



Statement by Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS)

UPR Pre-session on Lebanon

Geneva, 27 November 2025

Thank you, Madam/Mr. Chair,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS), an independent organization based in Tripoli, Lebanon, promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. CCLS provides legal aid, documents violations, supports victims of torture, arbitrary detention, and migration-related abuses, and offers rehabilitation services including medical, psychosocial, and physiotherapy support.

On 12 September 2025, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in partnership with the Government of Lebanon and UNDP, organized a national consultation in Beirut. While NGOs were invited to share reflections, the Government's national report was not made available, limiting transparency and meaningful civil society participation.

Today, we focus on three key areas: (1) torture, arbitrary detention, (2) enforced disappearances, and (3) violations against migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.

1. Torture and Arbitrary Detention

Despite Lebanon's Anti-Torture Law No. 65/2017 and the 2020 amendment to Article 47 of the Criminal Procedure Law, torture and ill-treatment remain widespread. Implementation of Article 47 is inconsistent, particularly in cases related to terrorism, collaboration with Israel, or drug trafficking.

Between September 2023¹ and October 2025, CCLS documented 49 cases of torture—all male victims: 41 Lebanese, 7 Syrians, and 1 Egyptian. Victims' ages ranged from 10 under 18, 25 between 18–25, and 17 over 25.

¹ Cedar Centre for Legal Studies, Report on Legal Violations in Lebanon: Torture, Enforced Disappearances, and Violations of Detainees' Rights (September 2023 – May 2024), 10 December 2024, <https://ccls-lebanon.org/torture-enforced-disappearances-and-violations-of-detainees-rights-september-2023-may-2024/> (accessed on 11 July 2025).



All torture complaints under Law 65/2017 were referred to military courts, where no effective investigations were opened, except for the case of Syrian refugee Bashar Abdul-Saud², tortured to death in 2022. The military court downgraded charges and sentenced perpetrators to time served, disregarding forensic evidence. This highlights the lack of independence and accountability in the military justice system, which continues to handle cases that should fall under civilian jurisdiction.

Overcrowding in Lebanese prisons worsens these human rights challenges. According to the Ministry of Justice (April 2025), 67% of prisoners are un-sentenced, and some facilities, such as Roumieh Central Prison, operate at 200% capacity³.

Recommendations – Torture and Arbitrary Detention

1. Amend Law 65/2017 to abolish the statute of limitations, broaden the definition of torture, and ensure all torture cases are heard in regular courts.
2. Publish the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) reports (2010 and 2022) and implement recommendations with transparency and civil society engagement.
3. Submit all overdue reports to UN treaty bodies (CAT, ICCPR) and recognize CAT's competence under Article 22 for individual complaints.
4. Improve detention conditions: reduce overcrowding, guarantee medical and psychosocial care, and enforce Article 47 across all security agencies.
5. Fully implement Articles 108 and 111 of the Criminal Procedure Code, expedite trials and rulings, and facilitate pre-trial release requests.
6. Adopt alternatives to pre-trial detention, including electronic monitoring, to reduce overcrowding and protect un-sentenced detainees.

2. Enforced Disappearances

Lebanon continues to grapple with the enduring legacy of enforced disappearances stemming from its 1975–1990 civil war. An estimated 17,000 individuals⁴ remain unaccounted for, leaving families in prolonged anguish and uncertainty. These disappearances, often involving

² Cedar Centre for Legal Studies, Trial Monitoring Report of Bachar Abed Saoud Case, 04 April 2025, <https://ccls-lebanon.org/trial-monitoring-report-of-bachar-abed-saoud-case/> (accessed on 14 April 2025).

³ Ministry of Interior and Municipalities in Lebanon, Minister Hajjar participated in the human rights conference held by the Prisons Committee of the Bar Association, titled "From Pain to Hope" at the Lawyers' House, 15 October 2025, <https://moim.gov.lb/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82%D9%8A/> (accessed on 12 November 2025).

⁴ Lebanon UN Women, Ba'adon: The Legal, Medical, And Psychological Needs Of The Families Of The Disappeared, December 2021, https://lebanon.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/Needs%20assessment%20report-Families%20of%20Missing%20and%20Disappeared%20-2031.3.22_1.pdf (accessed on 14 April 2025)



civilians abducted at checkpoints, from their homes, or in public spaces, have left indelible scars on the nation's social fabric

Under Law 105/2018, CCLS submitted 17 complaints of enforced disappearance, including to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. Victims included 16 men and 1 woman, 9 Lebanese and 8 Syrians. Nine were aged 18–25, seven over 25, and one unclassified. None of these complaints have led to investigations or accountability.

The Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS) also intervened in the case of Abdel-Rahman Al Qaradawi⁵, who was deported from Lebanon to the UAE in early 2025, despite credible risks of torture. He remains forcibly disappeared to this day.

Recommendations – Enforced Disappearances

1. Fully operationalize Law 105/2018: fund and staff the NCMFD, implement Article 37 criminalizing enforced disappearance, and develop a public activity plan.
2. Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and cooperate fully with UN mechanisms.
3. Develop coordination with Syria, Syrian civil actors, and international bodies for disappearance cases, particularly to track and verify the fate of Lebanese disappeared in Syria.
4. Ensure full cooperation with the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, providing timely and substantive responses to all communications.

3. Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees

Lebanon lacks a national asylum framework and has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, leaving refugees and asylum seekers without clear legal protection.

Since November 2023, CCLS documented 63 deportation cases, mostly involving Syrian men, and intervened with the General Security Office and other authorities. While CCLS prevented more than 20 deportations, the remaining people were forcibly returned without due process or individual risk assessments, violating the principle of non-refoulement.

During the same period, CCLS handled over 200 cases of irregular migration, involving Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians. Many migrants attempt perilous sea journeys due to deteriorating living conditions and lack of legal status. Notable tragedies include: the April

⁵ Cedar Centre for Legal Studies, Arrest and Risk of Forced Extradition of Poet Abdulrahman Al-Qaradawi, 04 January 2025, <https://ccls-lebanon.org/2025/11/05/arrest-and-risk-of-forced-extradition-of-poet-abdulrahman-al-qaradawi/> (accessed on 14 April 2025).



2022 Tripoli boat sinking⁶ and the December 2023 disappearance⁷ of a boat carrying 85 individuals, including women and children.

Recommendations – Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees

1. Adopt by 2027 a national asylum and migration law defining refugee status, guaranteeing due process, and prohibiting refoulement.
2. Ratify the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.
3. Immediately suspend all deportations until individual risk assessments are conducted by the Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation in coordination with UNHCR.
4. Establish a joint monitoring mechanism with UN agencies and civil society to oversee voluntary and safe returns.
5. Develop a national strategy to combat hate speech and discrimination, and simplify residency and work permit procedures to reduce exploitation.
6. Strengthen Mediterranean search and rescue operations and develop safe, legal migration pathways, including humanitarian corridors and labor mobility schemes.

Closing

Lebanon's fourth UPR cycle is an opportunity to move from promises to measurable progress. CCLS urges the Government to implement these reforms with clear timelines, independent oversight, and public accountability to ensure justice, dignity, and protection for all individuals—citizens and non-citizens alike.

Thank you.

⁶ Cedar Centre for Legal Studies, The April Boat Tragedy: Between Proving the Disappearance and Seeking Justice, 10 September 2025, <https://ccls-lebanon.org/2025/09/10/the-april-boat-tragedy/> (accessed on 12 November 2025).

⁷ Cedar Centre for Legal Studies, Mystery Surrounds Fate of 85 Migrants in Cypriot Waters, 31 December 2025, <https://ccls-lebanon.org/mystery-surrounds-fate-migrants-in-cypriot-waters/> (accessed on 12 November 2025).