

Solidarity Statement with Lawyer Nabil Halabi
Issued by Lebanese Institutions for Human Rights

On May 30, 2016, the home of lawyer Nabil Al-Halabi, Executive Director of the Lebanese Institute for Democracy and Human Rights "Life", was raided over a libel and defamation complaint filed by Mr. Maher Abu Al Khodoud, Director of the Office of the Interior Minister, Mr. Nohad Al Mashnouk. On his Facebook page, Lawyer Halabi had asked the concerned official authorities to start an investigation into corruption issues in the Ministry of Interior, and to verify the extent of the involvement of ministry officials in acts of human trafficking.

It is reported that the door of Al Halabi's home was dislocated during the raid, which occurred at 06:45 am and off legal hours, and that his family was intimidated. The Public Prosecution Appeals in Beirut filed a lawsuit against Lawyer Al Halabi and referred his file to Beirut's First Investigative Judge Ghassan Owaidat. It should also be noted that there is a second complaint filed by Minister Al Mashnouk himself on the same background.

On May 31, 2016, a hearing for Lawyer Al Halabi took place by the investigative judge and then he was kept in detention.

As a result of the arrest, human rights organizations called upon each other and the following gathered at "LIFE" office:

- The Legal Agenda Organization
- The Lebanese Center for Human Rights
- Frontiers Association
- Al Karama Association

The gathering parties expressed their total rejection of the measures taken against Lawyer Al Halabi, which constitute law violations, such as:

- 1- The raid took place off legal hours,
- 2- The door of the house was broken and dislocated which indicates the use of excessive force in the raid without a justification for the use of such measures,
- 3- Lawyer Al Halabi was detained and is still in detention and this violates article 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which prohibits preventive detention for crimes that do not exceed the maximum penalty of 1 year of imprisonment, which is the case of the charges filed (libel and defamation), and violates the rules of preventive detention which requires reasons for such an arrest that are not available in the case of Lawyer Al Halabi, whose place of work and residence are known.

Facing such major violations and legal irregularities against a lawyer and the possibility of it being presented as an abuse of power in the light of the charged acts and the identity of the plaintiff.

For all these reasons, the Human Rights organizations listed above demand the following:

- 1- The immediate release of Lawyer Nabil Al Halabi due to the absence of any reason or legal justification for his arrest,
- 2- The Beirut Bar Association to take the necessary steps to stop this violation against Al Halabi as a lawyer and a citizen, in line with its role and duties in maintaining the right of defense and public freedoms.
- 3- Requesting the Judicial Inspection Authority to take over this file, to verify the backgrounds of the violations outlined above, and the reasons that have led to it, and to undertake appropriate measures in the light of these investigations
- 4- Requesting the Public Prosecution to conduct the necessary investigations in preparation of bringing action against the judicial police staff who participated in this arbitrary arrest process and, where appropriate, against anybody proved to have exerted pressure or interference in the judiciary works in this case.

Finally we bring to attention the importance of defending this case by calling upon all citizens and lawyers in particular to express the highest levels of solidarity, in order to preserve what is left of our public freedoms and the right to maintain the privacy and sanctity of the home, which is protected by the constitution.
