



# ACTIVITY REPORT

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2024

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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 2023 and ended the project on 14 November 2024.

The project funded by Medico and TDH(Germany) was on “Legal empowerment and awareness-raising for Syrians and Lebanese in the context of migration”. The goal was to contribute for improved access of young adults and families in the context of migration to legal counselling and support to access their rights.

In addition to the CLDH project, which ran from September 2023 to May 2024, the initiative provided legal assistance to victims of torture and enforced disappearance and established a rehabilitation center in December 2024 in Tripoli, Lebanon, to support their recovery.

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

- **Legal Support:** Assisting individuals impacted by dangerous boat journeys to Europe, including jurisdictional issues and survivor support.
- **Post-Failed Escape Assistance:** Supporting Lebanese and Syrians facing imprisonment or deportation, as well as families seeking missing loved ones.
- **Shipwreck Cases:** Filing complaints, seeking accountability, and clarifying legal responsibilities for shipwreck incidents.
- **Syrian Legal Support:** Addressing detention, torture, deportation, and discrimination cases, including payment of court fees and file follow-ups.
- **Risk Awareness:** Informing individuals about the dangers of unseaworthy boat crossings, particularly targeting families and young adults.



# MEDICO & TDH PROJECT **ACTIVITIES**

**Legal counselling for Syrians and  
Lebanese in context of migration**

**239 CASES**

monitored by CCLS, and overturned over  
50 refoulement decisions

**33**

**INDIVIDUALS**

were deported, one female still  
disappeared in Syria; after the fall of Al  
Assad regime.

## Legal aid hotline:

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The legal aid telephone was established by the beginning of project. Most of the cases that CCLS worked on were received by legal aid hotline. Moreover, the hotline has become known with Syrians community.



# Advocacy & Documentation:

## 51 CASES

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

## PUBLIC EVENTS

CCLS organized three planned public events as part of its project. The first two were successfully held in February and June 2024. The final event, initially scheduled for the fall of 2024, was cancelled due to the Israeli war against Lebanon.

## Documentation and Submission to the UN related special procedures

Overall, Cedar Centre has submitted 51 cases to the UN special procedures and to the UNHCR.

01

Urgent Action Needed to Prevent Extradition of Yassin Al Eter



02

A Palestinian Refugee Faces the Risk of Deportation to Syria



03

Lebanese Authorities Should Not Deport Jumaa Laheeb



Submitted contribution to the UN on the phenomenon of missing migrants in the Mediterranean!



### **In focus: Lebanese Authorities Should Not Deport Jumaa Laheeb**

The Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS) urgently brings to light the case of Jumaa Mohammad Laheeb, a Syrian researcher affiliated with the Research and Studies Department of the opposition Syrian Future Movement. On 28 November 2011, he arrived in Lebanon with his family. However, recent developments on 06 March 2024 have seen the issuance of a decision by the Lebanese General Security to deport him and his family back to Syria, exposing them to severe risks under the Syrian authorities. On 15 March 2024, an officer of the General Directorate of General Security called Mr Laheeb to inform him, that his file will be reconsidered by the General Directorate of General Security. Case [link](#).

# REPORT



on 18 December 2024, CCLS published a report titled Report on Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Between Discriminatory Policies, Hate Speech and the “Death Boats”. Lebanon’s lack of a national refugee law and failure to ratify the 1951 UN Refugee Convention has led to significant challenges for Syrian refugees, including bureaucratic obstacles, xenophobic rhetoric, and human rights violations. The economic and political crises have worsened the situation, leading to illegal boat escapes and discrimination in the labor market and education. Hate speech and restrictive policies have further marginalized Syrians, with only 20% having valid residency status. The EU-Lebanon Partnership emphasizes the need for safe return and socio-economic inclusion of refugees, but inconsistent policies and violence have turned Lebanon into a transit hub for migrants to Europe. The report calls for international cooperation to improve conditions and reduce illegal migration. Full report [link](#).



# STUDY



The study addresses the challenges and problems people are facing in prisons and detention centres in Lebanon. The study conducted and published by Cedar Centre for Legal Studies presents the reality of prisons in Lebanon in light of the current, political, economic and health crisis. The study raises the question if there are political measures to protect detainees and prisoners in light of these crises. Prisons, in general, are significant places for diseases, especially infectious diseases, due to the high prevalence of risk factors for infection and actual infection. Environmental factors in prison such as unavoidable close contact, excessive overcrowding, poor ventilation and limited access to healthcare services are such aforementioned risk factors.

Full study [link](#).



Inside Roumieh Prison

## 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 , Legal Agenda, infomigrants, BBC, Aljazeera, aaswat, LBC, grandlb, Daraj Media, SBI, Al-modon, almarkazia, Syriadirect, aljumhurria, nowllebanon, Al Araby TV), English (L'Orient Today, Alarmphone, Megaphone), 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. 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.*

# 104

**Interviews  
& articles  
in 2024**

# New Agreement Between CLDH and CEDAR



CLDH and CCLS on 18 December 2024, signed a new agreement Memorandum of Understanding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), for the activities to be conducted under “Quality and sustainable rehabilitation services to Victims of Torture in North Lebanon”

This project aims to ensure sustainable rehabilitation services for torture victims in Tripoli by strengthening CEDAR’s capacity in case management and running a holistic center that takes care of victims of torture through CLDH’s expertise.

This MOU is entered into to govern arrangements between CLDH and CEDAR for executing the exit strategy activities of the “Quality and sustainable rehabilitation services to Victims of Torture in North Lebanon” project, to be carried out by both parties.



# Rehabilitation center for victims of torture



In December 2024, we are proud to announce the opening of a rehabilitation center dedicated to providing comprehensive support to victims of torture. This center will offer a range of specialized services including general practitioner consultations, physiotherapy, psychological support, legal assistance, medicines, medical tests and treatment, aimed at helping survivors heal and rebuild their lives. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive environment where victims can heal physically, emotionally, and socially. We are committed to advocating for their rights, promoting justice, and ensuring that every survivor has access to the resources they need for recovery.



# Advocacy & Documentation:

## 23 CASES OF TORTURE

under Law 65/2017

### DOCUMENTED CASES

The distribution of cases is as follows:

- Gender: 23 cases of males, 0 cases of females.
- Nationalities: 18 Lebanese, 4 Syrians, 1 Egyptian.
- Age Groups:
  - Under 18 years: 2 cases.
  - From 18 to 35 years: 13 cases.
  - From 36 to 50 years: 6 cases.
  - Over 50 years: 2 cases.

## DOCUMENTED CASES under 105/2018

The documented cases under Law 105/2018 on the criminalization of enforced disappearance and submitted to the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances are as follows:

- Gender: 11 males, 1 female.
- Nationalities: 7 Lebanese, 5 Syrians.
  - Age: Under 18: 0 cases.
  - Between 18 and 35: 9 cases.
  - Between 36 and 50: 1 case.
  - Over 50: 2 cases.

## ARTICLE 47 OF THE LEBANESE CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT 2020)

During the period when cases were documented, the center recorded 23 violations of Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The cases are distributed as follows:

- Gender: 20 males, 3 females.
- Nationalities: 5 Lebanese, 10 Syrians, 8 Palestinians.
- Age:
  - Under 18: 0 cases.
  - Between 18 and 35: 15 cases.
  - Between 36 and 50: 7 cases.
  - Over 50: 1 case.

## LEGAL CONSULTATIONS

In addition, Cedar center provided legal consultations and follow-ups, which included legal guidance on cases resulting from arrest, follow-up on requests for cleaning records of previous prisoners, release requests, and more. These cases were distributed across 30 legal consultations and follow-ups.

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



Within the framework of this project, Cedar Center for legal studies (CCLS) in collaboration with the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) organized one training for lawyers, in May 2024, the training included 25 trainees. It dealt on documenting violations, particularly with regard to torture and violations of Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in addition to an introduction to the Istanbul Protocol.



## Cases of enforced disappearance and torture

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# 01

Disappearance of a Syrian in Lebanon Sparks Concern

# 02

Arbitrary Arrest and Torture of Rabih Fadel Zakaria

# 03

The Enforced Disappearance of Mr. Abedullah Al Zohouri

# 04

The Disappearance of M.A after Entering Lebanon

### **In focus: Arbitrary Arrest and Torture of Rabih Fadel Zakaria**

This case study examines the grave injustices faced by Mr. Rabih Fadel Zakaria (ربيع فاضل زكريا), a Lebanese citizen born on 20 February 1983. Mr. Zakaria served in the Lebanese Army for over 18.5 years. His experiences highlight significant human rights violations, including torture, arbitrary detention, and wrongful dismissal. Study [link](#).

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## 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.

# Joint Statements

- Lebanon: Seeking Justice for Migrants
- Seeking Social Justice in Lebanon
- The Lebanese government must urgently and immediately cease the forced deportation of Syrian refugees and adhere to its international legal obligations
- Lebanon must end practices of refoulement and torture
- Rights Groups and Victims' Families Call for International Action in the Beirut Blast Case
- Stop the violence against Syrian refugees 17 civil society organisations condemn the recent escalations against Syrians in Turkey and call for protection
- Enforced Disappearances in Lebanon: A Call for Justice and Accountability
- Joint NGO Letter to UN Member States on the situation in Lebanon: The UN Human Rights Council should urgently convene a special session to establish an international investigative mechanism
- Global Coalition of NGOs Call for Immediate Ceasefire in Lebanon
- Torture to Death: Military Justice Fails to Deliver





# 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**

 **terre des hommes**  
Help for Children in Need



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



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