

# THE RIGHTS OBSERVER BY CLDH

*Monitoring the Latest Human Rights Violations from the Field*

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PHOTO: AP



### A WORD FROM THE TEAM

“The measure of a society lies in its treatment of the most vulnerable. Denying individuals their human rights and dignity challenges their very humanity, often leading societies to adopt a 'an eye for an eye' mentality, ultimately blinding the entire community.”

- TRACY KHOURY, CENTER COORDINATOR AT CLDH

## 01 ESCALATING CRISIS: REFUGEES' BATTLE FOR SAFETY IN LEBANON

### • MANDATORY RENEWAL FOR REFUGEE HOUSING ATTESTATIONS

UNHCR and the Lebanese General Security had planned to launch a new version of the online link for refugees to renew their residency based on their UNHCR certificate, starting March 15, 2024. However, the Lebanese General Security is now requiring those who have previously renewed their statements before to reapply on the new version, otherwise their statements will not be acknowledged.

- **ONGOING FORCED DEPORTATIONS**

On March 7th, 2024, the Lebanese security forces raided Al-Salam refugee camp in Beqaa, Bar Elias, and arrested 14 Syrian men. CLDH later confirmed that the detainees were forcibly deported to Syria. This incident comes amidst the decision that was announced by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to “Regulate the Legal Status of Syrian Refugees and Mechanisms for their Return”.

- **REFUGEES UNDER THREAT**

Between November 2023 and March 2024, CLDH’s legal team assisted 54 individuals facing deportation, marking a significant 450% increase from the 12 beneficiaries supported during the same period last year. Similarly, in the past two months, CLDH’s hotline has received several calls from individuals expressing apprehension about potential deportation. This surge in outreach underscores a prevalent sense of anxiety and alarm among refugees in response to looming threats of compulsory detention and deportation from Lebanon.

## 02 EDUCATION DISRUPTED: CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS IN BEKAA

- **STRUGGLE WITH SCHOOL CLOSURES**

The ongoing closure of schools in Beqaa due to Israeli strikes poses a potential threat to students' continuity in attending classes throughout the academic year. Furthermore, the insufficient number of schools fails to sufficiently cater to the increasing number of students relocating from their original regions.

## 03 LEBANON’S 2024 BUDGET IMPACT: RISING FEES AND REGIONAL DISPARITIES

- **SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN DOCUMENTATIONS FEES**

Following the approval of the 2024 Government budget, fees for civil documentation, official documents, and the renewal of residency permits at notary public offices, which authenticate legal documents and certifications, have increased by 2000%. This increase has disproportionately affected vulnerable groups, including refugees, who struggle to afford these fees.



*No State Party shall expel, return, or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.*

**ARTICLE 3 OF THE CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DIGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT**



**CLDH’S NASSIM TEAM PROVIDES REHABILITATION SURVICES FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE AND INFORCED DISSAPEARANCES.**



PHOTO: MOHAMED AZAKIR/REUTERS

## • SUBSTANTIAL DELAYS IN COURTS

The ongoing strikes by judicial clerks across various courts are exacerbating delays in decision-making, bail processing, detainee release, and court order enforcement. Moreover, the misplacement of arrest records, particularly noticeable in the accusatory court in Mount Lebanon justice palace, is depriving many detainees of their right to retrial and impeding the submission of their records to the Public Prosecution. These issues are leading to substantial delays of several months in the resolution of cases, leaving detainees in a state of arbitrary detention.

## • LACK OF OFFICIAL STAMPS

Court employees cannot proceed with transactions due to the absence of official stamps, causing many challenges for lawyers, although they are sold before the eyes of the authorities at prices higher than their real cost.

## • UNJUSTIFIED INCREASE IN CLERK'S FEES

In 2023, the clerk's fee stood at 100,000 LBP, however, in February, it was adjusted to 200,000 LBP for cases involving foreign detainees and 100,000 LBP for Lebanese detainees. By the end of February, the fees escalated to 400,000 LBP for foreigners and 200,000 LBP for Lebanese detainees. However, it is worth noting that the increasing of clerk's fees does not have any legal basis.

## • MINORS FACING TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

In Baabda court, minors' sessions were repetitively postponed because they were not transferred from prison to court. CLDH reported that many issues related to transferring detainees to the courts are causing significant delays in resolving their legal status.

## • DEPRIVATION OF BASIC NEEDS AMONG INMATES

Females at Al-Qubbah detention center in Tripoli are enduring harsh conditions due to unmet basic needs caused by budget constraints. Additionally, many foreign females are unable to fulfill their personal hygiene requirements and access pain relievers as well.



PHOTO: LBCI

**CLDH'S LEGAL AND PROTECTION TEAM PROVIDES LEGAL ASSISTANCE AND CONSULTATIONS FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS IN LEBANON.**



PHOTO: ABBASS SALMAN