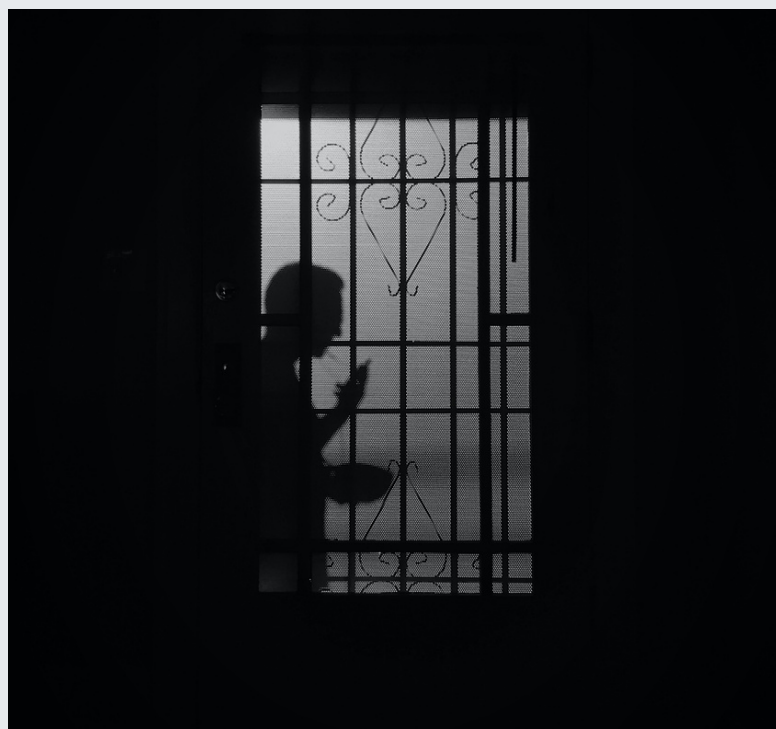


THE RIGHTS OBSERVER BY CLDH

Monitoring the Latest Human Rights Violations from the Field

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01

SILENCED BEHIND BARS: UNVEILING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN DETENTION

• ISOLATED FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD

The internal interphone system in Roumieh prison's Block D has been inoperative since June, which creates obstacles and hinders communication between inmates and CLDH's frontliners. This malfunction has also made it harder for prisoners to communicate with loved ones during family visits. Although there were at least 20 interphones to allow prisoners to speak from behind the glass, there now is only one functioning interphone for the entire block. The issue is further alleviated by the fact that the phones used by inmates to call outside the prison are often out of service too.

A WORD FROM THE TEAM

"In the pursuit of justice, we must shine a light on the shadows of silence and adversity, for it is in these darkest moments that our commitment to human rights is tested and our resolve to bring about change is strengthened."

- Tony Sleiman, Programs Manager at CLDH

- **COVID-19 RESURGENCE**

According to the convicted building's head in Roumieh prison, the entire building has been infected with the COVID-19 virus, raising concerns about the safety and well-being of the inmates in light of the rapid spread of the virus in confined spaces. Inmates often face underlying health issues and have limited access to proper medical care, heightening the severity of COVID-19 cases.

- **PERPETRATORS OF TORTURE**

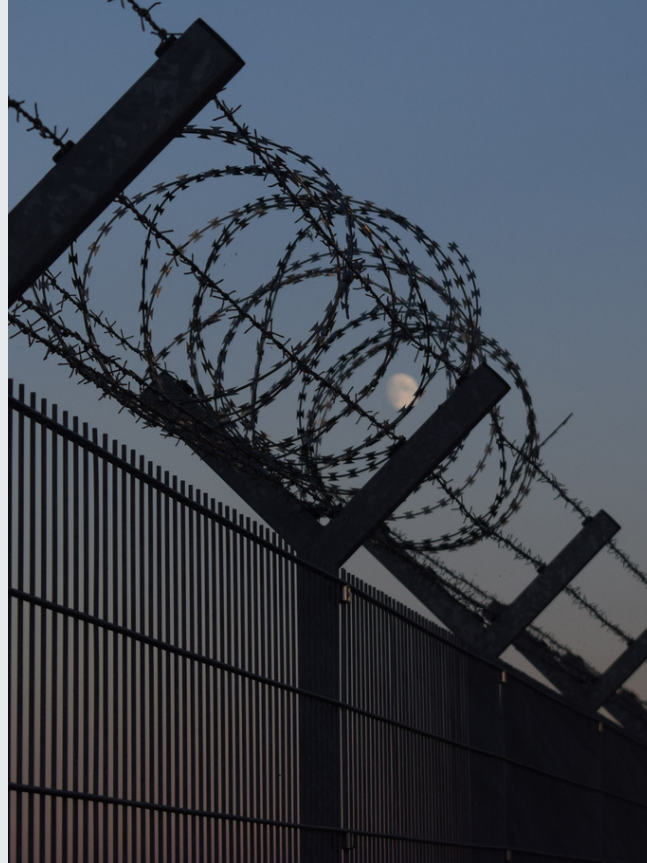
According to one of CLDH's frontliners, a police officer in Roumieh's juvenile block was temporarily detained after being accused of physically abusing juvenile inmates. When confronted, the officer stated that "he abused the juveniles for their benefit". The officer currently no longer works with juveniles and is given administrative work outside the juvenile block.

- **INMATE-INFLICTED TRAGEDY**

Following the death of a prisoner in Roumieh's Block D, it was reported that the incident might not have been a routine occurrence and that three inmates were punished for their alleged involvement in the murder. Police officers inside the building reported to CLDH frontliners that the victim was restrained and coerced into consuming rubbing alcohol, culminating in his death.

- **SILENCED RESISTANCE**

On June 1st, inmates in Roumieh prison attempted to initiate an uprising to protest prevailing prison conditions, but police officers directly intervened and regained control of the situation, attempting to restrict the dissemination of information regarding the incident.



"All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings. No prisoner shall be subjected to, and all prisoners shall be protected from, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, for which no circumstances whatsoever may be invoked as a justification.

**THE UNITED NATIONS STANDARD
MINIMUM RULES FOR THE
TREATMENT OF PRISONERS**



- **RESTRICTED ACCESS FOR FRONTLINERS**

Certain blocks in Roumieh prison instituted a new policy regarding access to the facility. Consequently, CLDH's frontliners are forced to frequently coordinate with the head of the block to gain entry, despite already obtaining permits from the Internal Security Forces and the Attorney General, which indicate that the organization's activities are legally permitted and have undergone the necessary review. Thus, frontliners must be able to operate within the limits set by these permits without unnecessary obstacles. Moreover, when frontliners need to meet with a prisoner, considerable time is consumed to locate the intended individual.

- **MOTHER LONGS TO SEE HER CHILDREN**

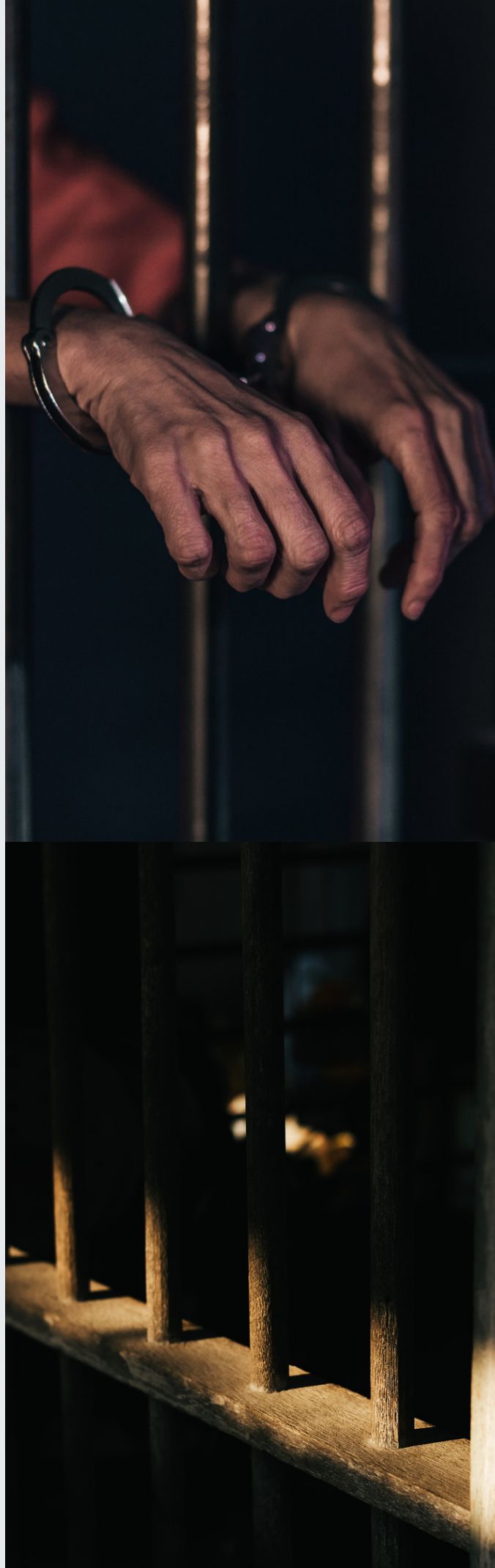
A juvenile care center denied a female inmate in Baabda prison the opportunity to see her children, despite an order from the juvenile court allowing her reunification with them. One of CLDH's social workers intervened, pressuring the care center and in turn ensuring the reunification of the mother with her children.

- **MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ON HOLD**

The medical department inside Roumieh's prison went on strike in July, leaving inmates without access to essential medical care and treatment.

- **ONGOING ARBITRARY DETENTION**

An inmate has been detained in Baabda prison for a decade without undergoing trial or receiving any judicial decision. A session was scheduled to review her case in 2022, but she was not transported to court, leading to the cancellation of the session. This case is not an isolated incident, as it rather reflects a larger pattern of prolonged detentions and postponed sessions that infringe on the right to a fair trial. Indeed, individuals are frequently held in Lebanese prisons for extended periods without facing trial, which can severely harm their physical and mental well-being. The second element of this pattern constitutes the cancellation of court sessions scheduled to review these detainees' cases, highlighting a larger problem within the judicial system that violates prisoners' rights to prompt hearings.



- **UNDERMINING THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION**

Juveniles in Baabda prison are often unable to contact their lawyers or even get their numbers, which constitutes a violation of Rule 61 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which guarantees detainees the right to confidentially consult with a legal adviser.

- **ADDITIONAL SERVICES IN EXCHANGE FOR BENEFITS**

Some prisoners in Baabda prison have the possibility to improve their condition and get more comfortable cells through certain means, such as paying.

- **UNWARRANTED HARASSMENT**

Guards in Roumieh prison have repetitively harassed service providers during searches, with the former insisting on searching sanitary pads before granting them entrance.

02

INVISIBLE CHAINS: DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MIGRANT WORKERS IN BAABDA PRISON

- **NO COMMUNICATION WITH HOME**

Some migrant workers have not been able to contact family members who live abroad for years, since the telecartes available in prisons are often expensive and do not work for international calls. This has forced them to resort to an English teacher who regularly attends the prison and serves as their communication bridge to the outside world.

- **NATIONALITY DICTATES STATUS**

Incarcerated migrant workers are subject to discriminatory treatment, being labeled "unhygienic" and relegated to the role of "prison keepers." They are expected to clean, complete chores, and serve other prisoners in exchange for leftover food. This discrimination is further aggravated in cells with fewer migrant workers, as it makes it easier for other inmates to marginalize them.



- **PAYING FOR JUSTICE**

Courts have recently implemented a new procedure requiring individuals, when filing complaints or upon release, to pay a fee of 100,000 L.L. to the Judicial Assistants Fund, as per the receipt issued by the employee processing their application. This decision has no legal basis, and it has given clerks the power to refuse to register requests sent by prisoners who do not have someone capable of paying the fee on their behalf.

- **DISCREPANCIES IN JUDICIAL STAMP CHARGES**

Although the law requires a 50,000 L.L. stamp for each request, the stamp is not printed or made available, leaving applicants with no choice but to use the 100,000 L.L. stamp, effectively doubling the fee they must pay.

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

- **LOCKED UP IN ARBITRARY DETENTION**

Many detainees held in police stations were not brought before the investigative judge, and a considerable number of these judges declined to conduct online interrogations, even when it was evident that the detainee could not physically appear before them for several months. The practice of not bringing detainees before the investigation judge amounts to arbitrary detention that is not backed by an arrest warrant.

- **BAIL BURDEN AND FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS**

The value of bail continues to surge as judges tie it to the dollar's fluctuating value. Unfortunately, detainees and those most in need rarely reap the benefits of this currency fluctuation. Furthermore, the closure of financial funds exacerbates the burden of paying bail.

- **JUSTICE LOST IN TRANSIT**

In the Bekaa and Baabda regions, judgment summaries fail to reach prisons due to mail transportation issues, compelling lawyers to personally deliver the summaries to the prisons.

- **JUSTICE ON HOLD**

In the Baalbek Court, judges frequently fail to attend court proceedings, causing delays and disruptions in the justice system. Meanwhile, in the Bekaa region, the process of deciding on releases faces persistent unexplained delays. Moreover, in Baalbek, one of the investigative judges unjustly refrains from interrogating detainees for extended periods, without providing any valid reason for the delay. These issues raise doubts about the fair and timely administration of justice in these areas.



- **DARK DAYS IN COURTS**

Since the beginning of the judicial recess, the courts in Baabda, Beirut, and Jdeidet Al Matn have ceased to provide electricity. This unexpected disruption has impacted court proceedings, imposing additional challenges.

- **INEFFECTUAL JUDICIAL SHIFTS**

Throughout the judicial recess, CLDH's frontliners have discovered the extent of inefficiency in the judicial shift at the Mount Lebanon Court. The alternate judge frequently abstains from making decisions on the cases assigned to the principal judge, raising concerns about delayed justice and a lack of continuity in the legal proceedings. For instance, the alternative judge refused to rule on the requests for bail and bail reduction. This decision had far-reaching repercussions, leading to several cases of arbitrary detention.



• SWIFT DEPORTATIONS AND LACK OF CRITERIA

The General Directorate of General Security has been issuing deportation decisions without a clear basis or consideration of refugee status and implementing them without sending comprehensive lists of individuals subject to deportation to the UNHCR, leaving the latter with insufficient time to find a solution to halt the deportation. The Lebanese Armed Forces have allegedly deported countless individuals, including unaccompanied minors who are ill-treated and separated from their families. Other allegedly deported people include those vulnerable to severe punishments in Syria, as they could fall victim to arbitrary detention, torture, and forced conscription into the Syrian army. In one case, a family has been trying to find out the whereabouts of their son for over a month now.

• RESIDENCY RENEWALS

Amid ongoing deportations, Syrian refugees have sought to renew their residency, while also covering the costs of the required supporting documents and stamps. The process has been further complicated for Syrian refugees born in Lebanon as they do not have a national identity card or a valid passport.

• CLDH PROVIDES LEGAL GUIDANCE IN THE BEKAA REGION

Given the circumstances mentioned above, CLDH's front liners have conducted additional field visits and legal information sessions in the Bekaa region to answer Syrian refugees' questions and concerns and lay out the proper legal steps that they must pursue.



CLDH'S NASSIM TEAM PROVIDES REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE AND ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES.

