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 opened “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 Baalbak 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.
Universal and Indivisible, this is our vision of human rights. Our fight to defend human rights in Lebanon and beyond Lebanon to the region and the world finds its origin in this universality and indivisibility. We never saw this fight as an act of revenge or as a matter of people but rather as a question of principle. Our leitmotif is to defend victims and denounce violations regardless of who the victims are and the nature of the violation. In a country like Lebanon torn apart by vertical and horizontal divisions, both at the level of social class and at the level of religious beliefs, it was essential for us, members and founders of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights, to give an example of impartiality which we could only find in the founding principles of the Charter of Human Rights and a systematic and systemic approach to the defense of its rights. Since 1997, with the SOLIDA movement, which gave birth to CLDH in 2007, following our action shows that we always kept as semaphore universality and indivisibility. This fight took us to lose friends and allies who did not understand that defending a victim of human rights violations is in no way adopting his/her cause. It starts from a deep conviction that every human being, regardless of race, religion, social situation, and legal status, has the right to be defended, to have access to a fair trial, not be discriminated against, not tortured, not to be unlawfully detained. These are the principles that have guided and will always guide the Lebanese Center for Human Rights, and it is these principles that we hope to have succeeded in preserving.

Wadih AL-ASMAR
President of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights
GOAL
Fight against all Human Rights violations; Monitor, Protect, and Rehabilitate Victims of torture and families of enforced disappearances.

MISSION
CLDH advocates for the enforcement of Human Rights for all, denounces Human Rights violations, and fights impunity by providing legal and rehabilitation services.

VISION
We envision a country free from human rights violations and discrimination.
Amid several questions about Enforced Disappearances in 1993, human rights activists, Wadih Al-Asmar and Marie Daunay, who were located in France, reached out to several organizations in Lebanon in order to examine the depth of advocacy towards combating Enforced Disappearances and to follow up on research and documentation for the purpose of lobbying in order to find forcibly disappeared individuals and reunite families after the civil war in Lebanon.

The team figured that several committees were already thriving for this cause, such as: Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, Committee of the Families of Kidnapped and the Disappeared in Lebanon, SOLIDE (support of Lebanese in detention and exile) and the committe of parents of lebanese detained in Syria. The group by then decided to further develop research on prosecution, enforced disappearances, and torture in order to further expand the advocacy network towards abolishing gross human rights violations.

Several arrests occurred in Lebanon and the group was simultaneously documenting cases of enforced disappearances and torture, for the purpose of launching a report later on. The group by then was mainly advocating and creating networks with the international community and lobbying for the pursuit of forcibly disappeared persons.

The group founded “SOLIDA”, an organization that works on documenting and conducting reports around enforced disappearances and torture. In the same year, “SOLIDA” published its very first report on torture which proved torture allegations at the ministry of defense right; it included illustrations on torture methods in Lebanese detention places and allowed further visibility the role of SOLIDA in denouncing such demeaning practices.

SOLIDA took families of the forcibly disappeared to Europe, where the presence of forcibly disappeared persons in Syria was confirmed for the very first time. In March 1998, 121 people were released out of Syrian prisons due to International pressure and consistent advocacy.

Between 1997 and 2005, SOLIDA was working on several files and reports around detentions, enforced disappearances, death penalties, humanitarian, and legal concerns in Lebanon. The reports highlighted human rights’ violations regardless of any political affiliations or contexts. After the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon, SOLIDA team decided to move to Lebanon and to establish the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH).
In 2000 and after the release of almost 50 new persons who were victims of enforced disappearances in Syria, SOLIDA’s team visited Lebanon in order to have direct calls with victims. This called for an inspiration to initiate a rehabilitation center for victims of torture. The organization started a rehabilitation center’s concept note in 2002, in order to provide social and psychological support for victims of torture. In 2007, the center was launched under the name “Nassim” and SOLIDA’s name was changed to “The Lebanese Center for Human Rights”.

CLDH launched its legal program in order to provide legal representation to vulnerable inmates. Progressively, the number of persons in prisons assisted by the organization every year has increased from a few dozen per year at the beginning of the project to 669 in 2019 (some of which are ongoing and proceeding).

Overall, the legal team today includes 11 lawyers and provides legal assistance in 23 prisons and detention centers all over the country including GSO and the military court.

Ever since then, CLDH has been launching advocacy campaigns, conducting reports around torture and other human rights violations, and providing rehabilitation services for victims of torture and legal aid for vulnerable groups.
VALUES

CLDH has had its role in exposing torture prosecutions since the civil war in Lebanon in which it conducted several reports around torture in Lebanese detention centers and is still tracking the updates on torture after legislating law (65/2017) which criminalizes torture.

CONTRIBUTIONS

CLDH has historically contributed in lobbying for the uplift or change in certain policies and laws in Lebanon. For instance, CLDH’s advocacy team was able to actively participate in the drafting, for the three concerned laws including the legislation of law (65) criminalizing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in 2017. In 2016, CLDH also lobbied for the passing of law (62) of creating an independent National Commission for Human Rights, Lebanon's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), which includes a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM). The law was passed by the Lebanese government in October 2016. In 2018, CLDH participated in drafting for law (105) on the missing and disappeared which was ratified by the Lebanese government in November 2018 and lobbied afterwards for the formation of a committee of enforced disappearances in Lebanon.

MANDATE

CLDH’s mandate stands out as it has always been consistent in providing the same services and referring cases to other organizations, which allowed more credibility in the sight of other organizations, donors, and partners. CLDH has been a relevant source of accurate data and legal information, as the role of the rehabilitation center “Nassim” has helped many inmates to re-engage in the society and contribute after suffering from traumatic torture incidents on the social, psychological, and physiological level.
LOOKING FOR ANSWERS?

YEARS IN OPERATION: 24 YEARS (since SOLIDA was founded).

FOUNDERS: Marie Daunay & Wadih Al-Asmar

BOARD MEMBERS: Berengere Pineau, Delphine Compain, & Wadih Al Asmar

NUMBER OF TEAM MEMBERS: 28 Members in both Beirut and Baalback’s office

OFFICES:
- 7th Floor, Bakhos Bldg, St Joseph Hospital Street, Dora, Lebanon.
- 2nd Floor, Ayn Bourday Street, Doures, Baalback, Lebanon.

Nassim Center Hotline: 79 / 171 272  
Legal Aid Hotline: 76/ 329 319
LEGAL AID PROGRAM DONORS

- Open Society Foundation - Renewed its support to the project “Legal assistance to vulnerable inmates in Lebanese prisons
- Sigrid Rausing Trust - Provided CLDH with funding for various activities.
- 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 Programme (RDPP) supported a project titled “Legal assistance to vulnerable persons in the context of the war in Syria”.

NASSIM PROGRAM DONORS

- 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 Refugiee - Provided funding for Nassim Center

MEDIA COVERAGE

- LBCI
- Al-Horra
- NNA
- The Daily Star
- L’Orient-Le Jour

ASSOCIATES:

- LHDF
- ALEF
- Lebanon Support
- House of Peace
- AJEM
- Legal Agenda
- Refugees = Partners
- Proud Lebanon
- Restart Center
- KAFA

- ABAAD
- Basmeh & Zeitooneh
- MCC
- ARM
- MOSAIC
- Access Center for Human Rights
- Amel Association
MAIN PROGRAMS OVER THE YEARS:

SCOPE OF WORK

4 Main components for the scope of work:

1. ADVOCACY
   - **Media campaign:** Online awareness, press releases, and legal information on social media platforms and websites.
   - **Human rights monitoring:** Weekly human rights developments and conducting reports around various human rights’ topics in Lebanon.
   - **Lobbying:** Round tables, conferences, position papers, networking with policy makers and civil society actors, training police officers.
   - **Policy change:** Law (62) of creating an independent National Commission for Human Rights in 2016, law (65) criminalizing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in 2017, and law (105) on the missing and disappeared in 2018.
2 PUBLIC MOBILIZATION:
- Capacity building trainings for the public
- Public support network
- Public awareness sessions

3 NASSIM REHABILITATION CENTER:
Rehabilitation and resettlement for victims of torture and families of forcibly disappeared persons.

4 LEGAL SERVICES:
Pro-bono walk in and in prison consultations, and legal aid for vulnerable groups.
DETAILS OF COMPONENTS

1 ADVOCACY

A- Lobbying/ conferences - over the past few years:

This includes activities involving policy makers, community members, and the civil society for the purpose of lobbying towards local and international law enforcement and implementation in order to grant equality and human rights.

2016

February 26: “Lawyers National Conference for the Prevention of Torture”.
June 24: Online petition asking the government for implantation of policies and processes leading to a torture-free Lebanon.
October 31: Launching report event: “Legal challenges faced by refugees from Syria in Lebanon”.
November 11: Press conference on the legal challenges faced by refugees from Syria in Lebanon.
December 15: Launching report event: “Shadow Report”.

2017

May 17: Press release on the occasion of International day against Homophobia.
May 24: Conference to follow up with the U.N. Committee Against Torture on Torture prevention in Lebanon.
May 25: Press release on the concern over prosecuting Mr. Salman Smaha who was called for interrogation over a Facebook post.

2018

June 1st: NHRI/NPM - Round table to discuss the NHRI appointments and the process of its formation and the subsequent steps.
Press conference after the nomination and assignment of NHRI and NPM’s members.
March 22: Legal aid round table and torture prevention.
March 28: Conference on torture prevention and law (65).
June 26: Launching event for the policy paper on Torture - Enforcing Lebanon’s commitment to preventing torture.
June 24: Conference titled “Torture in Lebanon between law and implementation” in collaboration with Tripoli Bar Association.

June 25: Position Paper by 8 organizations about forced deportations to Syria.
June 28: Press conference on the incident of an ISF member assaulting Rida Azar, a member of National Preventive Mechanism.

February 15: “Guidelines on the research of Enforced Disappearances” with FEMED.

March 8: International women's day press release: Highlighting women rights’ violations in Lebanon.
B- Media campaigns:

This includes various posts on several social media platforms for the following purposes: hate speech awareness, violence awareness, action call, civil society support, event coverage, advocacy, highlighting Human Rights, denouncing Human Rights’ violations, event invitations, and providing legal information.

The posts include sharing press releases by other NGOs, sharing legal information, press releases on CLDH’s events and coverages, and statements to denounce human rights’ violations.

Below are some examples of social media posts.

1- Social media statements on International days: (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)

- June 26: International day for the support of victims of torture
- June 20: World refugee day
- August 20: World humanitarian day
- August 30: International day of the victims of enforced disappearances
- September 10: World suicide prevention day
- September 15: World democracy day
- September 21: World peace day
- December 10: International human rights day

- February 20: World day of social justice
- March 8: International women’s day
July 10: NGOs press release against discrimination towards Syrian refugees.

July 30: Press release supporting freedom of expression with Lebanese band “Mashrou Leila”.

July 29: Call for further investigations on torture after two Parliament members publicly shared intel on torture in Lebanese detention centers.

October 18: Statement supporting protesters with legal aid and providing legal aid hotline in case of any arrest.


October 23: Denouncing ISF and LAF’s forced trial and attacks on protesters in order to stop them from closing roads and demonstrating.

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

November 8: Press release on Students’ freedom of expression during Lebanon’s uprising.

2- Some examples of other posts:

2019

July 10:
NGOs press release against discrimination towards Syrian refugees.

July 30:
Press release supporting freedom of expression with Lebanese band “Mashrou Leila”.

July 29:
Call for further investigations on torture after two Parliament members publicly shared intel on torture in Lebanese detention centers.

October 18:
Statement supporting protesters with legal aid and providing legal aid hotline in case of any arrest.

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

October 23:
Denouncing ISF and LAF’s forced trial and attacks on protesters in order to stop them from closing roads and demonstrating.

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

November 8:
Press release on Students' freedom of expression during Lebanon’s uprising.
February 26: Invitation to court session to investigate on the case of the victim of torture, Hassan Al Dika, who passed away under torture prosecutions. It was the first time that law (65) was used by the Lebanese government to criminalize torture.
Facebook Page Likes: 6,066 likes

Twitter Followers: 1,311 Followers

Instagram Followers: 420 followers

2019 Facebook Page Reach 1,063 average organic performance
C- Human rights monitoring:

Human Rights’ weekly development brief:
This includes daily updates around human rights on the local, regional, and International level. The weekly brief is shared with several partners and donors every Monday of each week.

CLDH has also been briefing the human rights’ developments during the Lebanese uprising since October 17, 2019. This includes tracking and documenting daily developments and denouncing human rights’ violations on social media.

REPORTS:
This includes around 40 reports that CLDH conducted since 1997 around gross human rights’ violations in Lebanon. The topics include: maltreatment in detention centers, torture developments in accordance to law (65), enforced disappearances, death penalties, torture prosecutions at the ministry of defense,

www.rightsobserver.org/publication
A- Capacity building trainings for public members:

6 and 7 November:
Training and capacity building around human rights’ topics between local laws and international treaties.

1 and 2 February:
Life Skills and Life Coaching training for 25 young community members from Beqaa’ Region.

10, 11, 12, 13 February:
Training of trainers on human rights topics and local laws.

April:
- Training and capacity building around human rights’ topics between local laws and international treaties.
- Trainings for 150 Focal points of the Syrian Refugees on facilitation skills, residency and raids.
B- Public support network:

9 and 10 October, 2019:
Capacity building training for police officers and investigators in Beqaa' region on torture and gender-based violence in partnership with KAFA and OXFAM.

March 4, 2020:
Awareness session on freedom of speech and torture with "House of Peace".

C- Public awareness sessions:

July 18, 2019:
Ziad Itani’s Play about torture "W Ma Tallet Colette".

2019:
100 awareness sessions for Syrian Refugees in North Beqaa on civil documents, raids and residency.
### NASSIM REHABILITATION CENTER:

#### Number of supported beneficiaries over the years

![Graph showing number of beneficiaries over the years]

#### Number of supported beneficiaries categorized by Gender

![Bar chart showing male, female, and LGBTQ+ beneficiaries by year]

#### Number of supported beneficiaries categorized by Nationalities

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SUCCESS STORIES OF NASSIM CENTER:

**Ben #431:**

In September 2017, Beneficiary #431 who was suffering from PTSD due to severe psychological and physical torture after being detained twice in Syria, visited Nassim Rehabilitation center for the first time. When he first arrived to Nassim, he was having suicidal thoughts, and even had prepared a noose to hang himself, and poison to resort to, if he found himself unable to use the noose. He says that at the time all he could think about was what had happened to him, and how that had wrecked his life. He had no relationship with his children, and he blamed his wife for everything bad happening to them in Lebanon. Ever since September 2017, he sees the psychotherapist and the physiotherapist on a weekly basis, he consults the general practitioner whenever necessary, and he also benefited from social support through the social worker, and social assistance through rent, and other commodities.

A few months after he came to Nassim, he enrolled all of his children in public school, to have them near him and because he felt motivated enough to be their father. He said that Nassim Center helped him drive out the black thoughts and induced his motivation. He started working as a garlic peeler, whereby he peeled garlic and sold them to restaurants near-by. He spent a lot of time working, despite his physical pain, to provide for his children and support their education.

Nassim Center also assisted legally through CLDH in-house lawyer. He understood the simplicity of having a legal residency in Lebanon since he is married to a Lebanese woman, and all the legal processes were handled by the lawyers at CLDH. Now, he has a legal residency, and his children are all registered. Today, he is a survivor of torture, yet he seeks a stable job in order to find a permanent solution for his financial situation.

**Ben #405:**

This beneficiary is a Syrian- Palestinian man who was subjected to severe physical and psychological torture by the Syrian regime until his release via amnesty, 10 years later. He then fled the war after he lost his granddaughter in the Syrian war and arrived to Lebanon where he was kidnapped and taken back to Syria. He was tortured again for 57 days for the purpose of investigating what he was doing in Lebanon. Meanwhile, his wife was also detained, tortured and interrogated about her husband’s activity. After their release in 2013, they came back to Lebanon and got settled in Shatila.

When he first came to Nassim Center he had a deteriorated image of himself, felt that the 10 years spent in detention made him become an angry, broken and negative person. He had lost hope of regaining his dignity and humanity. From May 2017 until April 2019 he saw the psychotherapist and the physiotherapist on a weekly basis, he consulted the general practitioner whenever necessary and he also benefited from social support through the social worker, and social assistance to cover rent, medical shoes for his wife and other commodities.

A few months after he came to Nassim, he was able to drive out the black thoughts, became motivated in finding a job and started volunteering with his wife. He would spend his free time creating art crafts at home to decorate his house.
The closure for therapy was done in July 2018 after ensuring a stable mental health, even though he had still been receiving threats. He was feeling calm and had started to adapt to his life, having accepted the fact that he might never be resettled in a safer country because of his Palestinian origin.

In August 2018, he was attacked by two men in an alley as he was walking back from the pastry shop. They hit him and tried to put him in a car. He managed to escape but collapsed in the middle of the road from a cardiac attack which was due to the incident. He underwent a heart surgery and needed a couple of months to get back on his feet.

After this incident, he came back to the center from October till December 2019 for a couple of follow up psychological sessions. He showed signs of relapse as the attack made him relive the trauma.

In the meanwhile, he met with an Italian organization that started working on his resettlement and his family’s. In July 2019, they were resettled in France; a dream he’d never thought would come true.

*NASSIM*’s Hotline number: 79/171 272
Legal Services:

Number of lawyers in 2020:

11 Lawyers

Vulnerable groups supported by the legal team:

- Migrant domestic workers
- LGBTQ+
- Refugees
- Asylum seekers
- Syrian refugees
- Former detainees
- Vulnerable inmates

Legal assistance covering years 2016 to 2019

Nationalities by Gender:

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<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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Total Number of Cases: 1569
Accusations of Females
(Either Released or Transferred to GSO)

Accusations of Males
(Either Released or Transferred to GSO)
SUCCESS STORIES
* Names of beneficiaries have been changed due to confidentiality reasons.

1- **Nawal**, an Ethiopian migrant domestic worker, gave birth to twins and fled from the hospital since she could not pay the expenses, therefore ISF arrested her on 28/04/2017 for human trafficking and for selling the newborns. Nawal was transferred to Qobbeh Women prison, where CLDH met her during one of their field visits to Women prison and discussed the case. Samira was being arbitrary detained and wrongfully prosecuted therefore CLDH’s lawyer checked on the status of her case, the file located at the accusation chamber the judge found her innocent of Human trafficking but she got indicted of illegal residence. CLDH’s legal team prepared and submitted a power of attorney which allowed them to act as legal representatives on her behalf; The file was transferred to misdemeanor court after one and half year of detention waiting for trial, the lawyer in charge of the case attended her session and the judge closed the trial and issued her verdict on the same day, she was sentenced to five hundred thousand LBP fine.
CLDH sent the summary of her sentence to prison, submitted a request to the district attorney to order the GSO not to deport her without her children, as result the judge accepted CLDH’s request and ordered GSO to transfer her to Caritas, to rejoin the children. Meanwhile CLDH started a fundraising campaign so a plane ticket could be bought to her. Nawal arrived safely at home with her twins.

2- **Najib**, Lebanese, date of his detention, 16/6/2015, with 19 verdicts accused of theft. He stole to treat his daughter who was suffering from growth deficiency which needed treatment for two years. CLDH’s legal team assisted him to get a concurrent sentence, which means to merge all of his verdicts into one sentence: instead of implementing 19 years in total he would serve the highest verdict which was four years. After a long administrative procedure of collecting certified verdicts and statements from multiple courts, CLDH was able to submit his request the judge approved and issue a concurrent sentence. However, it turned out that a new warrant emerged while running a background check, CLDH checked on the status of the file at court, and it turned out that the judge released him without a bail-in this case however the clerk did not send the release order. As a result, the legal team took a copy of the file order and delivered it to the prison, and he got released.

3- **Karim**, a Syrian refugee, got arrested on drugs consumption charges from 05/09/2018, the judge granted him a release on bail the same month, however, he spent two additional years because he couldn’t afford bail which was one hundred thousand LBP. By the time he managed to collect the amount he had no relatives outside the prison to bail him meaning to pay his bail at court. During CLDH’s field visit to Qobbeh prison the director referred his case to us, we checked on the status of the file and verified the information of his release, therefore we paid his bail and he got a release in April 2020, after waiting for two years for someone to bail him out on drugs consumption charges. “
Walk-in assistance covering years 2016 to 2019

Nationalities by Gender:

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<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Cases: 401
CASES RESULTS BY GENDER

**MALE RESULTS**

- 52.0% Closed, referred him/her to another lawyer/NGO
- 19.0% Closed, referred him/her to another NGO
- 25.3% Closed, gave him/her advice on his/her case
- 2.2% Closed, no legal ground for intervention
- 88.0% Ongoing
- 88.0% Closed, case ended positively

**FEMALE RESULTS**

- 51.5% Closed, referred him/her to another lawyer/NGO
- 6.4% Closed, referred him/her to another NGO
- 8.2% Closed, gave him/her advice on his/her case
- 31.0% Closed, no legal ground for intervention
- 53.0% Ongoing
- 115.0% Closed, case ended positively