



ACTIVITY REPORT

2023

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Vision & Mission



VISION

Lebanon is a country that respects the rights of its citizens and residents through democracy, social justice, human rights and the rule of law.

Conducting studies and legal research on topics related to human rights, especially the situation of prisons and detention places and enforced disappearance, in Lebanon and their compatibility with the Lebanese laws and international conventions and determine which laws/articles to be amended in the light of international treaties.

MISSION

At Cedar Centre for Legal Studies, our mission is to serve as a beacon of legal enlightenment and advocacy. Committed to the pursuit of justice, we aim to elevate the understanding and application of legal principles, with a focus on fostering a society where the rule of law is not just an abstract concept but a lived reality.

THEMATIC UNITS

1. Human Rights, Social Justice, and Legal Empowerment Unit
2. Mediation, Arbitration, and Alternative Dispute Resolution Unit
3. Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) and Rehabilitation for Victims of Torture Unit
4. Comparative Legal Systems and Global Governance Unit

Executive Summary

Cedar Centre for Legal Studies “CCLS” started working on a project from 15 November 2022 and ended the project on 31 December 2023.

The initial project funded by Medico and was on 'Raise Awareness of the Dangers of Illegal Migration and Support Survivors and Potential Migrants via Death Boats. In June 2023, started working as well on providing legal assistance and advocacy for those impacted by unlawful forced deportations of Syrians from Lebanon.

In addition to the CLDH project, which began in September 2023 and will continue until May 2024, the initiative aims to provide legal assistance to victims of torture and establish a rehabilitation center to support their recovery.

During the implementation of the projects, CCLS worked on the following activities:

- Pleading, defending the victims before the local judiciary and providing legal consultations,
- Documentation and submission to the UN related special procedures,
- Human rights advocacy and networking with local and international NGOs,
- Raising the issue with the media.



MEDICO PROJECT ACTIVITIES

1. Legal Representation and Counseling:

30+ CASES

of irregular migration were represented by CCLS in Lebanese courts.

70+

INDIVIDUALS

Received legal consultations by CCLS, including survivors of shipwrecks and those detained or at risk of deportation.

Cases of Migration:

01

Mystery Surrounds
Fate of 85
Migrants in
Cypriot Waters

02

A new case at risk of
extradition to Syria

03

A Syrian refugee is at
risk of extradition
from Lebanon to Syria

04

A defected Syrian
officer is at risk of
extradition from
Lebanon to Syria

05

Two Syrian refugees
are at risk of
extradition from
Lebanon to Syria

06

Migrants from
Lebanon abducted in
Libya

Advocacy & Documentation:

91 CASES

Of human rights violations, including deportations and irregular migration, were submitted by CCLS to UN Special Procedures and OHCHR.

MEDIA

Media campaigns and advocacy efforts significantly reduced deportations of Syrian refugees and highlighted risks to returnees.

Documentation and Submission to the UN related special procedures

Overall, Cedar Centre has submitted 91 cases to the UN special procedures and to the UNHCR.

In focus: Mystery Surrounds Fate of 85 Migrants in Cypriot Waters:

On 11 December 2023, a group of 85 people, including 50 women and children, embarked on an irregular journey from Lebanon via boat. The majority are Syrians, with others being Lebanese. As reported by the families, the migrants had reached Cypriot territorial waters on 12 December 2023, distressingly, no further information has emerged regarding their whereabouts.

Families suspect that the individuals were arrested by Cypriot authorities. Information from an organization indicate their detention in Cyprus. Some families' members in Cyprus have inquired about the missing persons with the Cypriot authorities, but to no avail.

In a bid to ascertain the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared, on 31 December 2023 Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS) submitted a list of 75 from among 85 individuals to the Working Group of Enforced Disappearance. We urgently implore Cypriot authorities and neighboring countries to transparently disclose any information regarding the whereabouts of these missing individuals. The families are desperate for answers, and time is of the essence.

Case's [link](#)



HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL NGOS

Organizing the CommemorAction day activities

On 6 February 2023, the Cedar Centre organized a sit-in for the families of shipwreck victims in Lebanon. The sit-in took place at Tripoli Pilot Station and symbolized solidarity with survivors and the families of victims, particularly in light of the lack of recognition from Lebanese authorities for those affected by shipwrecks.

Later on the same day, in Tripoli, the Cedar Centre organized a press conference in collaboration with several NGOs, including AlarmPhone, CLDH, and MENA Rights Group. At the conclusion of the press conference, a joint statement was read out. This statement, initiated by the Cedar Centre and endorsed by local and international NGOs, garnered attention from both Lebanese and international media, which quoted and covered both the press conference and the joint statement.



Participating in the EuroMed Workshop in Beirut

On 3 April 2023, Mohammad Sablough and Saadeddine Shatila from the Cedar Centre participated in the EuroMed workshop held in Beirut. The workshop aimed to enhance networking and cooperation among Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) dedicated to safeguarding the rights of migrants and refugees in Lebanon. The focus was on developing awareness, and implementing communication activities.

ROUNDTABLE

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Cedar Centre organized a roundtable on 26 June 2023. The panel featured speakers from Cedar Centre, HRW, Legal Agenda, and CLDH. In addition to the main speakers, other participants included the former head of the Bar Association in Tripoli, Me. Mohamed Al-Murad; Mr. Zein Ayoub, representative of the OHCHR in Beirut; the former head of the Sanctions Reduction Committee in Lebanon, Judge Hamza Sharaf Al-Din; Me. Edmond Medlej, a representative of the Lebanese National Commission for Human Rights in Lebanon; and representatives from the British and Norwegian embassies, local and international human rights organizations, and lawyers.



The roundtable concluded with recommendations of a joint press release, which was issued in the same day. The press release emphasized the unlawfulness of extradition cases involving Syrian refugees from Lebanon to Syria. It also addressed the case of a Syrian refugee “Bashar AbdelSaoud who was killed under torture during investigations, stressing the need to prosecute the accused, who were members of the Lebanese State Security Service.

RAISING THE ISSUE WITH THE MEDIA

Throughout the project implementation, Cedar Centre's work received coverage from various media and news platforms, with quotes and interviews. The media outlets that covered our work include those in Arabic (Al Hurra, Independent Arabia, Legal Agenda, Al Mayadeen TV), English (Public Source, Al Hadath Syria, AP, L'Orient Today, Alarmphone), French (Le Orient le Jour, France 2), and German (Medico International) languages."

Overall, Cedar Centre has brought numerous cases to the media, resulting in positive impacts. An illustrative example is the case of individuals arrested by the TBZ militia in Libya. Following their arrests in August 2023, the centre diligently worked to spotlight their situations through both Arab and English media outlets. Initially, the militia demanded ransom for the release of each individual. However, through the publication of articles outlining their cases and active lobbying within the international community, the detainees were ultimately released without any ransom being made.

- 01 After they were rescued from sinking in Lebanon. Accusations of handing over Syrian refugees to "death"
- 02 La migration clandestine se confirme malgré les naufrages meurtriers de 2022
- 03 Interview in the program "With the Utmost Sincerity"
- 04 Conference titled: "Between the bitter reality and the bass of fate, the irregular migration"
- 05 Intercepted at Sea: Anatomy of a Pullback

- 06 [A wave of mass immigration threatens the Lebanese fabric](#)
- 07 [CommemorAction Day](#)
- 08 ["No transparent investigations" into the sinking of the death boat of last April: "dangerous" information about the Indian submarine mission is in the custody of the judiciary](#)
- 09 [Death Boats: Borders Kill and Justice Missing/ Joint press release of 6th Feb](#)
- 10 [Intercepted at Sea: The Deadly Reality of Border Control](#)
- 11 [coverage of 6th Feb Press Conference](#)
- 12 [Lebanon remembers the victims of irregular migration... 182 victims in one year](#)
- 13 [Liban, les naufragés de la crise](#)
- 14 [Saved from death at sea, Syrian refugees face deportation](#)
- 15 [Death boats \(Doumentary\)](#)
- 16 [تسليم بيانات اللاجئين السوريين للأمن اللبناني.. حقوقيون يدقون ناقوس الخطر](#)
- 17 [مخاوف من ترحيل معارضين سوريين من لبنان إلى بلدهم؟](#)
- 18 [من قرار ترحيل موقوف سوري معارض إلى إخلاء سبيل الببيري رجل النزاهة والعدل](#)
- 19 [ركاب القارب اللبناني العالقون في ليبيا.. سيناريوهات مرعبة ومصير مجهول](#)
- 20 [وسط غموض محيط بمصيرهم.. مصدر أمني ليبي يكشف تفاصيل متعلقة بقارب المهاجرين اللبناني](#)
- 21 [Libyan militants release 80 of 110 migrants departing Lebanon](#)

- 22 [مهاجرون لبنانيون و سوريين يفعون في أيدي قراصنة ليبين قراية حدود مالطا واهاليهم يطالبون باعادتهم](#)
- 23 [Libyan militants take captive 110 migrants departing Lebanon, demand ransom](#)
- 24 [110 people escaping Lebanon abducted to Libya!](#)
- 25 [«Μεγάλος αριθμός Σύρων προσφύγων κατευθύνεται στην Κύπρο» - Οι πληροφορίες του ΥΠΕΣ](#)
- 26 [Συναγερμός για μαζική κάθοδο μεταναστών από τον Λίβανο](#)
- 27 [From racketeering to sexual violence: Migrants' ordeal at Lebanon-Syria border](#)
- 28 [In Wadi Khaled, smuggling is 'passed down from father to son](#)
- 29 [هل يبدأ مواسم "قوارب الموت"؟](#)
- 30 [جراقة المشرق.. رحلة الموت بحثا عن الحياة](#)
- 31 [85 مهاجراً مجهول المصير منذ أسبوعين المركب انطلق من لبنان وفُقد الاتصال به بعد يوم](#)
- 32 [على متنه 85 شخصاً.. مصير مجهول يحبط بركاب قارب هجرة لبنانيّ](#)
- 33 [كأن البحر انشق وابتلعه".. مصير مجهول لقارب هجرة لبناني يحمل العشرات](#)
- 34 [قارب مهاجرين انطلق من لبنان وضاع في المتوسط](#)

Human Rights Networking and **Media Engagement:**

- Collaborated with local and international NGOs to amplify advocacy, including organizing CommemorAction Day and engaging with media outlets in Arabic, English, French, and German.
- Participated in regional workshops and roundtables, such as the EuroMed workshop and the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

Support for **Shipwreck Survivors:**

- Represented survivors of shipwrecks (April, September, and December 2022) in military and civil courts.
- Advocated for and retrieved identity cards and mobile devices for **21 deported Syrians**, ensuring restoration of personal documentation.

Cooperation Agreement Between CLDH and CEDAR



On 28 september 2023 the General Director of the Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS) Me Mohamad Sablouh, and the Executive Director of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) Mr. Fadl Fakhri, signed a cooperation agreement to establish a rehabilitation center for torture victims, in order to provide medical services of all kinds to victims of torture and their families, in addition to establishing a monitoring center for human rights violations. The rehabilitation center will be in Tripoli, northern Lebanon.



Training Lawyers in Tripoli on Anti-Torture Law and Legal Safeguards

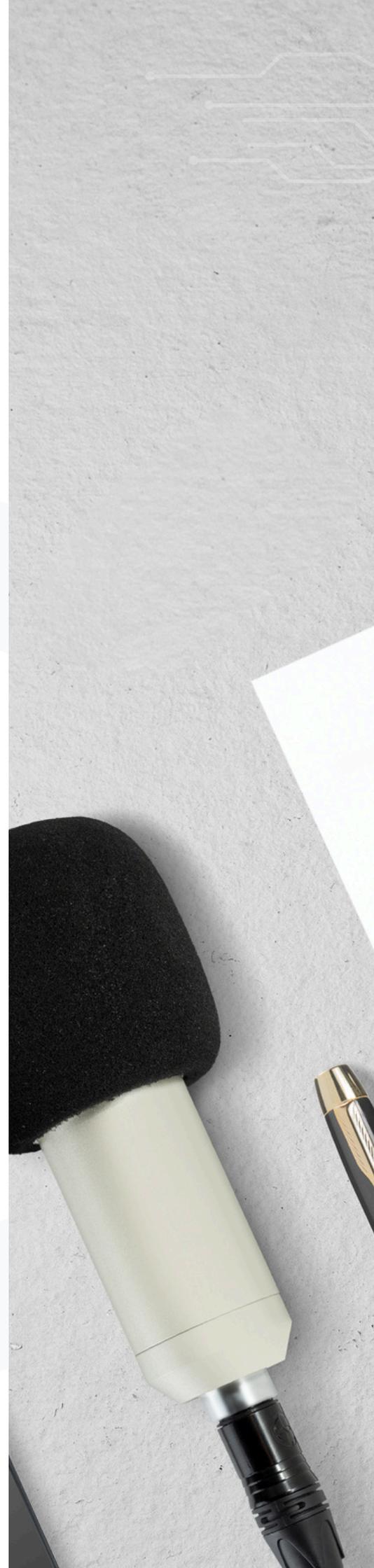


After the first training for lawyers in Tripoli in February 2023, the Lebanese Center for Human Rights and Cedar Centre for Legal Studies held a second session on 21 December 2023. The training focused on Anti-Torture Law No. 65/2017 and Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Twenty lawyers attended, with emphasis placed on documenting torture-related human rights violations. A monitoring platform was launched to report violations via the hotline 81490607, and booklets on the security forces' code of conduct were distributed.



Joint Statements

- Boats of death: Killing borders and lost justice
- Joint Statement by Lebanon CSOs on the situation in occupied Palestine and Lebanon
- Joint Open Letter to the UNHCR in Lebanon
- Call for urgent action concerning the situation in Roumieh prison and other Lebanese detention centres
- Lebanon: 5 years on, no tangible progress in enforcing anti-torture law





key Outcomes

- **Increased Access to Justice:** Legal aid provided to victims of shipwrecks and deportations ensured better representation in court and recovery of personal rights.
- **Advocacy Impact:** Public pressure, including social media campaigns, led to the release of detainees and prevented unlawful deportations.
- **Strengthened Networks:** Partnerships with NGOs and workshops enhanced cooperation for addressing migration and human rights issues in Lebanon and the region.

"We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the generous donors and institutions for their unwavering support and contributions with CEDAR Center for legal studies".



medico international



This report represents the views of CEDAR and might not necessarily reflect CLDH or MEDICO



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