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I- Presentation of CLDH:

The Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) is a local non-profit, non-partisan Lebanese human rights organization based in Beirut. CLDH was created in 2006 by the Franco-Lebanese Movement SOLIDA (Support for Lebanese Detained Arbitrarily), which had been active since 1996 in the struggle against arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and the impunity of those perpetrating gross human rights violations.

CLDH is a founding member of the Euro-Mediterranean Federation against Enforced Disappearance (FEMED), a member of the EuroMed Rights (REMDH), the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and the SOS Torture Network of the World Organization against Torture (OMCT).

CLDH’s complementary components include advocacy, public mobilization, rehabilitation for victims of torture and families of enforced disappearances, and the provision of pro-bono legal services for vulnerable groups.

As part of its advocacy campaign, CLDH monitors the human rights’ situation in Lebanon, fights enforced disappearances, impunity, arbitrary detention, and racism through media campaigns, lobbying with the civil society and decision makers, and conducting reports on a regular basis. In addition, CLDH compiles a daily press review on human rights violations and on-going judiciary cases in Lebanon.

Within the scope of public mobilization, CLDH regularly organizes press conferences, workshops and capacity building training to community members in order to raise awareness on human rights’ issues and create agents of change in Lebanon. Besides lobbying for policy change and public mobilization, CLDH’s provided services consist a base for monitoring on ground-violations and playing an enormous role in reaching out to vulnerable groups through legal assistance and rehabilitation of victims of torture.

In 2007, CLDH founded “Nassim Center”, a rehabilitation center for the victims of torture and families of the forcibly disappeared, which provides multi-disciplinary professional support and case management for victims of torture or families as per Istanbul Protocol, including psychotherapy, physiotherapy, legal, social, and financial assistance to over 100 victims of torture on a yearly basis.
In 2009, CLDH launched its legal aid program by which, currently, a team of more than 10 lawyers provides legal assistance and consultations to vulnerable groups as the team handles walk-in and in-prison cases all over 23 detention centers in Lebanon on a daily basis.

In February 2019, CLDH established a second office in Baalbek in which vulnerable groups are provided with legal assistance, psycho-social assistance, and several awareness sessions on legal procedures, in addition to referral procedures to CLDH’s main office or Nassim rehabilitation center.

Who are our Donors?

During 2018, CLDH received several financial support for both its programs: Rehabilitation for victims of Torture and their families and families of enforced disappeared and legal aid.

CLDH donors are foundations and embassies, which allow CLDH to respond to human rights violations and to operate independently from political, economic or religious interests.

The majority of these donors have been supporting CLDH and Nassim for more than two years while others granted their funds in 2018. The donors are as listed below:

Our Donors:

Open Society Foundation - Renewed its support to the project “Legal assistance to vulnerable inmates in Lebanese prisons.

Sigrid Rausing Trust

AEDH (Working Together for Human Rights) – Supported the legal assistance activities to migrant workers.

DANIDA/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark – Through its Regional Development and Protection Program (RDPP) supported a project titled “Legal assistance to vulnerable persons in the context of the war in Syria”.

ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) - Partially supported the project titled “Legal assistance to vulnerable inmates in Lebanese prisons”.

Oxfam UK.
The Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Lebanon – Provided CLDH with funding for various activities including rehabilitation.

The Norwegian Embassy in Lebanon - Provided funding to Nassim Center.

Forum Refugie - Provided funding for Nassim Center.

Agence française de développement – AFD.

II- Arbitrary detention and torture in Lebanon: legal assistance in prisons/ legal consultations in center

A- State of Lebanese prisons:

The state of Lebanese prisons hasn’t changed significantly over the past year. Prisons are still overcrowded: 2811 prisoners are held in the detention centers of the Justice Palace as of December 2019. The total number of prisoners in Lebanon is estimated around 9777\(^1\). In the course of CLDH’s work it has been more than evident that torture is still a common practice in prisons and detention centers and practiced by the majority of security forces.

Several cases of arbitrary detention have been spotted by CLDH’s team and on-the-ground work such as individuals detained beyond the end of their sentences, stranded in prisons for administrative or financial reasons, or arrested on grounds of sexual orientation.

The main reason why legal aid is not widely sought after is the distrust people have towards the Lebanese judicial system, and the exorbitant fees linked to hiring a lawyer. The insufficient judiciary assistance provided by the State and the insufficient fees paid to lawyers by the Beirut and Tripoli bar associations make it nearly impossible for lawyers to defend low-income detainees.

\(^1\) [https://www.aljoumhouria.com/ar/news/505834/](https://www.aljoumhouria.com/ar/news/505834/)
B- CLDH’s intervention:

Since the start of the legal aid program in 2009, CLDH has been on the frontlines of this battle against injustice in prisons. The Centre’s core belief is that every individual has the right to a fair trial, and legal representation is the main drive in assisting vulnerable inmates in detention centres all over Lebanon.

During 2019, CLDH’s team continued its visits to Lebanese prisons and detention centers to meet with detainees who were subjected to Human Rights violations, such as arbitrary detentions and torture. The team also received many referrals of cases from the relatives and families of the detainees, prison directors, and other NGOs. Their cases were followed up by the team of lawyers according to the demands and specific needs of the beneficiaries.

CLDH’s legal team, composed of 10 lawyers, provided pro-bono legal aid and support throughout 2019 in all Lebanese regions. The total number of vulnerable inmates assisted is 669 (520 men and 149 women). Out of these cases, 171 were closed; 184 are still ongoing and 314 were successfully solved.
Based on the Monitoring & Evaluation tools developed in previous years, CLDH was able to accurately calculate the number of interventions done by the lawyers. A detailed breakdown of the type of interventions was also made possible thanks to the M&E tools. The interventions were mainly centered around:

- Applying for sentence reduction (release on bail, bail reduction, concurrency of sentences, penalty reduction);
- Contacting the detainee (visit or making him/her sign papers);
- Contacting other individuals (Embassy, UNHCR, GSO, family, prison authorities);
- Collecting information (copying files, retrieving file numbers, identifying the location of the detainee);
- Attending sessions in court;
- Preparing defense, objections, and appeals;
- Resolving administrative issues (sending papers to court from prison, corrections in files, admitting POA);
- Paying bails or fees;
- Checking on the status of his/her case.

The majority of the beneficiaries supported by CLDH were Syrians (118) and Lebanese (112). Individuals of other nationalities were also assisted, included but not limited to Palestinians, Ethiopians, Bangladeshis.
In 2019, CLDH opened a new office in the Bekaa region in Baalbek where 2 social workers and 2 lawyers are operating. The Center, in partnership with Oxfam, implemented two projects (GAC and Danida) covering two different areas in Bekaa.

For the GAC project, 34 individuals were provided legal advice; 33 of them holding the Syrian nationality.

23 were females and their demands were mostly focused on children and marriage registration and residency renewal. Out of these 23 cases, 1 was closed as she was assisted by another lawyer and/or NGO; 1 was closed as she was referred to another NGO; 2 are ongoing; 4 were closed as the lawyer couldn’t help them (no legal grounds for intervention) and 15 were closed and given advice on their case.

11 were males and their demands were mostly focused on residency renewal and marriage registration. 1 case was closed (ended with a negative outcome); 1 was closed as he was referred to another NGO and 9 were given legal advice and the cases were subsequently closed.
102 individuals were provided with legal assistance; 65 males (64 Syrian and 1 Palestinian) and 37 females (all Syrians).

The males' demands mostly revolved around children and marriage registrations. 63 cases were successfully solved and closed; 1 case was referred to another NGO and 1 is still ongoing.

Females' demands were also centered around children and marriage registrations. 35 cases ended positively and hence closed; 1 was referred to another NGO and 1 is still ongoing.
For the Danida project, the lawyers reported on 191 cases: 38 cases received legal consultation and 153 received legal assistance.

For the legal consultations, 30 were males and 8 were females.

Women's demands were mostly related to children registration and residency renewal. 4 cases were closed because the lawyer couldn’t help them; 3 were given advice on their case and 1 was referred to another NGO.
Men's demands were focused on regularization of legal status, detention and residency renewal. 2 cases were closed because the lawyers couldn't help them as there were no legal grounds for the intervention; 20 were given advice on their case; 1 was closed because he got help from another lawyer/NGO and 7 were referred to another NGO.
For the legal assistance cases, 26 were women and 127 were men.

Women’s demands were centered around marriage and children registration and detention. 20 cases ended positively and subsequently closed; 3 were closed as they got help from another lawyer/NGO and 3 are ongoing.

Men’s demands also centered around marriage and children registration. 121 cases ended positively; 2 were closed as they got help from another lawyer/NGO and 4 are ongoing.
C- Legal intervention at the Center:

During 2019, CLDH continued providing legal consultation and support to vulnerable individuals through walk-ins at the office. The inhouse lawyer assisted them on matters related to their UNHCR file, resettlement, residency renewal, children/marriage registration, etc… In these cases, the priority was always given to the most vulnerable, including but not limited to LGBT, migrant workers, victims of torture and victims of SGBV.

The total number of walk-ins during 2019 is 31 (13 women and 18 men), 3 of them are beneficiaries at Nassim Center. The vulnerabilities of these individuals included low income, torture, and being part of the LGBT community. Many of them had multiple demands.

Of these 31 cases, 10 were successfully solved; 32 demands are still ongoing and 7 were closed/referred to another NGO.
III- Nassim Center for the rehabilitation of victims of torture and their families:

a- Services:

Nassim Center is a multidisciplinary center for the rehabilitation of torture victims. It provides medical, psychological, legal, and social support, as well as assistance with vocational rehabilitation and physiotherapy. A team of professionals has been established along with a well-developed framework for care and monitoring. After assessing each new case, a team meeting is done to discuss and set an action plan according to the needs of the beneficiary. This plan involves all services provided by
Nassim and sets a time frame for each task to be done. It can be subject to change depending on the situation in the country and on the obstacles, which may occur during the rehabilitation. The beneficiary takes part in the implementation of this plan as he/she is totally aware of it and gives his/her approbation. It is the role of the social worker to explain the plan and oversee through its evolution by evaluating the progress with the rest of the team. Nassim Center provides the following support:

- **Medical support** – The majority of the beneficiaries of the Center are among those who have not received care during their imprisonment or after their subsequent release from prison. Some have been subjected to grave torture during the imprisonment/detention and carry many physical scars due to the practiced abuse., for e.g.; severe bruises/injuries to various parts of the body, pains and aches, loss of body parts, loss of mobility etc. These beneficiaries are also, in most cases not entitled to any state support, since social security is restricted to only those employees who have been declared by their Lebanese employers. Since the majority of beneficiaries are Syrian refugees, unemployed or not gainfully employed and therefore, they are not in a position to obtain proper medical care and assistance for their needs.

- **Physiotherapy** – In addition to the above, Centre Nassim also provides for physiotherapeutic care of the beneficiaries. Treatment of beneficiaries at Centre Nassim is based on various approaches including a kinesiological approach that applies scientific based medical principles towards the analysis, preservation and enhancement of human movement in all settings and populations. Our physiotherapist works out a treatment plan which involves explaining to the patients about the exercise and massage regimen that will be followed at the Center and the exercises that the patient will do at home to aid in faster recovery. In short, our beneficiaries benefited immensely from this therapeutic regimen of controlled exercises, ergonomics and lifestyle modifications.

- **Psychotherapy** – The effects of torture are often a combination of physical injuries as a result of the inflicted violence and the mental trauma associated with experiencing such acts. The mental suffering due to torture and Post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) are the most commonly observed cases at the Centre. There are also patients who have experienced intense bereavement and grief over the death or disappearance of their loved ones. Cases are systematically assessed by the psychologist, who then puts together a therapy
program involving autogenic training, supportive psychotherapy, psychoanalytic psychotherapy, relaxation or a combination of all, after taking into consideration unique factors that each case may present. Whenever necessary, the cases are reviewed on a regular basis by an external psychiatrist, for medication treatment combined to the psychotherapy. The psychologist successfully dealt with several cases of PTSDs, adaptation disorders, acute depression, delusions etc. and had facilitated several beneficiaries to successfully reinvest in their personal and professional life. Another important observation is that psycho-education coupled with general health education and physiotherapy has led to the alleviation in the physical symptoms of many patients.

- Social Support – The social worker identifies the obstacles in preventing family and social reintegration of the victim, and puts in place a program aimed at providing appropriate assistance to the beneficiary. The program is essentially based on encouraging the beneficiary to be autonomous and on avoiding the creation of a dependency to the Center. Through home visits and family mediation, the social worker coordinates with the close relatives on how to support the rehabilitation of the beneficiary. Wherever necessary and according to requirement, the social worker also gets in touch with other organizations for provision of necessary assistance to the beneficiaries.

- Legal Support – Victims of torture have many legal issues: claims for reintegration into workplace, clearing of criminal records, processing of asylum applications with UNHCR, help with issuance of stay permits and/or work permits, request for attestations for various administrative reasons, so on and so forth. Center Nassim’s lawyer, with the help of the protection officer, provides extensive legal consultations and counseling to the victims on various aspects of laws relating to human rights violations, torture related issues; public interest litigation etc.


**b-Stats and Figures:**

In 2019, Center Nassim provided support to 14 beneficiaries.
Psychologist: 155 consultations  
Social worker: 230 consultations  
Lawyer/Protection officer: 88 consultations  
General practitioner: 147 consultations  
Physiotherapist: 103 consultations  

IV - Advocacy and Awareness

The Communication and Advocacy activities aim at raising awareness around legal contexts and human rights violations, in order to fight enforced disappearances, impunity, torture, arbitrary detention, inequality, and racism.

The communication and advocacy activities include monitoring human rights developments, launching media campaigns, and lobbying for policy change and law reforms. The activities are undergone by the Communication and Advocacy team in which reports around human rights topics are conducted and a weekly news brief is filed every week to monitor human rights developments. Media campaigning is done through sharing online awareness posts, press releases, and legal information through social media platforms and CLDH’s website. Lobbying for policy change includes holding conferences, round-table discussions, and sharing position papers with partners and policy makers in order to recommend and lobby for law enhancement and policy change.

In 2019, CLDH became part of two groups of local organizations, in which several position papers and statements were released in order to reinforce the need for granted social, legal, and economic rights for all Lebanese residents. CLDH became a part of a socio-economic and a legal group of local NGOs (Lebanon Support, ALEF, Proud, Refugees=Partners, House of Peace, Legal Agenda....) in which more than three position papers were jointly released to push for social, legal, and economic policy reforms for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. CLDH also became a member of Lebanon Humanitarian & Development NGO Forum (LHDF), in which a group of 40 local and national NGOs regularly collaborate to work on strengthening the coordination between local NGOs themselves and external stakeholders.
A- Reports and Briefs

Human Rights Weekly Developments Report - 2019
The Human Rights weekly development brief includes news around human rights topics (anything that is a breach of human rights, might lead to a breach of human rights, improves human rights, or might lead to an improvement of human rights.) News is conducted on a daily basis on the local, regional, and international level as the brief is shared every Monday of each week with partners, donors, and embassies. The brief mainly assists in monitoring and acknowledging human rights developments on different levels and on a consistent basis.

Lebanese Uprising Brief - October 2019
Since October 17, 2019, and as soon as demonstrations ignited in Lebanon and violations of demonstrators’ rights increased, CLDH’s legal aid team started supporting protesters through legal aid and legal consultations. The advocacy team was simultaneously briefing a Lebanese Uprising report in which all updates related to the demonstrations are documented on a daily basis since October 17, in order to later extract and analyze human rights violations occurring throughout this period.

Questions and Answers Booklets for Refugees- October 2019

Residency Renewal Booklet / Marriage Registration Booklet
The Residency Renewal and Marriage Registration booklets were published in a Q & A form to assist refugees and answer legal questions around legal procedures, including the needed documents and the legal circumstances of any marriage or residency registration. The booklets were distributed to Syrian refugees in Baalbek refugee camps in order to raise awareness on the importance of granting social and legal rights for refugees residing in Lebanon.

“Lebanon’s Torture Situation after Legislating Law 65/2017” - October 2019
This report has been produced with the support and financial assistance of The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beirut. The report is based on 92 questionnaires of persons detained in Lebanese detention facilities, as well as legal analysis and information given by specialists in the field of torture rehabilitation. It mainly focuses on two main points. Firstly, it briefly examines the international and domestic legal framework in place to
combat torture and other ill-treatment, as it covers and discusses the adoption and implementation of Law 65. Secondly, with the help of testimonies collected by CLDH’s team, it questions the systematic use of torture by security officials, more particularly during the preliminary investigations.

B- Other Advocacy and Awareness Raising Activities

1- Media Campaigns and Lobbying Activities

- 16 April, 2019: Capacity Building Training:

- 31 participants attended a two days’ capacity building training on the 16th and the 17th of April at Smallville Hotel - Badaro. 5 topics were covered during the training including (Women’s rights, LGBTQ, victims of torture, political and civil rights of refugees and domestic workers). As for the training objectives; Provide tools to NGO members, law students and junior lawyers to help them gain facilitation skills and awareness applicable in their respective communities.

- 24 June, 2019: Conference titled “Torture in Lebanon between law and implementation” in collaboration with Tripoli Bar Association.² Lawyers and members of the civil society attended the conference which included a presentation about torture laws in Lebanon, the role of the National Commission for Human Rights in limiting torture practices, and a presentation on medical ways to prove that torture has been practiced over the victims.

- 25 June, 2019: Position Paper by 8 organizations about forced deportations to Syria³.

- 28 June, 2019: Press conference on the incident of an ISF member assaulting Rida Azar, a member of National Preventive Mechanism⁴

² https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1279306065561208
³ https://www.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=5684&fbclid=IwAR2jxmD092oN2aZo40uZ5Dq5TSCp1mRcdT0I8nh5d4Wqe9QC7zutiqSGN4A
⁴ https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/videos/358340788436043/?v=358340788436043
- 18 July, 2019: **Torture Awareness Play “W Ma Tallet Colette”**\(^5\) by Ziad Itani who was detained and tortured for 109 days. Community members were invited to attend the play for free through an open invitation.

![Figure 1 Torture awareness play](image)

2- Strengthening Governmental Institution:

- **Legal aid committee and the Tripoli Bar association:**

  An MOU signed between CLDH and Tripoli Bar Association and specifically the committee of legal aid. As it is already known, the legal aid committee at the bar has no/limited financial resources to cover legal and lawyer fees expenditures, for junior and senior lawyers willing to provide legal aid services for the one in need, which has caused a decrease in numbers of lawyers willing to provide legal aid services. As a result, CLDH conducted several meetings with both president of Tripoli bar association Me. Mohamad Trad and president of Legal aid committee Me. Joseph El Doueihy, during which both parties agreed on mutual steps

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\(^5\) [http://www.rightsobserver.org/blog/the-lebanese-center-for-human-rights-organizes-raising-awareness-play-%E2%80%9Cw-ma-tallet-colette%E2%80%9D?fbclid=IwAR0JEV6QAQIXUPKi4mHqob6hhwBkOl9Zhr1XuVOMCPaj3fMXSNVR7s7s6SM](http://www.rightsobserver.org/blog/the-lebanese-center-for-human-rights-organizes-raising-awareness-play-%E2%80%9Cw-ma-tallet-colette%E2%80%9D?fbclid=IwAR0JEV6QAQIXUPKi4mHqob6hhwBkOl9Zhr1XuVOMCPaj3fMXSNVR7s7s6SM)
and actions to be taken to enhance and improve the capacity of junior/senior lawyers willing to provide legal aid services to detainees including refugees, foreigners and Lebanese. The MOU signed with the bar included the following points:

- The Legal Aid committee will assign three junior lawyers monthly to handle detainee cases.
- Lawyers assigned will be responsible for cases and have to submit a report showing the case’s results and interventions.
- Lawyers will be working under the supervision of both parties to ensure the quality of legal services provided.
- CLDH will cover 500,000 LBP around 333 USD per case including lawyer and legal fees.
- The aim of this MOU is to encourage legal aid/pro bono services for junior lawyers by providing financial and capacity for legal assistance and to increase the number of cases supported by the legal aid committee.

- Training provided for ISF and Lebanese Army:

9 & 10 October, 2019: Training provided to Internal Security Forces and Lebanese Army members around Torture and Gender Based Violence in collaboration with KAFA and OXFAM6

6 https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1362154197276394?__tn__=-R
Figure 2 ISF and Lebanese Army training
3- Public Events:

- 11 October, 2019: Conference titled “Launching of Inception Report - Lebanon's Torture Situation after Legeslating law (65/2017)”
  The conference was held at Radisson Blu - Ain El Mraiseh where several civil society members, judges, lawyers, and representatives of the Ministry of Justice discussed the findings of the inception report and Lebanon’s torture situation after legislating law (65).

7 https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/13660456646887249?__tn__=-R
October 18, 2019: Provision of CLDH’s legal hotline on social media to support Lebanese demonstrators during the Lebanese Uprising\(^8\)

October 19, 2019: Press release: “CLDH Urgently Calls Lebanese Authorities to Respect Domestic and International Commitments During Lebanese Uprising” \(^9\)

4- Social Media statements with legal context on International Days:

- June 26: International day for the Prevention of torture\(^{10}\)
- June 20: World Refugee day\(^{11}\)

\(^8\) https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/photos/a.159606240864535/1369810036510810/?type=3&theater
\(^9\) http://www.rightsobserver.org/blog/cldh-urgently-calls-lebanese-authorities-to-respect-domestic-and-international-commitments
\(^{10}\) https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/photos/a.131638670327959/1280845325407282/?type=3&theater
\(^{11}\) https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1276095559215592?__tn__=-R
- Other examples of social media awareness posts include individual and joint statements and press releases:


- July 29: Call for further investigations on torture after two Parliament members publicly shared intel on torture in Lebanese detention centers: https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1300551706769977?__tn__=-R

- October 18: Statement supporting protesters with legal aid and providing legal aid hotline in case of any arrest: https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/photos/a.159606240864535/1370996556392158/?type=3&theater

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12 https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/photos/a.159606240864535/1321118988046582/?type=3&theater
13 https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1328376613987486?__tn__=-R
14 https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/photos/a.159606240864535/1336905533134594/?type=3&theater
15 https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/photos/a.159606240864535/1336906156467865/?type=3&theater
16 https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/photos/a.159606240864535/1345894152235732/?type=3&theater
17 https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1423579837800496?__tn__=-R
● October 23: Denouncing ISF and LAF’s forced trial and attacks on protesters in order to stop them from closing roads and demonstrating:

https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1375462329278914?__tn__=-R

● October 30: Statement denouncing attacks by political parties against peaceful protesters:

https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/photos/a.159606240864535/1382278885263925/?type=3&theater

● October 19, 2019: Press release: “CLDH Urgently Calls Lebanese Authorities to Respect Domestic and International Commitments” during the Lebanese uprising:

https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1371228669702280?__tn__=-R

● November 8, 2019: Press release on Students’ freedom of expression during Lebanon’s uprising:

https://www.facebook.com/cldh.ngo/posts/1391388477686299?__tn__=-R