



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

24 - 30 APRIL, 2023



UNDEF
The United Nations
Democracy Fund



FNUD
Fonds des
Nations Unies
pour la démocratie



Human Rights are inherent to all human beings, regardless of the nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language or any other status without discrimination. These rights are all universal, inalienable, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

The articles shared in this brief are the liability of their respective news outlets and do not reflect the views of CLDH.



LEBANON

Monday
24 April 2023

Amnesty International Urges Lebanese Authorities to Halt Unlawful Deportations of Syrian Refugees

Lebanese authorities must immediately stop forcibly deporting refugees back to Syria, Amnesty International said today, amid fears that these individuals are at risk of torture or persecution at the hands of the Syrian government upon return. Last week, the Lebanese Armed Forces raided houses occupied by Syrian families in different locations across the country, including Bourj Hammoud in Beirut, and deported to Syria dozens of refugees who had entered the country irregularly or held expired residency cards. "It is extremely alarming to see the army deciding the fate of refugees, without respecting due process or allowing those facing deportation to challenge their removal in court or seek protection," said Aya Majzoub, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa. "Lebanon is obligated under the customary international law principle of non-refoulement not to return anyone to a country where they would face a threat of torture or persecution." Amnesty International and other rights groups have documented how refugees who returned to Syria faced grave human rights violations, including torture and enforced disappearance, at the hands of the Syrian government.

Wednesday
26 April 2023

Lebanon Launches Grant Programme To Support Persons With Disabilities

Lebanon has launched a social grant program that aims to provide the country's differently-abled people with direct economic support. At least 20,000 people with disabilities will receive a monthly allowance of \$40 each for 12 months under the National Disability Allowance (NDA) program, which was jointly launched by Lebanon's Ministry of Social Affairs, the UNICEF, and the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNICEF said in a statement. "The NDA aims to support individuals with disabilities to face the extra cost of disability and facilitate their access to key services. While all persons with disabilities would ultimately be eligible to receive the NDA, youth aged between 18-28 years are prioritized during the first roll-out to support them in their transition to higher education or to joining the labor market," it added.

Thursday
27 April 2023

Lebanon Inflation Hits 264% in March as Currency Devaluation Bites

Inflation in Lebanon hit an annual rate of about 264 percent in March as the Lebanese pound continued to lose value on the parallel and official markets since it was devalued by 90 percent at the start of February. Hyperinflation continued for the 33rd consecutive month, led by soaring communication, alcoholic beverage, and tobacco costs, restaurant and hotel prices, health, as well as rising food prices and water and energy rates, the Central Administration of Statistics' Consumer Price Index (CPI) showed. The CPI increased by about 33 percent from February 2023. Inflation had begun to decline after hitting 171 percent last year, the highest in nearly four decades, and 155 percent in 2021. Lebanon's central bank devalued the pound/lira in early February, with the official exchange rate changing to 15,000 to the US dollar, compared with the peg in place since 1997 of 1,507.50 to the greenback. This led to a surge in consumer prices in March and the Lebanese pound trading in the parallel market as much as 140,000 to the dollar earlier this month.

Anti-Syrian Racism on the Rise in Lebanon as Authorities Deport Refugees

A wave of anti-Syrian sentiment erupted in Lebanon following revelations that the Lebanese army deported around fifty Syrians back to their country last month as part of an apparent security crackdown. At least one of the deported Syrians, a defected army officer, has been arrested by Syrian regime authorities upon return where his relatives fear he is being tortured. The Lebanese army reportedly conducted raids across Lebanon and set up checkpoints to check the residency status of Syrians. "We believe it's an issue of human rights and violation of the legally binding commitments that Lebanon previously made in the Universal Declaration of human rights and Convention Against Torture," Fadel Fakhri, executive director of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights, said to TNA.

Friday
28 April 2023

Lebanese Officer Indicted for Torture Death of Syrian Refugee Back on the Job

Four of the five Lebanese State Security officers indicted by a military court last November for the in-custody torture death of Syrian refugee Bashar Abdul Saud were released on bail this month, one of whom is now back at work, while the victim's family and lawyer have been pressured to drop their complaint. Abdul Saud, a 30-year-old Syrian refugee and a father of three, was detained in Beirut's Shatila refugee camp in August 2022 by the local Palestinian security apparatus and handed over to Lebanese State Security officers. Hours later, he was dead. A video of his body posted online showing clear signs of torture sparked an outcry and spurred an investigation that led to the detention last September of five officers who were indicted by a military judge in November. At least one of the indicted officers released after paying a 300 million Lebanese pound (\$3,086) bail, Captain Hamza Khalil Ibrahim—son of the former head of the military court, Brigadier General Khalil Ibrahim—is now back on the job. "This is a lack of accountability at the administrative and institutional level," Fadel Fakhri, Executive Director of the Lebanese Center For Human Rights (CLDH) said. "State Security should have kept the person from going back to work until the investigation is done."

Saturday and Sunday
29 and 30 April 2023

The Fight for Justice Continues for Beirut Blast's Victims

"We will not be bored." Under this slogan, several families of the victims of the fire brigade moved in two directions: the first towards the Palace of Justice, holding up pictures of their children. The second is towards the Beirut Bar Association. In Adlieh, a delegation from the families met the head of the Supreme Judicial Council, Judge Suhail Abboud. There are no firm or decisive promises in resolving the issue and launching its train. This means that the file is still in the circle of internal judicial conflict on the one hand and its resistance to achieving its sovereignty and independence from the interference of the political authority on the other hand. Despite this, lawyer Ralph Tannous relies on the Lebanese judiciary, calling on the Supreme Judicial Council to quickly resolve the outstanding legal problem between the Public Prosecution Office and Judge Tarek Bitar so that the latter can accomplish his mission and complete his investigations, provided that the Public Prosecution then conducts its legal review in preparation for issuing the decision. William Noun stressed that "the families did not demand, even once, to know what is happening in the investigation and its confidentiality, but rather "we have the right to know the date of the sessions and the time of the judiciary's work and why the lawsuits against some people withdrew a year ago, and the investigation stopped. We blame some judges." He called Judge Bitar to "clarify his position."

President of the Beirut Bar Association Sponsors Festival on Homophobia

The president of the Beirut Bar Association Nader Gaspard sponsored a festival on homophobia at the Bar's headquarters last Wednesday, to present lawyer Salman Barakat's book entitled "The Crime of Homosexuality." For an hour, the Bar was the host to incitement against the LGBTQI+ community, with an audience consisting exclusively of clerics and supporters of the issue, without any discussion of the rights of homosexuals in Lebanon.