



Input for the Project of Joint Statement on Enforced Disappearances in the Context of Transnational Repression

Submitted by:

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Lebanon

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I. About the Submitting Organization

The Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS) is an independent, non-profit Lebanese civil society organization established in 2013. CCLS works on human rights documentation, legal advocacy, and strategic litigation, with a particular focus on enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary detention, and violations arising in migration and transnational contexts.

In addition to its legal and documentation work, CCLS established a specialized rehabilitation center for victims of torture and other grave human rights violations in December 2024, providing holistic support that includes legal assistance, psychological rehabilitation, and referral services. This work is directly informed by CCLS's documentation of enforced disappearance and torture cases, particularly those involving detention, transfer, and cross-border repression.

CCLS has documented and followed multiple cases involving cross-border arrest, transfer, deportation, and subsequent enforced disappearance, including cases where Lebanese authorities were directly involved in actions that placed individuals outside the protection of the law. Through its combined legal, documentation, and rehabilitation work, CCLS has developed direct insight into the human, legal, and psychological consequences of transnational enforced disappearance on victims and their families.

II. Factual Case Summaries

1. Rafaat Falih (Syrian national)

- **Date and place of arrest:** 10 January 2024, Madfoun checkpoint, North Lebanon
- **Arresting authority:** Lebanese Army / Military Intelligence



- **Legal status:** Registered refugee with UNHCR

Following [his arrest](#), Lebanese authorities provided contradictory information regarding his detention. His family was denied clear information on his fate and whereabouts for several months. Credible information later indicated that Mr. Falih had been transferred to Syrian authorities and detained in the Palestine Branch prison.

- **Period of enforced disappearance:** January–May 2024
- **Subsequent confirmation:** Family visit in Sednaya Prison in May 2024
- **Outcome:** Released on 8 December 2024 after the fall of Al Asaad’s regime

2. Abdullah Al-Zohouri (Syrian national)

- **Date and place of arrest:** 27 May 2024, Ablah, Bekaa Valley
- **Arresting authority:** Lebanese Army Intelligence

Mr. [Al-Zohouri](#) was arrested without judicial warrant and denied access to legal counsel and family contact. On 11 June 2024, he was handed over to Syrian Military Security (Branch 291) without any extradition procedure or judicial review.

His family was not officially informed of his arrest, transfer, or place of detention. Information regarding his whereabouts was only obtained through unofficial channels.

- **Place of disappearance:** Palestine Branch prison, Syria
- **Period of enforced disappearance:** June–December 2024
- **Outcome:** Released on 8 December 2024 after the fall of Al Asaad’s regime.

3. Abdulrahman Al-Qaradawi (Egyptian national, poet)

- **Date and place of arrest:** 28 December 2024, Masnaa border crossing, Lebanon
- **Arresting authority:** Lebanese General Security

Mr. [Al-Qaradawi](#) was arrested based on a request circulated through the Arab Interior Ministers Council. Despite the political nature of the charges and the foreseeable risk of serious human rights violations, the Lebanese Council of Ministers approved his deportation to the United Arab Emirates on 7 January 2025.

- **Date of deportation:** 8 January 2025



- **Post-transfer situation:** Since mid-January 2025, no official information has been provided regarding his place of detention, legal status, or conditions of custody.

This lack of information places Mr. Al-Qaradawi in a situation of **ongoing enforced disappearance**.

III. Responses to the Questions Posed by the Committee and the Working Group

1. How do enforced disappearances occur in the context of transnational repression, and who is most at risk?

Based on CCLS documentation, enforced disappearances in transnational contexts occur through:

- Arrest by national security agencies followed by secret detention or transfer across borders;
- Deportation or handover carried out without judicial oversight or effective remedies;
- Denial of information to families regarding the fate or whereabouts of the person after transfer.

Individuals most at risk include:

- Refugees and asylum seekers;
- Political dissidents, writers, activists, and perceived critics;
- Individuals targeted through regional security cooperation mechanisms.

All three cases illustrate how State actions directly resulted in individuals being placed outside the protection of the law.

2. Which national laws or practices contribute to or prevent such acts? (Lebanon)

Lebanon has adopted several legal frameworks intended to prevent enforced disappearance, torture, and arbitrary detention.

Law No. 105/2018 on the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared recognizes enforced disappearance as a continuing crime and guarantees the right of families to know the fate and whereabouts of disappeared persons. Article 37 of Law No. 105/2018 criminalizes acts linked to enforced disappearance, including torture and inhuman or degrading treatment committed in connection with enforced disappearance, and obliges State authorities to prevent, investigate, and prosecute such crimes.

Lebanon has also enacted Anti-Torture Law No. 65/2017, which criminalizes torture and establishes the obligation of State authorities to prevent torture, investigate allegations, and prosecute perpetrators. This



law applies to all public officials and is particularly relevant in cases where individuals are exposed to a foreseeable risk of torture following arrest, detention, or transfer.

In addition, Article 47 of the Lebanese Criminal Procedure Law provides essential procedural safeguards for persons deprived of liberty, including the right to:

- Be informed of the reasons for arrest;
- Contact a lawyer from the moment of arrest;
- Communicate with a family member or a person of trust;
- Be examined by a medical doctor upon request;
- Be brought promptly before a judicial authority.

In the cases documented by CCLS, these safeguards were systematically violated, including through:

- Arrests conducted without prompt judicial oversight;
- Denial of access to legal counsel and family contact;
- Incommunicado detention during critical periods;
- Transfers or deportations carried out without effective judicial review, despite a real risk of enforced disappearance and torture.

While these legal frameworks, if properly implemented, could prevent enforced disappearance and related violations, their failure to be applied in practice—particularly in cases involving security agencies and transnational cooperation—has contributed directly to the commission of enforced disappearance.

3. Which mechanisms exist—or are lacking—to ensure investigation, prosecution, and mutual legal assistance?

CCLS observes a systemic absence of effective mechanisms to address transnational enforced disappearances in Lebanon:

- No automatic investigations are initiated when a person disappears following State action;
- Authorities tend to deny responsibility once a person is transferred abroad;
- Mutual legal assistance mechanisms are not activated to clarify fate and whereabouts;
- Families lack access to judicial remedies or effective complaint mechanisms.

As a result, impunity prevails in cases involving cross-border enforced disappearance.

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4. Which measures should States adopt to ensure protection, truth, justice, and reparation?

CCLS recommends that States:

- Prohibit all forms of transfer where there is a real risk of enforced disappearance;
- Ensure judicial oversight of deportation, extradition, and handover procedures;
- Guarantee immediate access to lawyers and family contact;
- Initiate prompt, independent investigations whenever a person disappears following State involvement;
- Provide full reparation to victims and their families, including truth, compensation, rehabilitation, and guarantees of non-repetition.

5. How can international and regional cooperation mechanisms be safeguarded from misuse?

The case of Abdulrahman Al-Qaradawi illustrates how regional security cooperation mechanisms can be misused to facilitate transnational repression.

Safeguards should include:

- Rejection of politically motivated requests;
- Mandatory human rights risk assessments;
- Transparency and access to remedies for affected individuals.

6. Are there positive examples of prevention or response?

CCLS notes that early legal intervention, public advocacy, and engagement with UN human rights mechanisms can sometimes prevent enforced disappearance or limit its duration. However, such responses remain exceptional and depend on external pressure rather than institutional safeguards.

IV. Need for Lebanon to Ratify the UN Convention on Enforced Disappearance

Lebanon has not ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.



Ratification is urgently needed to:

- Strengthen enforcement of Law No. 105/2018, including Article 37;
- Clarify State responsibility in transnational contexts;
- Ensure access to international oversight and individual complaint mechanisms;
- Prevent enforced disappearance in deportation, extradition, and migration-related procedures.

V. Conclusion

The cases documented by CCLS demonstrate how enforced disappearance is increasingly used as a tool of transnational repression, facilitated by weak safeguards, security-driven cooperation, and lack of accountability.

CCLS urges the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to adopt a strong, victim-centered joint statement affirming that:

- Enforced disappearance is prohibited in all circumstances;
- States bear responsibility for violations committed through cross-border actions;
- Domestic and international safeguards must be effectively implemented, not merely adopted.

CCLS remains available to provide further documentation or engage in follow-up consultations.