

## **Cedar Centre for Legal Studies Commemorates Human Rights Day: A Call to Uphold Dignity and Equality**

Lebanon, 10 December 2023 – As the world prepares to celebrate Human Rights Day on December 10th, Cedar Centre stands committed to the principles of justice, equality, and the inherent dignity of every individual. Cedar Centre reaffirms its commitment to defending and protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people, regardless of race, sex, religion or background. The Cedar Centre launches this year's theme on “the right to life and the right not to be subjected to torture”, to build a just and inclusive society.

This year marks Human Rights Day, and our Arab world is witnessing genocide committed by Israel against the Palestinian people since 7 October in Gaza and mass violations in the West Bank. On this day, let us remember that the pursuit of equality, justice and freedom is an ongoing collective responsibility. Our responsibility as the Cedar Centre is reflected this year through our daily work in Lebanon to spread the culture of justice, basic rights and freedoms, and through our positions in supporting the right of the Palestinian people to live in dignity and their right to liberation, freedom and self-determination.

Cedar Centre received this year about 20 cases of torture in Lebanon. The Legal section has submitted most of these cases to the local courts but to no avail. In addition, the Cedar Centre monitored the ongoing trial of those accused of committing torture against the victim Bashar Abed Saoud, who died under torture. Finally, we received this year 30 cases of refoulment for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, which is considered a clear violation for article 3 of the UN convention against torture. Cedar Centre submitted the cases to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and through local legal frameworks, succeeded in stopping the forced return to Syria of most of these cases.

We recall the [recommendations issued](#) by the UN Committee against torture after the first review by the UN committee. The committee urged the Lebanese authorities to provide the detainees with basic safeguards during the preliminary investigations. The Code of Criminal Procedure guarantees the rights of detainees prior to initiation of any investigations concerning them. Both article 32, which provides for the preliminary investigation of in flagrante offences, and article 47, which provides for the preliminary investigation of offences falling outside the in flagrante category, accord detainees fundamental safeguards pending the investigations.

For occupied territory in Palestine, we recall the [recent UN experts'](#) call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people. The grave violations committed by Israel against Palestinians in the aftermath of 7 October, particularly in Gaza, point to a genocide in the making. They illustrated evidence of increasing genocidal incitement, overt intent to “destroy the Palestinian people under occupation”, loud calls for a ‘second Nakba’ in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, and the use of powerful weaponry with inherently indiscriminate impacts, resulting in a colossal death toll and destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure.

Cedar Centre for Legal Studies expresses commitment that Human Rights Day serves as a critical moment to reflect on our shared responsibility to uphold the principles enshrined in the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As we face global challenges, we remains steadfast in its dedication to promoting human rights, fostering inclusivity, and advocating for positive change.

Join us in marking Human Rights Day by engaging in discussions, spreading awareness on social media using the hashtag #HumanRightsDay2023.

Together, let us continue to work towards a world where human rights are universally respected, protected, and upheld.

## **About us**

Cedar Center for Legal Studies is a civil, non-profit company, established in Lebanon in 2013 and registered with No. 609. It is an independent, non-sectarian center and is not affiliated with any political parties. It is concerned with spreading the culture of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

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