was subjected to physical or psychological torture. The crime is considered as aggravated where the death of a human being results, as a consequence of fear or any other cause, in relation with the deprivation of liberty.

Does the Lebanese Justice not consider migrant domestic workers as human beings?

CLDH demands the Justice to address the deaths of migrant domestic workers without any discrimination: their death should be considered as suspicious, like the death of any Lebanese, and the employers immediately arrested in case of alleged sequestration, ill-treatments or any other crime.

Beirut, August 14, 2012

Press contact: Wadih Al-Asmar, 70/950 780



On November 13, 2011, CLDH participated in a demonstration following the death of a migrant domestic worker called upon by the Anti Racism Movement.

Documentation

During the month of June 2012, a volunteer at CLDH has documented in a detailed manner the situation of the Sudanese refugees in Lebanon who have been on hunger strike in front of UNHCR office in Beirut since June 11, 2012.

This activity was followed by a meeting between CLDH and UNHCR to discuss the findings.



Press release

On March 26, CLDH issued a press release regarding the death of the Ethiopian migrant worker Alem Desisa, entitled: “We are all Ali Mahfouz!”



Press release

We are all Ali Mahfouz!

On March 8, 2012, the LBCI television channel broadcast shocking footage of the young Ethiopian woman, Alem Dechasa-Desisa, as she lays on the ground in front of her country's embassy, weeping and saying that she does not want to return to Ethiopia. A man is then filmed dragging her forcefully into a car. We later learned that the woman in question had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital, and that Ali Mahfouz, her employer, had been charged. Finally, we learned that she had committed suicide on March 14 by hanging herself.

Much has been written about this tragedy on social networks and in the press. We cannot overstate or repeat it enough: The law is at fault, the hiring agencies are slave-traders, and the employers are often abusers. All these facts are endlessly repeated, to the point where we have lost our ability to distance ourselves and judge the practices of a civil society that supposedly can effect change.

We, the civil society, could have saved Alem. We are all equally as responsible for her death as Ali Mahfouz is!

Because Alem did not die from the beatings of Ali Mahfouz. Nor was she thrown off of a balcony by her employer. Alem chose to commit suicide because no solution was ever offered to her.

She had indebted herself to come and work in Lebanon, and her expulsion (the only solution offered to her) would have meant a return to her country with debts that are simply unbearable for an Ethiopian family: The family would not have been able to send the children to school, and the children could very well have suffered from malnutrition. By committing suicide, Alem canceled out her debts. Who would not have made that very same choice? It's probably painful, but this is not a choice for a mother to make because the answer is clear: She'd rather die than to see her children die.

Yet, even if civil society had vociferously demanded justice for Alem, no one would have offered her a solution: Alem could have found another employer in Lebanon, or the NGOs could have raised funds to pay off her debt before she returns to her country. We certainly should have fought for her to stay in Lebanon until a real solution is found for her! Instead, we talked, and talked, and then talked some more about who is responsible, about what charges to bring, what reforms to make... and while we were talking, we forgot that a woman in a hospital faced no other choice but death.

We killed her. Alem, we ask for your forgiveness!

Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH)

Beirut, March 26, 2012

Press contact: Wadih Al-Asmar: 70 950 780

Participation in other activities

CLDH representatives participated in several meetings organized by UNHCR and its partners regarding the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Lebanon as well as the particular situation of the Syrians fleeing the violence in Syria.



On May 29, CLDH representatives participated in a protest organized by the Anti Racism Movement in front of the Ministry of work for the rights of migrant domestic workers.

On June 14 and 15, CLDH also attended a conference organized by the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) and the Human Rights Institute of the Bar Association about the anti-trafficking law.

Overview of the Human Rights situation, capacity building and networking

Objective **Provide a clear and complete overview of the Human Rights situation in Lebanon, and to be an active partner along with the other Lebanese Human Rights NGOs.**

1. Report on civil and political rights in Lebanon in 2012

Ms. Claire Saade was appointed to prepare the 2012 report on civil and political rights in Lebanon that should be made public in 2013.

2. Blog “CLDH Human Rights Press Review” and new websites

During the reporting period, CLDH continued to compile a daily press review, gathering all articles on Human Rights issues in the Lebanese press (English, Arabic and French articles), available on a blog “[CLDH Human Rights Press Review](#)”. The blog was not updated for a few months due to a lack of human resources, but a volunteer and a webmaster took over the tasks. The number of users from several countries continues to steadily rise. As on December 31, 2012 the blog had registered **88,100 viewers** from 10 different countries.

With the support of MEPI (see below) a website dedicated to the media monitoring was created and is now visible on the following address: www.rightsobserver.org

A temporary website of CLDH, and a Facebook Fan Page were created in 2012 in order to promote CLDH activities and improve its visibility.

3. Media Monitoring in Lebanon to Promote Democracy and Human Rights

On December 12, 2012, CLDH organized, with the support of MEPI, a workshop entitled “Media relations & Capacity building training for Civil Society Organizations” for 20 Human Rights civil society organizations members.

Objectives

Addressing the means of communication on HR information and the media circulation of HR issues in order to ameliorate the information related to HR delivered to the media.
Develop the relationship between CSO members and journalists



Demonstration



On August 11, CLDH participated in Helem demonstration in front of the Ministry of Justice, against the forced tests of shame (anal tests and virginity tests) perpetrated at the police stations in Lebanon against the persons “suspected” of homosexuality.

Workshops, Seminars



On June 26 and 27, CLDH co-organized along with 9 other NGOs, including the Euro Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) a workshop entitled:

“EU-Lebanon Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan, challenges and opportunities to support women’s rights and the realization of gender equality in Lebanon”

A representative of CLDH also participated to the EMHRN Gender working group meeting on 26, 27 and 28 of June in Cyprus.

May Chidiac Foundation - Institute of Media and the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) organized on 15 and 16 November in cooperation with the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) a conference of experts entitled: “Participation and protection of witnesses in international criminal proceedings”.

This conference was an opportunity for NGOs, judges, lawyers, newspaper editors and representatives of embassies, the STL and the Lebanese State to discuss various issues relating to actions taken or to be taken to ensure the participation and protection of witnesses, but also the role of the media (public's right to information vs. confidentiality).

Students' trainings



CLDH representatives participated in the launching of the 8th year Global Classrooms Model United Nations in collaboration with the United Nations Association of the United States of America on December 15, 2012 at the Lebanese American University in Beirut. An Honorary Shield was handed to CLDH for “having been a main contributor in human rights for so long”.



NGO fairs

CLDH participated in the 3d NGO fair of the Lebanese American University on May 23, 2012.

Other

CLDH Secretary General participated in the General Assembly (GA) of the Euro Mediterranean Human Rights Network in Copenhagen and was part of the committee of organization of the GA and of the pre-GA Seminar entitled “Challenges faced by the human rights movement”, from May 30 to June 3.