



Beirut, April 26, 2023.

**The Beirut Bar Association Council,**

**Represented by the Head of the Beirut Bar Association Nader Gaspar,**

**Subject:** A letter by the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) to the Beirut Bar Association Council regarding the council's recent decisions

The Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) is a non-profit, non-political Lebanese local organization founded in Beirut in 2006. It is a subsidiary of the French Lebanese Association SOLIDA (Support for Lebanese Arbitrarily Detained), active since 1996 in the field of combating arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and impunity from punishment and from committing gross violations of human rights.

CLDH is a founding member of the European-Mediterranean Federation Against Enforced Disappearances (FEMED), a member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Council (EMHRN), a member of the SOS Torture Network of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). The center also publishes research related to various topics, aiming to improve the human rights situation in the country.

Since its establishment in 1919, the Bar Association carried the slogan of protecting and preserving rights. The legal profession has indeed a fundamental role in ensuring the application of laws and international treaties, as well as defending rights and freedoms without any discrimination.

Based on the hierarchy of laws, international treaties and agreements signed by Lebanon override national laws. As for freedom of expression, this right is enshrined in

- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights included in the preamble of the Lebanese Constitution;
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Lebanon signed in 1966;
- the Arab Charter on Human Rights that Lebanon ratified in 2011, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, to which Lebanon acceded according to Law 33/2008;
- and the Lebanese Constitution.

Furthermore, the principle of equality was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially in Article 7 which stipulates the duty to protect everyone from any discrimination or incitement to discrimination.

Despite the aforementioned, the Council of the Beirut Bar Association has taken several decisions that violate freedoms and human rights. First, the Bar Association summoned a number of lawyers due to their objection to its decision issued on March 3, 2023, which amended the articles regulating the relationship between lawyers and media outlets. Second, the Bar Association signed and promoted a book entitled "The Crime of Homosexuality in Lebanese Law and Monotheistic Religions".



Based on the foregoing, the Lebanese Center for Human Rights condemns the summoning of lawyers as this decision violates their freedom of expression and subjects them to further scrutiny and censorship. CLDH also refutes turning the Bar Association into a platform for oppression and discrimination.

Accordingly, we call on the Beirut Bar association to retract its decision and to focus on the protection and preservation of freedoms rather than legislating their violation.

Wadih El Asmar

President of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights

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