

Unprotected Refugees...

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Contents

Introduction	5
Part One - Violations	7
Preface	9
Chapter One - Violations	11
Section One - Racism, Incitement To Hatred And Violence	13
Section Two - Discrimination	17
Section Three - The Syrian Refugees Legal Status In Lebanon	21
Section Four - Deprivation Of The Right To Litigation	27
Section Five - Labour Rights Violations	29
Section Six - Deprivation From The Right To Medical Care	33
Section Seven - Deprivation Of Decent Housing	35
Section Eight - Deprivation Of The Right To Circulation	37
Section Nine - Freedom Of Opinion, Expression And Association	39
Section Ten - Compelling The Syrian Refugees To Handle Financial Burdens	41
Chapter Two - Violations Related To The Physical Safety	43
Section One - Extrajudicial Killing	45
Section Two - Abductions And Forced Disappearances	47
Section Three - Torture	51
Section Four - Arbitrary Arrests And Extrajudicial Detention	59
Section Five - Long-Term Detention Without Prosecution	63
Section Six - Forced Deportation Or Warnings	65
Section Seven - Human Trafficking	67
Organized Begging	68
Sexual Slavery	70
Exploitation In Cultivation Of Contraband Products	70

Chapter Three - Violations Regarding Motherhood And Childhood	73
Section One - The Sufferings Of A Syrian Woman	75
Section Two - Violations Of The Rights Of Syrian Refugees' Children	79

Part Two - Recommendations _____ **91**

Chapter One - Recommendations Regarding The Lebanese Authorities	93
Section One - On The Governmental Level	95
Section Two - On The Judicial Level	99
Section Three - On The Legislative Level	101
Chapter Two - Recommendations For The International Community	103

Introduction

The Lebanese government considers the growing number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon to be a serious threat to the security, political, economic and social stability, as well as to the job market and infrastructure in a country that is already struggling in all of these fields.

Having kept its borders open for hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, the Lebanese government did not allow the construction of formal camps to contain and keep them on its lands. Thus, the Syrian dispersal in Lebanon became chaotic, in miserable poor camps spread in areas suffering from historic poverty and negligence since the Lebanese Republic was established.

Lebanon did not sign the 1951 refugees' convention. However, it ratified most of the conventions on Human rights, that contain articles enhancing the protection of the refugees. Unfortunately, though the Lebanese authorities committed to respect all the articles of these conventions, and even though the international conventions take precedence over the national legislations, these conventions did not have any practical impact, neither as to the governmental authorities' practices, nor to the judiciary ones. Thus, the asylum-seekers in Lebanon practically stayed out of the protection framework, and on many occasions, became victims of gross violations of Human rights.

Our institute was hoping that this report would include a significant progress in the situation of the Syrian refugees' rights in Lebanon in comparison with the violations published by the institute, especially these inflicted to the Syrian refugees in the country two years ago. They were published in details by the LIFE institute in the first legal report about the Syrian refugees situation in Lebanon, on 15/01/2013. The most concerning part is the dramatic and fast deterioration of the Human rights situation in Lebanon year after year. The Syrian refugees' situation in Lebanon is the most prominent example of all of those Human rights violations in the country.

■ Report Sources

In preparation for the report, the institute counted on the following sources of information:

- The complaints of the victims, their parents or family reported to the institute.
- The LIFE institute delegates in districts and areas of refugee presence.
- The Lebanese courts records.
- Security reports and military statements.
- Special press releases.
- Statements issued by the Lebanese government and official bodies.

■ Monitoring And Documentation Strategy

LIFE adopts a strategy that provides accuracy and transparency for the reports through a network of delegates who monitor the violations cases, and report them to the legal office in the institute. In turn, the institute forms a professional inquiry team that includes Lebanese attorneys. The attorneys were able to undertake interviews and access judicial files inside courts and police stations and operated without any legal impediment. Their professional immunity enables them to bypass exceptional security measures adopted in certain areas. It also prevents them from being subject to harassment of the Lebanese security systems as what usually occurs with the Human Rights activists in Lebanon.

■ The Parts Of The Report

The report is divided into two parts:

- 1- The violations.
- 2- The recommendations.

Part One

Violations

Preface

Since the beginning of their flee for refuge in Lebanon in April 2011, the Syrians have never imagined that they will be exposed to life and social security threatening elements as terrible as the gross and systematic violations of human rights they witnessed in their own country. Therefore, the Syrians fell in a deadly mix of a dangerous reality in Syria they had to flee, and a bitter one in Lebanon they are unable to evade because of many legal impediments, namely, the expiration or complete absence of passports enabling them to leave the country to a better, much safer and protective place for their families and them. The Syrian refugees are henceforth trapped in a huge concentration camp named Lebanon. Inside, all of their inalienable rights are violated through random and tyrannical governmental decisions, or arbitrary and most often illegal practices committed by Lebanese security and military systems against them. Progressively, they are partly or entirely deprived of their humanity. They are forced to endure all of this alongside a dubious and devastating international silence.



Chapter One

Violations

Section One

Racism, Incitement To Hatred And Violence.

“ All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. ”

(Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR).

It is true that Racism is a situation that was constantly haunting the Syrian refugees in Lebanon for more than three years. But it wasn't as expanding and systematic as it has become in 2014. Racism and hatred increased to a very alarming extent it was sometimes translated into exhortations to kill Syrians inside the camps and on the roads. The exhortations were spreading by different means including social media. Certain people even created special websites dedicated to ignite hatred against the Syrian refugees, such as “The Nazi movement in Lebanon”- “Lebanon online” and other websites that were repeatedly blocked because of the reports received by the Facebook administration, especially when these websites explicitly called to attack the Syrian refugees gathering sites and kill the refugees.

Some of these websites published mottos of the Lebanese Army, which spread terror amongst the Syrian refugees, who were thinking that these websites are related to the Lebanese Army intelligence system. The website owners were immune to any legal prosecution in Lebanon. All of this exposed many gathering sites in different areas to violent and systematic assaults.

The institute also monitored coercive evictions of Syrian families and shop owners in the areas of Nabaa, Borj Hamud (eastern Beirut suburbs) and the southern suburb of Beirut, namely Jnah and Ouzai, where many Syrian young men were assaulted and threatened by local gunmen.

LIFE also noticed that racism and incitement to violence against Syrians were increasing following the attack committed by Syrian gunmen against the Lebanese army post in Arsal (Northern Bekaa) in the beginning of last August. The Syrian gunmen families also assaulted Lebanese soldiers and security officers. Racism instigations took a very violent and retaliatory turns following the slaughter of a Lebanese soldier of “Medlej” family by ISIS gunmen who had abducted him during Arsal clash (*Pictures No. 1-2*).



(Picture No. 1) - A scene of two Syrian workers have their hands tied to the back and left them in the middle of the street in a degrading manner .- Bekaa - Lebanon



(Picture No. 2) – A Syrian citizen some young men tried to cut his arm with a knife - the southern suburb of Beirut

In 2014, several municipalities in Lebanese villages and towns published signs and warnings imposing curfews on Syrians in their respective areas after a specific hour during the day. Many municipal councils also decided to refrain from registering any lease agreements concluded by Syrians. These municipalities did not give any convincing or compelling reasons for their declarations. Such practice can be considered a type of racial discrimination (Pictures No. 3-4).



(Picture No. 3)



(Picture No. 4)

Certain Lebanese media such as Al-jadeed and OTV conducted systematic instigation campaigns against the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, demanding to deport them to Syria or to leave them at the borders between the two countries. They considered the Syrian refugees sites as an incubator for terrorist groups that must be raided, and where the residents should be put under interrogation by the Lebanese army. Certain Lebanese media were not able to differentiate between defending national interests, and racial speeches when they called upon the Lebanese government to protect the Lebanese manpower, and prevent Syrian competition. This led several times to racial instigations.

Similarly to this report, the institute monitored this time speeches of racial connotations delivered by a number of Lebanese politicians against Syrian refugees. Some of these politicians are ministers in the Lebanese government.



(Picture No. 5) - A wall sign welcomes Syrian refugees and apologizes to them about some of the racist behaviors.

Section Two

Discrimination

Discrimination is not hereby defined as the encouragements granted by the government to its citizens who are exclusively entitled to such basic rights, unlike the foreign residents.

Discrimination is meant to be here the behaviors that deprive any person, be it a citizen or a foreigner, of their inalienable rights, based on racial, political, religious or any other forms of discrimination.

“ **Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status** ”

(Article 2, UDHR)

■ Political Discrimination

Despite having decided to disassociate itself from the Syrian conflict, the Lebanese government is making decisions, and its security and military systems are conducting practices that target the pro-opposition Syrian refugees. However, they didn't do so neither with the pro-Syrian regime, nor with those who are able to enter the Lebanese territories through the formal borders of the two countries without being arrested by the Syrian intelligence.

Since April 2011, the different Lebanese security systems, namely the military intelligence and the general security arrested Syrian refugees for entering the Lebanese territories through the informal Lebanese-Syrian crossings. They were referring the refugees to the Lebanese criminal justice, after being accused of illegally entering the Lebanese territories by the department of public prosecution. This unexpected behaviour did not cease despite the condemnation and appeal of the Human Rights organizations.

LIFE considers these security practices to be targeting the Syrian refugees opponent to the Syrian government, as they are unable to get through the formal Syrian-Lebanese crossings, because they may be arrested by the Syrian security systems on the borders. This does not apply on other Syrian refugees or citizens that have no political or security issues with the Syrian regime.

“ Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution ”

(Article 14, UDHR).

LIFE reminds that hundreds of Syrian families entered the country forcibly through mountain crossings, when the battles surrounded their villages in “Tall Kalakh”, “Homs”, “Qusseir”, and the towns of “Elqamun”, and “Az-zabdani” in rural Damascus near the Lebanese borders. These families were in desperate need for security and protection on the Lebanese territories, not for them to be arrested and traced by the security and judicial systems.

This may have led “Nazik al Khatib”, the Lebanese criminal magistrate in Tripoly to issue the famous judicial order that prevents from prosecuting a Syrian refugee coming from Homs based on the article 14 of the UDHR. She thus refused to apply the Lebanese criminal law to the refugees according to the public prosecution accusations.

Though the General Security system called upon the Syrians who were breaching the residency laws to regularize their legal status, the military intelligence kept arresting every Syrian refugee illegally entering the Lebanese land. These arrests took a boarder turn following the armed conflict between the Lebanese army and Syrian gunmen who seized the Lebanese town of “Arsal”, and kept many Lebanese soldiers and security officers as hostages in the beginning of last August.

■ Nationality-Based Discrimination

“ All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination ”

(Article 7, UDHR).

The institute received many complaints from Syrian citizens having been mistreated in Lebanese police stations because of their nationality. Having considered certain samples, the institute made the following conclusions:

The investigation officers are not seriously considering the complaints and allegations of the public persecution department, following Syrian complaints against Lebanese citizens. However, the case is different when a Syrian citizen reports a complaint against another Syrian citizen.

They also adopt pre-assumptions that condemn the Syrian defendant when a complaint is reported against them by a Lebanese. Many times, the police members support their stereotype by using hard power against the Syrian detainee to push them to confess that they committed the crime they are accused of.

When dozens of Syrian workers are arrested and referred to the police station by the Internal Security officers, for violating the Labour and residency law, they are ill treated. The same goes to the foreign workers who are also inhumanly treated because of their nationality and miserable situation. Even though the security system is supported by human rights-related programs and social police, the phenomenon of disrespecting and violating the rights of foreign workers are still prevailing in several security sites. LIFE registered repeated beatings of Syrian detainees in Baabda-Mount Lebanon investigation division to push them to confess under torture, beating and threat to be physically assaulted.

■ **The Racial And Sectarian Discrimination Against The Syrian Refugees**

The minister of social affairs Rachid Derbas stated that Lebanon will not allow any Syrian refugee to enter the territories starting 31 December 2014, since the Syrian refugees' number in Lebanon exceeds the capacity of the country to contain them. However, the minister of internal affairs Nuhad Machnuq allowed tens of Syrian families belonging to the Christian Assyrian community to enter the country. He circulated the decision among the Lebanese security systems on the borders to proceed. At the same time, with the exacerbation of the clashes and acts of war in the border town of Az-zabdani, the Lebanese general security system detained a Syrian family crossing the town towards the Lebanese territories, the majority of which is women. They travelled with them to a neutral area between Syria and Lebanon and kept them there without considering their security status, or the fact that they could be arrested by the Syrian intelligence. The Lebanese government nevertheless had repeatedly mentioned that its decision to prevent Syrians from seeking asylum in Lebanon doesn't include humanitarian cases, and pledged not to deport any Syrian refugee.

■ The Fortune-Based Discrimination Against The Syrians

Since the beginning of the crisis of Syrians asylum seeking in Lebanon, the Lebanese authorities distinguished between the wealthy and the poor refugees. The base of such discrimination is the need of the Lebanese government, local communities and economic sectors for financial income provided by the Syrian wealthy refugees to Lebanon. The wealthy Syrian refugees rent or even buy apartments, and keep the empty Lebanese hotels operating, after suffering for years of the declining tourists' number. They pay taxes and duties imposed by the Lebanese government on apartment owners or renters, similarly to the Syrian refugees who wish to open a commercial enterprise or decided to move their commercial enterprises to the country. However, all these Lebanese parties consider the poor Syrian refugees to be a burden on the economy, a disaster that should be mitigated in Lebanon.

The Lebanese authorities treated all the Syrians coming to Lebanon equally, after the famous decision issued by the Lebanese general security on... that imposed severe conditions for the access of Syrians to Lebanon, regardless of their legal status and financial situation. But certain Lebanese municipalities are still discriminating the Syrian refugees based on their financial situation. They impose curfews on poor refugees based on their appearances, and welcome the refugees who are mainly going to restaurants, hotels and other touristic sites.

Section Three

The Syrian Refugees Legal Status In Lebanon

Since Lebanon did not ratify the 1951 refugee convention, it seems that its government is making sure that it does not recognize the refugees' rights on its land.

In the beginning of the Syrian refugees 'flee to Lebanon in April 2011, the Lebanese government considered them to be guests, not refugees. This was the ground of the Lebanese government behaviour facing the refugees 'phenomenon in the country. Since then, a contradiction emerged between the local laws that the Lebanese security systems wanted to implement towards the refugees (as foreign residents), and the international laws regarding human rights that should be implemented in the refugee seeking exceptional cases. But even though Lebanon did not ratify the 1951 refugee convention, it is a state party in most of the international conventions on human rights that recognize the refugees' inalienable rights.

This problem did not only confuse the Lebanese security systems, but also expanded to the Lebanese judiciary and confused the Syrian refugee. The latter is not able anymore to understand their legal status on the Lebanese lands, and to assimilate the details of the sudden governmental decisions related to the topic of the refugees, and their residency in Lebanon. They lost their confidence towards the Lebanese governmental systems and the UNHCR that was unable to provide legal solutions for most of legal problems.

■ Syrian Refugees In Lebanon Legal Status Overview.

The Syrian refugees in Lebanon can be divided into four categories:

- **The refugees who entered Lebanon through the natural borders.**

Since the beginning of the battles in Homs and its rural suburbs, tens of Syrian families entered northern Lebanon in April/May 2011. They crossed the countries natural borders – (i.e: the mountains and the river separating northern Lebanon and the southern Syrian

coast). – and did not enter through the formal borders, afraid that the Syrian security system will arrest them.

Likewise, hundreds of Syrian refugees' families came from the cities of Qusseir and Az-zabdani, near the eastern Lebanese borders.

The political asylum seekers, the dissident Syrian army soldiers and officers, and the individuals who refused to perform the compulsory military service in the Syrian Regime Army did the same.

Legally, these refugees do not hold formal entry cards, stamped (departure) from the immigration directorate and Syrian passports, stamped (entry) by the Lebanese general security.

Hence, the Lebanese authorities were adopting the following procedure, dealing with them:

They are arrested by the general security and Lebanese intelligence systems on the security checkpoints. The police also arrests them when they enter police stations for any reason, considering that they have illegally entered the country. They are referred to the criminal justice, and prosecuted as illegal migrants infiltrated across the borders. Certain judges refused to prosecute them considering them to be refugees fleeing persecution and danger, according to article 14 of the UDHR.

This category was still subject to security and judicial prosecution on the Lebanese lands, until the Lebanese general security declared opening the possibility for regularizing their illegal status in the end of 2014.

• Syrian Refugees Not Holding Neither Identity Cards Nor Passports.

Certain Syrian refugees in Lebanon do not hold personal documents, neither passports, especially those who fled the Syrian rural areas near the Lebanese borders. Some of them had to hastily leave the country, and did not bring along any personal documents or belongings. This happened to the refugees coming from “Tal Kalakh” and its suburbs since the bombing surprised the citizens, and was accompanied by an extensive attack carried on by the pro-regime militias.

It also happened to the soldiers and officers who defected from the Syrian government forces, and entered Lebanon. Most of them do not hold passports or identity cards. The reason is that the Syrian army chief of staff issued a publication in October 2011, ordering to seize the ID cards from the recruits during their military service. The aim was to limit their circulating capacity if they wished to defect, or to flee their military service. Some of those had to circulate with their brother's ID or with a falsified one, and were

arrested and prosecuted according to the Lebanese Penal code. Any Syrian refugee, not holding a personal ID, a passport, or personal documents proving who they were, will be under security and judicial prosecution on the Lebanese lands.

LIFE received many complaints from Syrian citizens whose cards were broken by the Syrian security officers on the Lebanese-Syrian borders. They were subsequently harassed by the Lebanese general security officers who used to refuse the cards and consider them to be damaged, invalid for all of the administrative paperwork. Therefore, the Syrian refugees are denied the right to get a formal residency authorization.



(Picture No. 6)

• **Syrian Refugees Not Holding Or Holding Expired Passports.**

According to the bilateral Lebanese-Syrian convention, it is allowed for the citizens of both countries to enter each others' borders only through their ID card, and not necessarily through the passport.

Many Syrian citizens entered the Lebanese lands through their ID, not the passports. But these people were having a problem: they were unable to leave the country, because they have to hold a passport, with an entry stamp from the Lebanese general security first, in order for them to leave the Lebanese lands. The Lebanese general security allowed those cases to apply for an entry stamp transfer from the ID to the passport in order for them to be able to leave.

However, the problem that is encountering all the pro-opposition Syrians in the asylum countries is the expiry of their passports. They find themselves unable to renew their passport validity, fearing to enter the Syrian lands, visit the Syrian embassy, and be kidnapped by the Syrian security officers. For those, Lebanon has turned into a huge prison. They are unable to leave to any place in the world. And the Lebanese government established only one compulsory solution for them, namely to get back to Syria and face

death. On August 21, 2014, the Lebanese government remitted the duties of the illegal Syrian refugees who wish to return to their homeland, in order to encourage them to return to Syria.

In order to facilitate their circulation abroad, many pro-opposition Syrians resorted to brokers to renew their passport validity. Hence, they had to pay huge amounts of money. The Syrian immigration and passports officer was stamping and renewing the passport, but was afraid to register it on the computer, fearing that the concerned person is wanted for the military service or for any other reason. After the networking that happened between the Lebanese general security and the Syrian immigration and passports system in late 2013, all Syrian refugees holding such passports that were renewed through brokers would be under arrest in airports and sea ports, in the Lebanese border facilities. The general security officers interrogate the concerned person and refer them to the Lebanese criminal court for falsifying a passport stamp, noting that the stamp is not falsified, and is issued by a formal regime authority. But the absence of the passport holder's name in the digital data of the Syrian immigration and passport directorate was considered to be falsification according to the general security. The Lebanese system not only arrests the person and refers them to the judiciary, but also re-detains them after the end of the sentence. These refugees were many times deported out of the Lebanese territory and faced an unknown fate.

In May 2014, LIFE published a warning through its Facebook page to the Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, against resorting to brokers to renew their passports. It asked the passport holders not to use them in Lebanon, even though their holders travelled through many countries using them, and entered the Lebanese lands before the Lebanese-Syrian security networking.

On April 27 2015, the Syrian ministry of foreign affairs allowed its embassies abroad to issue passports for the Syrian refugees living in foreign countries, including the political pro-opposition Syrians who informally fled the country. The Syrian government set the consular fees for issuing a new passport to be of 400 USD, and the passport validity renewal fees to be of 200 USD. According to the economic experts, it is a step that aims at increasing the foreign currency in the Syrian public treasury.

LIFE was unable to know how this decision was implemented, and how it affects the situation on the ground, considering that it was issued while preparing this report.

• **Syrian Refugees Who Entered The Lebanese Lands Through The Legal Borders (Picture No. 7):**

Many Syrian refugees fled from Syria to Lebanon through the formal border crossings

between the two countries. Most of them fled the areas facing armed conflicts. Some others fled for economic reasons.

Economic Immigrants can be divided into two sections:

- The Syrian investor Immigrant, having transferred their business to Lebanon, and complied with all the paperwork and procedures stipulated by the Lebanese law, after realising that it is now on impossible to resume their businesses in Syria.

- The Syrian Immigrant whose business ceased in Syria because of the security situation, and came to Lebanon in order to work and provide for their family. Few of them are returning to Syria to deliver the money to their miserable family in their hometown. But most of them brought their families along to Lebanon.

This category stayed out of the cycle of sufferings until the implementation of the Lebanese government decisions including the entry conditions of the Syrian refugees to Lebanon starting January 1st, 2015.

Despite the statements of the Lebanese officials confirming that these conditions do not include the Syrian refugees in Lebanon and their legal status, our institute monitored many breaches in many General Security posts. It was required from many refugees to have a Lebanese grantor to enable them to renew their residency card validity. The Syrian refugees are in a state of confusion and concern. These discretionary measures led many Syrian refugees to live without legal residency cards, and to be exposed to arrest at any security checkpoint.

Our institute was unable to confirm whether this procedure was intended to put more pressure on the Syrian refugees and push them to leave the Lebanese territories, since they were especially going to be rewarded by a duty remission for their illegal residency. Following the revision conducted by LIFE with the Lebanese general security system, the officials were surprised of such behaviour and considered it to be an individual infraction by the general security personnel.



(Picture No. 7)

Section Four

Deprivation Of The Right To Litigation

■ Deprivation Of The Right To Litigation Because Of The Legal Status.

The Syrian refugees in Lebanon, not holding personal documents or information are unable to go to courts or police stations to lodge complaints. They are also unable to grant an attorney judicial mandated in order to proceed for them. Their rights are violated for these often involuntary circumstantial reasons that forced them to leave their homeland, without any formal personal document

■ Deprivation Of The Right To Litigation Due To The Fear Threat.

Racism and discrimination in Lebanese local communities and public administrations against the Syrian refugees are increasing. Many local communities consider them to be outlaws. Hence, many refugees were pushed to refrain from going to police stations or courts in order for them to file complaints related to their personal rights, especially against a Lebanese citizen. The Syrian refugees are afraid of discrimination and absence of a balanced justice in the Lebanese formal administrations. These administrations can undermine their rights, while exposing them to threat and revenge. In many cases, intimidation was very powerful in that many Syrian refugees refrained from demanding their legal and personal rights in the Lebanese courts.

The LIFE delegates also noted a complete refusal of Syrian refugees to file a lawsuit against soldiers, security and government officers, as well as local party-related individuals who had assaulted them. They were fearful of retaliatory measures that can affect them personally or harm their families.

■ **Deprivation Of The Right To Litigation Because Of The Economic Situation.**

Filing a lawsuit in Lebanon is very expensive. The same goes to the bill of costs of any judicial case.

Most of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are suffering from hard economic conditions. Their priority is to spend their small savings only on the most necessary needs they have: i.e. living, medical care, and other daily indispensable needs.

Section Five

Labour Rights Violations

“ Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection ”

(paragraph 3, article 23 of the UDHR).

■ **Forced Family Collective Labour For Housing.**

Because of the unavailability of houses and food for the families, tens of Syrian families living in Baalbek and Hermel areas started working in agriculture and construction for free. The employer provides them a house as remuneration, has the power to modify the job nature and description and exploit all the family members at their discretion in different kinds of daunting jobs. Women and children are facing no exceptions.

■ **Preventing The Syrian Refugees In Lebanon From Working.**

The Lebanese government issued a decision depriving the Syrian refugees in Lebanon of the right to work. The ministers of internal affairs, labour, and social affairs declared that the Syrian refugees are not entitled to practice any kind of work in Lebanon, in order to protect the national manpower from any foreign competition. On the other hand, the Lebanese government considered that the refugees lose their humanitarian refugee status if they practice any kind of job in Lebanon, since they are benefiting from the assistance provided by the UNHCR!

In order to implement that decision, the Lebanese government ordered the Lebanese general security system to compel any Syrian refugee who wishes to renew their residency card in Lebanon, to sign a pledge to refrain from working, under penalty of losing their right to renew the residency card in Lebanon, and being deported out of the Lebanese territories.

The Lebanese government is trying to protect the Lebanese workers interests. However, it deprived the Syrian refugee of their inalienable right to work, insure their own and their family economic and social security. In addition, it is important to note that the UNHCR removed many refugees from their registries without any reason or clarification. It also reduced the amount of assistance to the beneficiary Syrian refugees in Lebanon, noting that it stated that the electronic food cards that they distribute to the Syrian families in Lebanon are only 41% of these families' resources. In addition, there are financial burdens imposed by the Lebanese government on the Syrian refugees on its lands. These burdens are unbearable at a time when the refugees are not working, and are unable to earn enough money to cover their families' expenses.

■ **Deprivation Of The Most Inalienable Rights Stipulated By The Labour Laws.**

Despite the Lebanese governmental decision to prevent the Syrian refugees from working on the Lebanese lands, the desperate need for money pushed the Syrian refugees and their families to work.

This violation of the Lebanese government decisions was a fertile ground for the employers to take advantage of. They mostly recruited Syrians for limited term jobs, and when the job is done they deprived the Syrians from their remuneration. Since it is a violation of a Lebanese governmental decision, the Syrian refugees were forced to refrain from demanding their rights before the judiciary or the police.

The institute also received complaints from Syrian refugee workers, working in a butcher shop in Mezbud (southern area of Chouf), stating that the shop owner confiscates all the personal documents of their Syrian workers, including the ID card, passport, and residency card. The institute documented two cases in that place:

The first one is that two workers were deprived of their wage after working for more than a month.

The second one is that a Syrian worker, whose personal documents were confiscated, decided to leave his job because he didn't get his wage. When he demanded that the shop owner restores the documents in order for him to circulate in the Lebanese territories, the shop owner filed a lawsuit against him before the Lebanese army intelligence. He accused him of being member of the "ISIS". The military intelligence system arrested the Syrian refugee, and then released after severe beating by the army intelligence all along his detention term.

In the context of Syrian refugee labour in Lebanon, there was a very serious issue that left tragic effects on many Syrian families. 98 % of the Syrian refugee workers in Lebanon are denied to have legal labour contracts and social insurances that can guarantee their rights. Many Syrian workers were seriously injured during their working hours, especially when it comes to the construction workers. Some of them lost their lives working. Because of the legal status, the injured Syrian workers are unable to bring suit against the employer to demand a compensation for the occupational injury. For the same reason, the deceased family accepts a very low compensation from the employer. And very often, the family doesn't benefit from any compensation at all (Picture No. 8).



(Picture No. 8)

Section Six

Deprivation From The Right To Medical Care

It is well known that most of the hospitals in Lebanon belong to the private sector and are very expensive. This forces the Syrian refugees to count on the medical care subsidised by the UNHCR. Due to the limited funding, the UNHCR had to set many criteria for those who can be treated in hospitals. But even when the refugees meet those criteria, most of them will have to pay 25 % of the treatment bill.

The UNHCR only covers 75 % of the hospitalisation bill. Its medical assistance does not include incurable cases such as cancer, Thalassemia, and dialysis. Before the Lebanese governmental decisions that include very complicated conditions to allow the Syrian citizens to enter its lands, and that stop welcoming the Syrians coming to Lebanon, the Syrian patients living in Lebanon – who were incurably ill – were going to hospitals located inside Syria to get treatment because of its cheap cost. However, after the Lebanese government decision, the Syrian refugees are not able anymore to go to Syria for treatment, because the Lebanese general security will prevent them from entering the Lebanese lands again, or will impose these harsh conditions to allow them to enter.

In addition, the Lebanese minister of the interior M. Nuhad Machnuq repeatedly said that any Syrian refugee who enters the Syrian territories will lose their legal refugee status. They will not be allowed to re-enter the Lebanese lands, unless they meet the new conditions.

It is impossible as well to accept the UNHCR decision to reduce the amount of the assistance it provides. LIFE documented the case of a refugee and his family's deprivation of the commissioner assistance, knowing that he is a person with special needs. This category is still deprived of special care.

The tragedy did not only affect the ill, and the elder Syrian refugees. It was also translated into a silent suffering, since there are no cemeteries for the deceased persons amongst the refugees, notwithstanding the accompanying legal problems, such as registering these death cases.

There was also the case of a colleague “Mohamed Adel Suleiman”, the Syrian Kurdish human rights activist, who died in the Rafiq Hariri governmental hospital in Beirut, in the middle of January 2014, from leukaemia. The family received a body that was not his, which proves that there is a disrespect of the Syrian refugee dignity, be it alive or dead (Picture No. 9).



(Picture No. 9) -Life Medical Services Foundation for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

Section Seven

Deprivation Of Decent Housing.

59 % of the Syrian families live in independent apartments or houses. 40 % are living in public tents or shelters, unfinished houses, garages, random facilities and separated rooms. The reason is that the government refuses to establish decent typical refugee camps on its lands.

According to the Lebanese ministry of the interior and municipalities, there are around 1400 random camps for the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, mostly dispersed in Bekaa.

Following the events of Aarsal in last August, the Lebanese army started to implement so-called military and security necessary measures. Thus, many Syrian refugee camps in many Lebanese areas were dismantled, without providing any alternative for the Syrian refugees who live from now on, in the streets.

Many Lebanese municipalities also refused to register leases for houses the Syrians rented, namely in the city of Zahleh and its suburbs where there is the highest Syrian concentration. This prevented the refugees from completing their paperwork with the Lebanese general security system which compels the refugees to have a legally registered lease in the municipal council as a condition to settle the legal residency affairs.

Section Eight

Deprivation Of The Right To Circulation

There are four factors that restrict the Syrian refugee capacity to circulate in Lebanon:

- In the beginning of the Syrian refugee flow to the different Lebanese areas, certain municipalities started to prevent them from circulating in certain hours.
- The security and military checkpoints arrest any Syrian not holding a legal entry card. This puts many Syrian refugees under the risk of being arrested, and prevents them from moving around the towns.
- The passports of many Syrian refugees living in Lebanon expired. This prevented them from travelling out of the country.
- The Lebanese government decided to prevent any Syrian refugee to enter its lands if the refugee ever decides to leave the country. This prevented many Syrians who wished to visit Syria for medical care or to submit official certificate exams from going to their country.

Section Nine

Freedom Of Opinion, Expression And Association

There are no laws preventing the Syrian refugees in Lebanon from practicing their rights to freely express their political opinions. However, this stayed under the discretion of the Lebanese security systems which were tracing the pro-opposition Syrian refugees when they organise sit-ins or gatherings to speak their mind. In the best cases, they were allowing them to conduct such gatherings through Lebanese associations. However, the security systems were taking the names of the Syrian participating in the peaceful gatherings and call them back for interrogation later. On the other hand, many Syrians loyal to the president Bachar Assad conducted pro-Assad marches, and participated to the Syrian presidential elections in Lebanon without being disturbed or interrupted by the Lebanese security officers. It is noteworthy that the pro-regime Syrian gatherings that rush to the Syrian embassy during the presidential elections blocked the road of the Lebanese ministry of defence near the presidential palace in Baabda, and caused unexpected security confusion.

Back to the Syrian presidential elections in Lebanon, LIFE documented tens of cases where Syrian refugees were forced to vote for the Syrian president Bachar Assad in the Syrian embassy. Many Lebanese complained to LIFE saying that individuals from Lebanese organisations entered their shops in Hamra streets in Beirut, taking along Syrian workers to the Syrian embassy. Some of them refused to let the workers go with them. However, party individuals revoked the ID cards from the Syrian workers and asked them to retrieve them on the election day at the Syrian embassy.

A Lebanese engineer also complained to LIFE that a local Lebanese organisation convoy forced Syrian construction workers to get off the building they were working on.

At the same time, the Syrians living in the southern suburbs of Beirut were under threat by local Lebanese militias. These Syrians were forced to ride the buses at the entrances of the southern Beirut suburbs area in order to go to the Syrian embassy, under the threat to close their stores in the suburb and expel them from their houses. LIFE delegates

received many statements of Syrians living in the southern Beirut Suburb, Ouzai and Burj Hamoud, about being forced to elect the current Syrian president for a new mandate. Looking at the influence circles of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, and north Bekaa where buses were transporting Syrian citizens to the Syrian embassy, LIFE concludes that there are similar cases to those of the southern Beirut Suburb, since the elements and circumstances are the same.

According to the Lebanese central Bank instructions, the Lebanese commercial banks prevented the Syrian refugees in Lebanon to open bank accounts. This undermined their rights to start civil businesses and associations. The Lebanese banks measures had really bad effect on the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, on the Syrian opposition, and the Syrian civil society that was wishing to start non-governmental organisations to assist the Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Section Ten

Compelling The Syrian Refugees To Handle Financial Burdens

Since it did not sign the 1951 refugee convention, the Lebanese government considers the Syrian refugees to be guests equal to any foreign resident in Lebanon. Thus, the Lebanese general security system collects annual residency fees, i.e. 200 USD.

On December 31st 2014, the Lebanese government issued a decision preventing the Syrian citizens to enter its lands unless they meet its conditions. It aims at reducing the flow of Syrians to the Lebanese lands.

Despite the fact that the Lebanese government pledged not to apply those conditions to the Syrian refugees already living in Lebanon, the reality is completely different. The Lebanese general security system requires the Syrian refugee in Lebanon to submit a lease certified by the municipality of the area they live in, and a Lebanese grantor as conditions for renewing the residency card.

Many Syrian refugees were asked by Lebanese citizens to pay up to 2000 USD as a granting condition. This left many Syrian refugees without legal residency cards, and under the threat of being tracked by the security systems as a result.

Upon the LIFE legal office review with the general security system, we were informed of the fact that these were individual cases caused by some general security officers misbehaviour, and that every Syrian refugee in Lebanon, registered in the UNHCR is not subject to these conditions.

However, the LIFE institute confirms that the Lebanese general security officers in all of the posts spread around Lebanon are imposing such conditions on the Syrian refugees. They charge them with unbearable financial burdens. Thus, the Lebanese authorities violated its pledge not to implement these conditions on the Syrian refugees already living in Lebanon, and registered in the UNHCR.

It is noteworthy that the Lebanese general security imposes on every Syrian refugee a prior pledge not to practice any job or profession on the Lebanese lands, as a condition for renewing the residency card.

As a result, LIFE asks very relevant questions as per the source of income that the Syrian refugees are able to secure in order to pay the residency fees, the grants, the rents, food, medication, medical care, education, transportation, and everyday life necessities, while they are not legally allowed to work, and the UNHCR only provides 19 USD a month!

There is also another aspect of suffering: the Syrian detainees, who are unable to bail themselves out of the prisons. They can afford neither attorneys' fees, nor expensive judicial ones. Tens of Syrians sit in the Lebanese prisons, and are paying the price of the often arbitrary, random and unfounded arrests.



Chapter Two

Violations Related To The Physical Safety

Section One

Extrajudicial Killing

On August 8th 2014, LIFE published a report about the field humanitarian situation in Aarsal, and mentioned the scale of the physical injuries among the Syrian civilian refugees, especially women and children, after the Lebanese army directly targeted their fragile refugee camps.

The Lebanese army command provided a story telling that armed groups are barricaded in the refugee camps. But it did not provide any pictures or proof to support the story. Besides, it is technically impossible in reality for the vulnerable textile camps to be appropriate barricades for the armed groups.

Looking at many complaints at the LIFE legal office regarding extrajudicial killings carried on by the Lebanese armed forces against Syrian refugees, it was revealed that most of these cases are related to violations perpetrated by the military individuals as to the rules regulating the use of firearms against the wanted, or those who did not stop at the military checkpoints.

As for the complaints received by LIFE about the intentional killings of Syrian refugees, the office considered publishing such cases to be inappropriate in the current circumstances, since the Syrian witnesses are unable to publicly submit any statement or testimony.

However, LIFE confirms that collective retaliatory operations led by the Lebanese armed forces and some Lebanese security systems against Syrian refugees in different areas happened following Aarsal events. They included extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and camps dismantling, beatings and torture inflicted equally on women, children, elders, and ill persons.

Section Two

Abductions And Forced Disappearances

Since the beginning of the Syrian social media calls for popular mobilization against the Syrian president Bashar Assad regime in February 2011, the Syrian embassy in Beirut, in cooperation with Lebanese security officers, abducted four Syrian brothers belonging to Jassem family. The brothers were distributing publications in Beirut calling the Syrian citizen living in Lebanon to take to the streets to protest against Assad's regime, at the Syrian embassy in Beirut. On February 23rd, the abductors took the Jassem brothers to the Syrian territories. The Lebanese lieutenant Salah H. was supervising their delivery to the Syrian Air intelligence system.

About a month later, on May 24th 2011 in particular, the former Syrian vice president and the currently Syrian regime opponent "Shibly Oseimy" was abducted at his own house in Aley.

The Information branch belonging to the Lebanese internal security forces started tracing the abductors. Also, on September 10th 2012, the Lebanese army arrested a network in Tripoly, responsible for abducting pro-opposition Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and delivers them to the Syrian security systems.

However, the networks organised to abduct Syrian opponents In Lebanon are now spread to many Lebanese areas. They carried out abductions against Syrian opponents and dissident soldiers and officers who have fled to Lebanon.

Adding to the difficulty to arrest and stop such organised networks of abduction from operating, or to even early detect their criminal operations is that these networks are cooperating with soldiers and officers inside the Lebanese security and military systems. They are cooperating with local parties as well to facilitate the abductions and safe crossing to the Syrian lands without carrying out any security inspection at all on the borders.

The abductions against dissident Syrian army officers taking asylum in Lebanon encompassed:

Captain Yahya Haddad, a dissident officer from the Syrian regime fourth armoured division. He was abducted in north Lebanon, and delivered to the Syrian intelligence in Syria. The same goes to the first lieutenant Kamal Bakir, who was delivered to the Syrian intelligence by his abductors in the area of Masnaa-Jdeideh-Yabouss at the borders. The Syrian dissident Brigadier General Yahya Zehra was also abducted, before his body was found by the security systems near the town of Aarsal.

On December 18th 2014, the information branch belonging to the Internal Security Forces in Bekaa detected a network affiliated to the Syrian Baath party in Lebanon. The network had abducted the Syrian opponent Mohamed Nohmani five days earlier by the force of arms. During the interrogation of the network chief and some members, they confessed having abducted by the force of arms many Syrian opponents in Bekaa. They delivered them afterwards to a Syrian intelligence officer in Damascus.

On July 22nd 2014, a boat took off from the fishermen port in Tripoli, with eight Syrian opponents, including Syrian dissident officers on board. The Lebanese broker M. Fahel had pledged to transfer them to Turkey for money.

The boat left the fishermen port in Tripoli at 5:30 a.m.

When the boat left the Lebanese territorial waters, it was redirected to the Syrian island Arwad, where a Syrian military boat was waiting for them. Then, the Syrian security officers intercepted the boat and arrested its eight passengers.

The Lebanese broker M. Fahel went back to the fishermen port in Tripoli around 10 a.m. raising suspicion amongst the abducted Syrian colleagues. One of them has in fact received a call from inland Syria at 2 o'clock during the same afternoon. He was told that the eight abducted persons are now at the grips of the military security system in Tartous. The caller asked for a financial ransom in return of freeing the kidnapped detainees.

The information branch arrested the broker M. Fahel who recounted the abduction operation details, his deals with the Syrian intelligence. He was soon released since no victim parent filed a lawsuit against him.

A month and 20 days later, the hostages' colleagues told the LIFE legal office that the hostages were transferred to the branch 215 in Damascus, affiliated to the Syrian incursion company. They had lost contact, and are now under an unknown fate.

LIFE wondered about how eight Syrians were able to enter the fishermen port in Lebanon with the Lebanese broker. It is known that all the fishermen ports along the Lebanese coast are under the Lebanese army control, and that any Lebanese fishermen

wishing to fish in these ports has to get a prior authorization from the Lebanese regional army intelligence.

The abduction exacerbated against Syrian opponents and dissident officers, as well as four Syrian dissident soldiers in the area of “Al Bkaieh” in Wadi Khaled, Northern Lebanon. These soldiers were then delivered to the Syrian security authorities. Following these incidents, on April 1st 2015, the Lebanese military intelligence arrested a group of persons in northern Lebanon, including a Lebanese soldier, responsible for luring dissident Syrian officers and soldiers taking asylum in Lebanon, and delivering them to the Syrian authorities.

On April 1st 2015, 30 Syrian refugees were also abducted, in order for them to be exchanged with a Lebanese citizen earlier kidnapped by the “Islamic State”. They were later released following local mediations.

LIFE also recorded the abductions of tens of Syrian refugees perpetrated by pro- Syrian government Lebanese militias. The aim was to exchange these hostages with fighters belonging to their organisation that have been taken as prisoners by the armed Syrian opposition. The abductions did not spare the wounded coming from Syria. There, the Lebanese armed individuals were intercepting the Lebanese Red Cross ambulances, forcing the wounded to get off the ambulance and abducting them to be able to bargain on them with the Syrian armed opposition.

The LIFE legal office documented the abduction of the Syrian wounded “Abdulla Riyad Hajj Mohamed”. He was abducted by the force of arms of the Lebanese militia Hezbollah which forced him to get off the Lebanese Red Cross ambulance in the area of “Rasm Al Hadath” in Bekaa, on August 7th, 2013, at 4:00 p.m.

LIFE thinks that delivering the name lists and data about all the Syrian asylum seekers to the Lebanese authorities, the UNHCR is committing a very dangerous measure that threatens the safety and security of the Syrian refugees, in particular the political opponents, and the dissident Syrian authorities’ personnel. The institute considers this measure to be violating the customs of preserving the refugees data confidentiality.

Section Three

Torture

“ **No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment** ”

(Article 5, UDHR)

The different Lebanese security systems are still practicing torture against their detainees, even though the levels are different.

The Lebanese army intelligence is the best in this field. This system practices systematic torture against its detainees that it is rare that an army intelligence detainee is released, without being subject to torture.

The Lebanese general and state security systems come second.

At a time when torture rates declined at different departments of the internal security forces system, the system is still accused of practicing torture against Roumieh central, and Baabda litigation squad prisoners. LIFE received more complaints from Syrian citizens and policemen affiliated to the Choueifat division.

Since most of the arrests that happened in the two previous years were targeting Syrian refugees in Lebanon, these refugees were not spared from torture, especially the detainees who were arrested for security accusations, or for residency conditions violations.

LIFE delegates interviewed many Syrian refugees who were tortured when detained. According to the victims' statements, torture was not limited to forcing victims to deliver statements during the interrogations. These practices had also political or racial backgrounds: even though they were governmental officers, the perpetrators were saying words that reveal a political belonging or a racial background.

The torture against Syrian refugees not only affected Syrians arrested by the security systems, but also included illegal assaults against Syrian refugees by individuals from the Lebanese armed forces and pro-Syrian regime local militias (Pictures No. 10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28).



(Picture No. 10)



(Picture No. 11)



(Picture No. 12)



(Picture No. 13)



(Picture No. 14)



(Picture No. 15)



(Picture No. 16)



(Picture No. 17)



(Picture No. 18)



(Picture No. 19)



(Picture No. 20)



(Picture No. 21)



(Picture No. 22)



(Picture No. 23)



(Picture No. 24)



(Picture No. 25)



(Picture No. 26)



(Picture No. 27)



(Picture No. 28)

When the armed conflict took place in eastern Saida, between Cheikh Ahmad Assir group on a side, and the Lebanese army, Hezbollah and allied militias on the other in the summer of 2013, the Lebanese armed forces, alongside with local militias arrested many Syrian workers and refugees. They beat and tortured them during interrogation in order to push them to confess their implications in the fight with Cheikh Ahmad Assir group.

On July 18th 2013, LIFE published a report on the “Abra” incident in the eastern part of Saida entitled (Saida... Who dares to hold the perpetrators accountable). The institute tackled the random arrests of Syrian citizens in Saida and its suburbs, as well as the torture they were subject to during mostly illegal interrogations. These interrogations were carried on by fighting officers from the Lebanese armed forces, and fighters from Lebanese local militias.

A video spread on youtube shows a Lebanese army officer affiliated to the 7th brigade with the rank of colonel named H.D, ordered the members of his division to beat a Syrian citizen after handcuffing him in a humiliating way. Though the Lebanese army pledged to hold the officer and his members accountable, no legal prosecution was carried on against them. The Lebanese army command promoted the perpetrators, and applied for the principle of seniority with regards to their colleagues.

The LIFE delegates also interviewed two Syrian citizens detained in Zahraa religious centre that belongs to Hezbollah. They were severely beaten.

Following the Aarsal incidents during August 2014, members of the airborne brigade affiliated to the Lebanese army, conducted incursions against the Syrian refugee camps in Aarsal. These soldiers expelled men from the camp first, in addition to the ill and the elders, and then threw them on the ground and cuffed them to the back. Some members stepped on the back of Syrian men, including a more than 70 years old elder, and others were filming this terrible scene. Films spread then on the social media. They were showing a member of the brigade stepping on a Syrian citizen amputated leg (*Picture No. 29*).



(Picture No. 29)

The camps residents submitted their statements to LIFE delegates. They talked about the incursion details, how the camp was set on fire, and how the handcuffed men were threatened to be set on fire as well after diesel fuel was poured on them (*Pictures No. 30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37*).



(Picture No. 30)



(Picture No. 31)



(Picture No. 32)



(Picture No. 33)



(Picture No. 34)



(Picture No. 35)



(Picture No. 36)



(Picture No. 37)

The Syrian refugees who witnessed that tragedy recounted how a Lebanese army officer objected to the behaviour of the airborne brigade, and demanded to release the elders and return them immediately to their camps. The high ranking officer is Brigadier General Abdel Karim Hachem, head of the eighth brigade who came back later and presented apologies on behalf of the Lebanese army to the Syrian refugees, as per all the violations perpetrated by undisciplined soldiers against them. He was then transferred to the ministry of defence for an unknown reason.

Though all the soldiers' faces appeared in the video footage and pictures, while practicing those violations, no one was prosecuted.

The statement of a Syrian woman was also documented. She was arrested while she was displaced and moving to Lebanon from Syria by armed people wearing civil outfits. They told her that they were going to take her to Palestine prison in Damascus. After being detained and blindfolded, someone took her clothes off and she could hear camera clicks. When she started screaming she was beaten before being sexually assaulted. She was then forced to drink Thinner (zinc chloride), and spent a long time spitting blood. Her case was also documented by the International committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who was visiting her in "Barbar Khazen" prison in Beirut, and informed her that she wasn't in Syria, but in the Lebanese defence ministry prison before being transferred to the women incarceration centre in Beirut.

LIFE followed up on this case until a cooperation was achieved with the military institution. It aims at identifying the perpetrators and preserving the victim's safety.

Through the help of Syrian lawyers, LIFE delegates tried to document such statements and testimonies regarding sexual assaults against Syrian women refugees. However, these women refrained from delivering any statement fearing scandals in their very conservative societies.

LIFE also kept track of three cases of Syrian refugees who were tortured to death in Aarsal. These cases were documented. The institute legal office refused to reveal the witnesses testimonies, since they are Syrian refugees and doctors. There are concerns about any retaliatory measures they can encounter in the absence of any protection for them (*Pictures No. 38-39-40*).



(Picture No. 38)



(Picture No. 39)



(Picture No. 40)

Section Four

Arbitrary Arrests And Extrajudicial Detention

“ No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile ”

(Article 9 of the UDHR).



(Picture No. 41)

Though the country did not declare an emergency, for decades, because of the security instability, the Lebanese government charged the Lebanese army with security missions. These missions include preserving security, arresting interrogating and incarcerating outlaws in military facilities during the interrogation, before referring them to the military court so they can be prosecuted.

The Lebanese army soldiers lack professionalism in the security-related missions based on the forensic sciences, unlike the internal security forces institution. Thus, this bad experience affected very negatively the rights of individuals, either Lebanese citizens or residents.

The Lebanese law stipulates that it is not allowed to arrest any person without a judicial arrest warrant, unless the person is caught “In Flagrate Delicto”. Despite the existence of such a legal rule, the Lebanese army intelligence repeatedly arrests people without prior judicial warrants. It detains them for up to more than a month without informing the detainee’s family or attorney. It doesn’t even inform the judiciary, which never knows about the operation until the intelligence completes its investigation with the detainee, and proceeds later with the prosecution conducted by the military prosecution, according to the results of the intelligence directorate’s investigations with the detainee. These investigations are not free of harsh torture, according to local and international human rights reports, including that of LIFE.

In these arrest operations, the Lebanese army intelligence, and the general security system are based on the so-called “communication documents” or “subjugation documents”, which are news or information coming from ordinary informers.

Despite the Lebanese cabinet’s decision July 24th 2014 abolished the concept of “communication documents” and compelled the security systems to comply with the law, The Lebanese general security system and army intelligence are still counting on such documents to arrest people.

When the flow of thousands of Syrian refugees to Lebanon started, the Lebanese army intelligence and the general security systems proceed to arrest any refugee entering the Lebanese territories through informal borders. They do not take into consideration the surrounding exceptional circumstances which pushed the Syrian refugees to cross Lebanon through the mountain crossings.

The Syrian refugee arrest operations reasons were not limited to their residency status in Lebanon. The operations also included Syrian regime forces dissident officers and soldiers who fled to Lebanon seeking asylum.

[In many instances, the reason the Syrian refugees are arrested for are arbitrary. They occur because of the military and security actions that violate the law for themselves:](#)

- When some Lebanese general security posts refuse to regularize the Syrian refugees residencies without justification, they transform the Syrian refugees, already deprived of a legal residency in Lebanon into outlaws. Therefore they will anytime be subject to arrests since they do not hold legal Lebanese residency documents.
- Following the incursion on the Syrian refugee camps in Aarsal, and the arrest of tens of Syrian refugees by the Lebanese army, the Syrian detainees’ belongings were confiscated including ID cards, passports and personal private documents. After their

release, their personal belongings were not returned to them. This left them without any paper that proved who they were. They are now on subject to arrest for that very reason when they pass any military checkpoint or when they go to any security post.

In violation of the law, the Lebanese general security system arrested Syrian refugees for the simple reason that their names are similar to those of wanted persons. It wasn't verifying the other personal documents such as the mother's name, the date of birth, etc... in accordance with the Lebanese law, it is not allowed to arrest any person without full knowledge and publication of the identity information.

In violation of the international humanitarian law basic rules, the Lebanese army intelligence arrested many Syrian wounded coming from Syria, and transferred them to military barracks to interrogate them. No necessary medical care was provided. The Lebanese security and military systems were tracing and summoning Syrian doctors working in field hospitals. They arrested many of them for their humanitarian action, and for treating the wounded coming from Syria.

On September 24 2014, the Lebanese general security officers at Beirut International Airport arrested the Syrian pro-opposition singer "Assala Nasri" for an hour, according to a summon warrant of the INTERPOL.

In addition, the Syrian authorities had issued an In-absentia warrant to trace "Assala" for communicating with the Syrian state enemies. It informed the INTERPOL of this decision.

After Lebanese politicians intervened, the Lebanese general security authorities returned the Syrian singer passport, since the accusations are based on political, not criminal grounds.

On the morning of March 30th 2015, a Lebanese army intelligence force in Beirut raided the Syrian opponent and liberal publisher "Maan Abel Salam". It took him to one of its security centres, and interrogated him for more than ten hours without any judicial warrant. He was released on the evening of the same day. LIFE had information about the arrest and interrogation reason: the communication between "Maan" and western diplomatic parties in Beirut.

Section Five

Long-Term Detention Without Prosecution

The Lebanese prisons are suffering from chronic overcrowding. In addition, governmental committees recommended that the prisoners' numbers should be reduced by accelerating the detainee's prosecutions.

However, monitoring the implementation of this recommendation, we can see that arbitrary arrests significantly increased lately. They are targeting Syrian refugees in particular.

The LIFE legal office studied certain samples of files for Syrians arrested by the Lebanese security systems, and transferred to justice for prosecution. The study revealed that most of the arrests that targeted Syrian refugees were random and lack evidence of guilt.

As an example, we mention repeated cases of Syrian arrests because of downloaded pictures or video footages on their mobile phones that pertain to the armed conflict in Syria. There were not based on any criminal evidence of guilt that requires any arrest or prosecution. The security systems arrested many Syrians, such as a Syrian refugee having, as wallpaper, a picture of his dead brother carrying a weapon, a picture of the opposition flag, or a video footage about the battles that occur in Syria.

These detainees sit for a very long time in different Lebanese prisons without prosecution. Sometimes, their prosecutions last for longer times for many reasons inter alia, economic ones. In fact, most of the Syrian detainees do not have enough money to appoint a lawyer, or pay their release bill. Some Syrian detainees' families had to hire persons in Syria to sell a real estate they own to pay the costs of their children prosecution in a case that doesn't require long term incarceration. The families wanted to accelerate the prosecution without any impediment.

Many Syrian detainees were subject to blackmailing and fraud committed by security officers, court criers or mediators in order to accelerate their prosecution or to be released.

Section Six

Forced Deportation Or Warnings

“ **No State Party shall expel, return («refouler») or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture** ”

(Article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment , or convention against torture)

The Lebanese government pledged not to force the Syrian refugees to forcibly return to Syria. However, the Lebanese general security adopted procedures to deliver Syrian activists refugees to the Syrian security system. The Lebanese general security system also took forced departure measures against Syrian refugees, and deported them beyond the Masnaa borders.

The Lebanese legal procedures stipulate that when a non-Lebanese citizen completes their sentence, they are delivered to the Lebanese general security system in order for it to prepare all the deportations procedures to the prisoner's homeland, as long as this doesn't contradict the 3rd article of the international convention against torture, ratified by Lebanon in 2000. According to this article, the Lebanese authorities are not allowed to deport any person to a country where they could risk torture.

All the reports issued by local and international human rights institutions point to that the Syrian security authorities are practicing systematic torture in all the security detention centres. There are many cases where torture resulted in death.

The Lebanese government pledged not to deliver any Syrian refugee to the Syrian authorities. Nevertheless, the Lebanese general security had in fact carried out delivery operations of Syrian refugees' opponents to the Syrian president Bachar Assad's regime, including the Syrian activists "Ayman Hariri" and "Mahmud Hamdan". LIFE also received information from the family stating that they are now in the Syrian security custody.

The Lebanese general security also refused to reveal the fate of many Syrian detainees in its custody, after delivery from the central prison of Roumieh. In a phone interview with LIFE, parents of the Syrian activist “Bassel Haidar” told the institute that a car belonging to the Lebanese general security transferred him to beyond the Lebanese-Syrian borders at Masnaa. In a review conducted by LIFE with the Lebanese general security, the latter refused to consider the deportation of “Bassel” out of the Lebanese territories to be “delivering him to the Syrian authorities”. The fate of Bassel Haidar is still unknown. Also parents of another Syrian activist “Usama Karkouz” called LIFE institute and said that the Lebanese general security received “Ussama”, after he completed his sentence in Roumieh prison. Upon a LIFE review with the general security, an officer in charge stated that “Ussama Karkouz” is no longer into the Lebanese general security custody. The mentioned officer did not provide any more details about his current location, or how he was released... this leads to assume that he was deported to Syria, similarly to what previously happened to many Syrian activists in similar circumstances.

In many other cases, with no legal justification, the Lebanese general security refuses to renew the residency card validity of Syrian refugees. It warns them that they have to leave the Lebanese lands a week after receiving the warning. Sometimes it only gives them 48 hours, while the Lebanese general security authorities know that the warned person have documents that only allow him to return to Syria.

Section Seven

Human Trafficking

The article 568 of the Lebanese penal code stipulated that human trafficking is criminalised, and punishable by law. It includes human exploitation, especially the most vulnerable such as women and children in prostitution, sexual exploitation, begging, slavery or forced labour, including forced child recruitment in armed conflicts, or forced implications in terrorist attacks.

On August 24th 2005, the Lebanese government was allowed to join the protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations convention against transnational organised crime, signed in New York on 9/12/2002.

The armed conflict in Syria and its devastating effects on the Syrian human being is a perfect fertile land for the crime of human trafficking to thrive. Poverty is prevailing. The economic situation is deteriorating for more than the two thirds of the Syrian citizens, notwithstanding the internal displacement of millions of Syrians and the dispersion of others in the neighbouring countries, or beyond the Mediterranean, barely surviving an inevitable death. These are factors that contributed to the rise of the human trafficking networks phenomenon, already existing in Lebanon. However, the difficult economic situation of the Syrian refugees, and the lack of security censorship on a big part of the organised crime networks in Bekaa and other areas are all factors that facilitated the work of such networks. They are preserved from censorship and accountability.

The international community has given up on hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in Lebanon on one hand. And on the other, the Lebanese authorities are besieging the Syrian refugees when it comes to making a living. Thus, the Syrian refugee was pushed to work with the organised crime networks that exploit him for benefits. Very often, the whole family participates in the network's operations in order to provide for itself. In return, the network that sponsors it exploits them in the fields of begging, prostitution, and drugs growing in all of its aspects.

Organized Begging

“ Whoom had resources, was able to get those resources through working and begged public charity for their own interests anywhere, explicitly, or under the commercial action cover, will be punished with prison and work for minimum a month and maximum six month. In addition, they can be put in an employment centre according to article 79, and, in case of repetition, they will be forced to undergo the hereby mentioned sentence ”

(Article 610, Penal Code).

Hanging around the cities, namely in the main streets inside the cities of Beirut, Saida, and Tripoli, many Syrian children rush to a person passing by. They want to sell flowers, small toys or tissue boxes. These children often work at the same place where their mothers are doing the same job. However the mothers wait on the side of the road. These children stay for long hours on the streets until beyond midnight. Then they disappear to get back an hour before the Lebanese employees leave their houses for work in the morning. On every Friday, they are seen dispersed at the mosques entrances following the Muslims Friday prayers to beg for financial help.

Though the Lebanese penal code criminalises begging according to article 610 of the Lebanese penal code, no serious prosecutions seem to be carried out by the police alongside with accurate investigation to unveil this increasing phenomenon and the persons behind it.

When the LIFE legal office scrutinised the begging cases in the Lebanese courts drawers, it found that many beggars who were previously arrested and prosecuted get back to the streets for begging, despite their previous pledges before the judiciary that they will refrain from begging and pushing their minor dependants to do so again.

The LIFE legal office interviewed a number of judges who looked into these cases. It was revealed that the judge is unable to proceed with those cases because the legal materials are insufficient, and that it is impossible to implement the laws articles that supports fighting begging, article 79 of the Lebanese penal code in particular. It stipulates that it is necessary to put beggars in a labour care home, since the ministry of social affairs did not build such homes yet. The beggar was therefore pushed back to the streets to commit begging again.

Back to the article 610 of the Lebanese penal code, the article stressed that begging is considered to be a crime, if the perpetrator was able to practice legal work in order to make money. However, if the beggar had no job opportunities, or was unable to work, begging will not be considered as a prosecutable crime. Thus, the Syrian refugee can't be considered to be committing a criminal act, since all of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are prohibited from working on the Lebanese lands according to Lebanese governmental decisions, and pledges not to practice any kind of jobs, clauses imposed by the Lebanese general security system on the Syrian refugees for renewing their residency validity.

In this sense, the human trafficking crime networks found a golden opportunity to exploit many families of Syrian refugees and forced them to work as beggars.



(Picture No. 42)

Sexual Slavery

which includes repeated sexual violations, or forcing the victim to provide sexual services. It also includes rape by the owner. The definition also includes the cases where a person is forced to practice domestic works or get married, or to practice other forced labour like performing sex

The Rome statute defines sexual slavery as the act of exercising any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person, such acts, and human trafficking, especially against women and children.

The social environment of most of the Syrian refugees is conservative. Hence, the Syrian women refugees totally refuse to work as prostitutes, except for very rare isolated cases.

Knowing that many girls were working as covert prostitutes in Syria, they are sold to Lebanese gangs working in this field. The reason is that the resources are rare, and few foreign tourists are going to Syria because of the armed conflict.

Many Syrian girls working as liberal prostitutes inside the Syrian territories, moved willingly to Lebanon in order to work in night clubs.

However, LIFE, through its connection with the bureau on fighting human trafficking in Lebanon, was able to reach cases where the Syrian girls were exploited to work in prostitution against their will. They were probably deceived to do so. The Lebanese police arrested a gang leader who confessed going to Syria and asks Syrian girls' fathers for marriage. He was paying less than one thousand dollars as the bride's dowry. After taking the Syrian girl to Lebanon, he cuts all communication between the girl and her family. He then forces her to work as a prostitute under threat and beating. Sometimes he forces her to use drugs in order for him to keep control of her.

Exploitation In Cultivation Of Contraband Products

The drug substances cultivation and trade in Lebanon are one of the popular activities that occur away from the Lebanese systems censorship. These activities thrive in areas that are beyond the state effective control, since they occur in the areas of Hezbollah militias and close-by Bekaa clans who exchange common profits and interests.

Following the armed conflict that erupted in Syria, many northern Bekaa families who were counting on the contraband of merchandise between Lebanon and Syria, away from the Lebanese customs control witnessed their business falling. There was a

cooperation going on between Syrian contraband networks working in “Qusseir”, and Lebanese ones working mainly in the Bkeaa area of Baalbek and Hermel.

“Abu Hussein”, one of the Lebanese workers in the cultivation of “Indian Cannabis” says for LIFE team that they are living in better conditions following the Syrian armed conflict. The demand for “Hashish” in Syria increased of about 50 %. He also says that Syrian gangs are buying huge quantities per year, i.e. 50 to 200 kg. They are smuggling these quantities to the neighbouring countries through Syria, since it is possible to take advantage of the prevailing chaos in the country. They succeeded in cultivating, harnessing and manufacturing “Hashish” without being disturbed by the Lebanese security systems that are now busy in Arsal and other bordering areas. In his opinion, the Lebanese security systems’ priority for now is to control the Syrian gunmen entry through the highlands of Arsal and Zabdani.

The Lebanese-Syrian borders are tens of kilometres long. In many places they are not even officially identified. It is also difficult for the Lebanese security systems to effectively control them, because these crossings are rough and very wide. It is historically known that these informal borders are used to smuggle people and merchandise between Lebanon and Syria for decades.

Witnesses can clearly see the numbers of Syrian workers who are operating alongside with Lebanese families who are taking advantage of this illegal trade.

It wasn’t easy to travel around the area. But LIFE used the general conversation with the Lebanese farmer “Abu Hussein”. Therefore, our team had the opportunity to watch the screening of the “Indian cannabis”, as well as the grinding operation. It also watched how the cannabis ends are burnt to be disposed of.

When “Abu Hussein” talked to one of the workers who was Syrian as it seems from his dialect, the team asked him whether he was happy with “Uncle Abu Hussein”. He answered: “Yes, Thank God.”

“Abu Hussein” added with pride that the cultivation of “Hashish” helps tens of Lebanese and Syrian families to make a living. The Syrian worker earns 30 USD a day. He added that many of them came with their families to work in Lebanon this season, whether they were Syrian refugees in Lebanon, or Syrians whose businesses stopped in Syria.

According to “Abu Hussein”: “The Syrians here are not harassed since they are away from the security issues. We also help them with the residency documents submitted to the official authorities”.

As an answer to the team’s question “Abu Hussein” says: “yes, we took advantage of the Syrian armed conflict, in both of the cultivation and harness operations. The security systems did not destroy our production for the season since they are busy with more urgent priorities for them. We are also doing great as per the delivery of our production to Syria. Where the war thrives, the “Hashish” trade thrives, this is well known all around the world.” *(Picture No. 43).*



(Picture No. 43)

Chapter Three

Violations Regarding Motherhood And Childhood

“ Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance ”

(Paragraph 2 of article 25 of the UDHR)



(Picture No. 44)



(Picture No. 45)

Section One

The Sufferings Of A Syrian Woman

The asylum crisis devastatingly affected the Syrian women and children, since these categories are the most vulnerable in societies, during these times of crisis.

In the asylum crisis in Lebanon, we notice that Syrian women are bearing the biggest brunt. The Syrian refugees' mothers play the role of the mother, the father and the provider for the whole family at the same time. They are not only bearing the tragedies endured in Syria, but also the harsh miserable refugee life in Lebanon as well.

In the absence of the father for the reasons of death or arrest, the Syrian mother had to provide for the family alone, in the asylum country.

The government denies the Syrian refugees the right to work. Hence, the educated Syrian mother was pushed to indecent and inappropriate kinds of jobs, exacerbating her psychological problems and frustration. As a result, many women Syrian refugees in Lebanon became severely depressed.

Working and providing for the family was not a source of psychological relief for the Syrian women. It was rather a source of embarrassment for fathers who found themselves compelled to accept any marriage proposal for their widowed daughters. They were afraid of the Syrian society's opinion, since it is commonly unacceptable for a Syrian woman to work in the asylum country.

In fact, the habit of parents forcing their Syrian daughters to marriage became very common in the refugee camps. When the daughter is a minor, the habit becomes a gross violation of human rights. LIFE recorded such cases where the husband is 20 to 30 years older than the girl, and already has a wife and children. The reason of such a marriage is the concerns, and the fear of the future. Fathers also wish to get their daughters to safety whatsoever during the exceptional circumstances and crisis. Very often the economic situation plays a main role in this kind of marriages.

Though many Syrian fathers support this kind of marriage, they do not deny that in some instances, it was devastating for the Syrian girl and her family. The husband sometimes abandons his wife days after their marriage, and brings her back to her parents after divorce. Sometimes the divorce is not registered. Hence, the wife is unable to prove her divorce or to file a lawsuit against her husband for legal reasons including not registering the marriage in the first place, or the absence of official documents that enable her to proceed with any legal or administrative procedure. The same goes to many Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

■ **The Syrian Women Underestimation In Lebanon Simply Because Of Her Status As A Refugee Covers Many Aspects Including:**

In ordinary marriages, there are derogations as per the Syrian wife rights, with regard to the low dowry, or her waiver of the right to live in an independent residence, and her acceptance to live with her parents-in-law.

There is also derogation as per her wage at work. Not only is she a woman, but also a refugee for the employers. Then, she will accept any wage she is given. It is noteworthy that about 61 % of the Syrian refugees' families are living of the women salary.

■ **The Women Syrian Refugees In Lebanon Are Humiliated In Different Ways Too Including:**

The Syrian women refugees in Lebanon are constantly suffering from sexual harassment which they encounter in their daily life. They are harassed in the work place, during her circulation, by the society of refugees, or even by the Lebanese security systems officers. The reason for this is the harasser misconception that the woman Syrian refugee is easier to attract than other women.

In the refugee life, domestic violence against women prevails significantly. Unable to work because of his fears to move around Lebanon, the Syrian husband often practices violence against his working wife out of jealousy. Many Syrian husbands also rush for divorce for very trivial reasons.

Here are also many cases of domestic violence practiced by the husband against the wife in the refugees' society, because the wife shares the residence with her parents-in-law. Therefore, the family's situation gets more complicated and problems exacerbate.

When the husband is absent because of death or compelling reasons, the Syrian refugee wife often becomes a violence victim of her parents-in-law who she lives with under the same roof. The reasons are related to the right of the wife to circulation, marriage, and children education.

The sufferings of the women Syrian refugee in Lebanon are not limited to the above-mentioned violations. There are more serious sufferings such as the threat by the Lebanese security systems, or local militias to arrests or deportations, especially against the mother, the wife or the sister if the threat comes as a result of a research operation to find a wanted parent. In addition, women Syrian refugees in Lebanon were subject to random and arbitrary arrests, physical torture, and sexual assaults in state military detention centres inside Lebanon.

Adding to the psychological depression the women Syrian refugees in Lebanon are suffering from, are health problems due to poverty, malnutrition and lack of medical care, which is even inexistent in many camps. Overcrowding, poor hygienic conditions, as well as the use of common bathrooms in the camps contributed to the prevalence of pandemics, and diseases, especially skin infections.

All of these factors negatively affected the Syrian refugee mothers and children in Lebanon equally (*Pictures No. 46-47*).



(Picture No. 46) - Life Team Foundation provides in-kind aids for Syrian refugees in Lebanon



(Picture No. 47) - Life Social Foundation team work to a statistical survey of the number of Syrian refugees in Bekaa and define their needs - Mapping

Section Two

Violations Of The Rights Of Syrian Refugees' Children

“ States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties ”

(Paragraph 1 of article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: CRC)



(Picture No. 48)



(Picture No. 49)

The Syrian refugees are encountering increasing violations of their rights, that their children's rights are violated on different levels. Once these violations touch upon the right of the child to physical safety and security, all their other inalienable rights are under an endless cycle of gross violations in terms of the rights of the child, and all forms of protection guaranteed by the international covenants and conventions on the rights of the child.

-
- “ 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement. ”

(Article 19, CRC)

■ Violations As Per The Physical And Psychological Health Of The Syrian Refugees Children

In the context of the gross violations of the Syrian refugees, the children are directly affected, since they are the most vulnerable and sensitive social category. Especially when they live in a violent environment, harsh conditions, in addition to the miserable economic situation of the Syrian refugees families in Lebanon. They are also affected by the inappropriate legal, or security situation that exacerbated the arrests operations against the Syrian refugees, namely after the Aarsal incidents in last August 5th.

During the Aarsal confrontations between armed groups who came to this Lebanese town from Syria and the Lebanese army, on August 5th, 2014, the Syrian children paid a significant price because of the confrontations. To make things worse, both of the parties did not comply with the armed conflicts rules. On August 8th 2014, LIFE published a field humanitarian report about the implications of the Aarsal confrontation on the civilians. It documented the killing of 8 children and the injury of 126 ones when the Lebanese army directly targeted the Syrian refugee camps in the town.

Adding to all of those tragedies, in the aftermath of Aarsal incidents, Syrian children were arrested by the military intelligence system affiliated to the Lebanese army, and by individuals belonging to the Hezbollah militia in the town of “Labweh”. These individuals were even tracing the Red Cross ambulances in the town of Labweh near Aarsal, and detaining the wounded. Similar individuals were dispatched to “Dar el Amal” hospital in Baalbek, waiting for the Syrian wounded to arrive.

On August 11th 2014, the 16-year-old Syrian child Fahed Abdel Ilah el Fadel, implored his mother who visited him in “Dar el Amal” hospital, Baalbek to take him along, because the investigators were beating him and attempting to strangle him during the interrogation. When she tried to take him along, she was intercepted by a number of gunmen in civil outfits, snatched her child away from her and dragged him to the opposite direction. The child was crying. Fahed’s mother vainly tried to implore the gunmen to leave her son alone, since he had nothing to do with Aarsal incidents, and his small hand injury doesn’t require him to stay in the hospital. But one of the gunmen threatened the mother of arrest if she did not immediately leave the hospital.

The mother of the child Fahed wasn’t able to know whether the civil gunmen belonged to the Lebanese army affiliated military intelligence or were local militia individuals.

On August 12th 2014, the mother of Fahed Abdel Ilah el Fadel received a call from a person in the Dar el Amal hospital, telling her that her child is dead, and that she has to take custody of his body as soon as possible. When the mother went to Dar el Amal hospital, the hospital’s administration told her that she has to look for the Ablah military barrack of the Lebanese army. After repeatedly demanding and insisting to know what happened to her child, the mother of Fahed received a direct threat from a Lebanese soldier she didn’t know what his rank was, that she is going to be delivered to the Syrian authorities.

During the same evening, a Lebanese army intelligence system patrol in Bekaa went to “Atibaa” hospital, in Al manara town, west Bekaa, and arrested the 14-year-old Syrian child “Omar Khaled Raad”, one of “Al Qussair” refugees. It took him to the Lebanese army barrack in Ablah. “Omar” lost his leg when the Lebanese army targeted Syrian refugee camps in Aarsal. He was receiving medical treatment for his wounds in the hospital. Omar Raad was then delivered to his father hours following his arrest. Thanks to a mediation carried out by LIFE with the major general “Mohamed Kheir”, the secretary general of the supreme defence council, rushed to contact the concerned party and released the child.

Since there is no children care program for the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and there are many refugees who were denied the right to education, the Syrian refugees’ children stayed out of schools, and were deprived of any care or protection against surrounding dangers that threaten their physical and psychological safety.

On June 8th 2014, in Halba, Akkar, (northern Lebanon), the Syrian child refugee Mohamed Nidal Khawli, 5 years was raped. The perpetrator then killed him by strangling and stabbing him many times later with a knife to make sure he was dead. Then he put it in a cardboard box, and dropped him in a dump.

Also, on March 21st 2015, and also in Akkar, The Lebanese police arrested a Lebanese young man who confessed of raping the ten year old Syrian refugee child “K.R.M”.

The next day, March 22nd 2015, the Lebanese police found the body of the 13 year old Syrian refugee child “Ali Walid Halloum”, who went missing one day earlier. His body was found on the river bank in the town of Koweikhat, Akkar. According to the forensic report, it was revealed that he was strangled by a 2 mm wire, and had bruises on his right eye.

Ali went missing when he was going to recharge his mobile phone from a mobile phone shop from his house in Koweikhat, Akkar. The shop is one hundred and fifty meters away from his house.

The Syrian children refugees in Lebanon were no exception to the sectarian and racist assaults. It left the children with negative psychological and health effects. The discrimination that the Syrian children encounter in the local Lebanese schools and societies because of their Syrian identity unfortunately became one of the most basic serious discrimination acts that happen all along their refugee journey in Lebanon.

On July 19th 2014, the social media published a video footage showing the assault perpetrated by the Lebanese child “Abbas Hussein Abbas Tufeily” against the Syrian child refugee “Khaled Naasan”, born in 2005. He was severely beating him, and his family was filming the beating scene and publishing the footage on youtube. The suspects were arrested: the child “Abbas Abbas” father and uncle. They were referred to the public prosecution before the cassation court. They were then transferred to the appellate body of Mount Lebanon, in order for them to be prosecuted for the serious crime of beating, assaulting and arresting the child Khaled Naasan. At the judicial level, at the end of the day, the file was referred to the Grand jury who released the prisoners three months following their detention.

LIFE tried to provide legal assistance for the assaulted child. Many bodies also tried to contact the child’s father to provide him and his family with financial assistance. However, the child’s father, afraid of revenge, was fearful to communicate with us and with the parties that offered help.

The LIFE lawyer team noticed that the child’s father wasn’t alone when he visited the Palace of Justice. Before entering to the public prosecutor and investigative judge offices, a number of men gathered around him and took him to the court. Others joined them, including an attorney. Though the public prosecutor asked the child Khaled’s father if he wishes to prosecute the perpetrators and demand a civil compensation, Khaled’s father refused to file any lawsuit against the perpetrators considering them to be neighbours and friends.

“ States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development ”

(Paragraph one of Article 27 of the CRC)

■ Child Labour And Exposure To The Danger Of Exploitation.

In order for them to improve the family living situation, many Syrian refugees’ families in Lebanon pushed their children to work in hard labour activities for them, inappropriate for their age, and physical and mental structure. Thus, tens of Syrian children were dispersed in the squares and streets as street vendors for flowers and tissues. They spend the night wandering on the streets, risking exploitation by certain drugs, prostitution, or human trafficking gangs, or by organised begging networks. They could also be subject to sexual assaults, kidnappings, or risk accidents that endanger their safety and life. The Syrian child “Fatima”, 11 years old, a flower street vendor in one of Saida squares lost her life after being rammed by a car on April - 2015.

Begging also rose as a habit amongst some Syrian refugees, especially in some Lebanese cities. The refugees’ children were lured to practice this habit. The institute was unable to confirm whether the Syrian children beggars are working for organisations, or it is a random behaviour of the child’s family. This stays completely unknown as long as the Lebanese police system did not mobilise to fight this plague, and conduct investigations about the reasons of its prevalence, or to find out whether there were organisations that exploit the children and their families.

Noting that the counter human trafficking office of the Lebanese internal security forces arrested organised gangs who exploit Syrian refugees’ women and children who fled the armed conflict in their country to Lebanon.

Some families as well forced their children to work in places that can endanger their physical safety such as bakeries, and construction sites. The institute noticed some beating and violence cases against Syrian children working in this field, perpetrated by the children’s parents and employers in order to force them to keep working against their will (*Picture No. 50-51*).



(Picture No. 50)



(Picture No. 51)

■ Deprivation Of The Syrian Refugees' Children Of The Right To Education.

“ Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages ”

(Article 26, UDHR)



(Picture No. 52) - Life educational institution programs special for Syrians refugees in Lebanon

The Syrian children number's percentage rate is between 60 and 70 % of the total Syrian refugees' number in Lebanon. Thus, when educational grants are given to 100 thousand Syrian students, this means that around 400 Syrian students will be deprived of education. Besides, the number of public schools in the Lebanese areas where the refugees are mainly living is unable to contain huge numbers of students. Instead of facilitating the efforts of the non-governmental organisations in the field of education of Syrian students refugees, the Lebanese minister of education asked all the governors in the working areas to shut down the schools established by the civil society organisations.

“Al Jadeed” TV station also broadcasted an instigation report against the education office affiliated to the Syrian opposition government in Tripoli, and denounced the establishment of such an office on the Lebanese lands. It wondered what would be the Lebanese government opinion about it. Therefore, the Lebanese minister of education,

who belongs to a pro- Syrian regime political party, was forced to chase the schools for Syrians and work on closing them without providing any alternative for the displaced Syrian students.

The bad economic situation, for most of the Syrian refugees' families in Lebanon, was a motive for many of them to give priority to their children labour instead of education.

The security situation was very influential in the fact that the Syrian children were not sent to schools. LIFE delegates met some fathers who stopped accompanying their children to school fearful to be arrested on the military checkpoints, arbitrarily or because of their expired residency cards. Also because of the lack of transportation means, parents refrained from sending their children to school.

■ **Syrian Refugee Children Deprivation Of Registration After Birth.**

“ **The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents** ”

(Paragraph 1, Article 7 of the CRC)

In order to prove the non-Lebanese children birth, the Lebanese authorities adopt specific conditions and procedures. Anyone wishing to register the birth of their child must comply with them in order to prevent legal problems that may harm the child identity in the future.

The Lebanese hospitals issue birth documents. In them they mention the child's parents names, the child's name (if available) and birth date. This document should be signed by the physician, or the midwife who supervised the delivery process. One the child's parents should apply for the document in the hospital where the delivery process took place. In addition, the hospital's administration is not entitled at all to refrain from delivering the document for the child's parents under any circumstances.

When the hospital delivers the document, the parents should go to the town of residency mayor. They apply for a birth record that should be signed by the physician or the midwife who supervised the delivery process. The mayor should then resume all the paperwork according to the statements and identities of the child's parents. They should also complete the details of the child's identity such as the name and the birth date.

Then, this record is certified in the personal status directorate in the area of the child's parents residency.

This procedure is considered to be one of the general regulations in Lebanon. Thus, if the parents delayed the registration of their child for more than a year, they should file a lawsuit to prove the identity of their child, and then register the child when a judicial judgement allows them to do so.

According to the UNHCR report, more than 70 % of the Syrian refugee children births are not registered in Lebanon, and are not formally proven in the governmental departments. Undoubtedly, most of the Syrian refugees' children will face a legal threat to their identity and citizenship in the future, when the armed conflict in Syria ends and the refugees return to their home country Unless the Lebanese authorities intervene soon, in cooperation with the international community in this regard.

The legal reality of most of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and the way the Lebanese authorities are dealing with the Syrian refugees file prevents the parents from registering their child according to the above-mentioned procedures.

[Most of the impediments that prevent the Syrian refugees from registering their newborns are the following:](#)

- **Fear Of Movement.**

Many Syrian refugees avoid moving or going to the official directorates for fear of being arrested, especially when arbitrary arrests of Syrian refugees and the phobia against the Lebanese military and security systems prevailed amongst the Syrian refugees.

- **Illegal Residency In Lebanon.**

Many Syrian refugees do not hold legal residency documents in Lebanon since they did not enter the Lebanese borders legally. They also do not hold formal personal identification documents, or they are unable to pay 200 USD as an annual residency fee for the Syrian refugee in Lebanon.

The Lebanese government decided to prevent any Syrian citizen to Lebanon as of December 31st 2014, unless under very complicated conditions. It also pledged not to include the Syrian refugees who live in Lebanon. However, the Lebanese general security system imposes on the Syrian refugees to find a Lebanese grantor or a registered lease to bring them along with the required documents that should be available in order to renew their residency document. As a result, many Syrian refugees refrained from going to the general security posts in order to regularise their residency documents.

In order for any parent to register their non- Lebanese child, the Lebanese authorities require them to have a legal residency document on the Lebanese lands. The Lebanese

government did not exempt the Syrian refugees from having to fulfil this requirement. As a result, the Syrian refugees found real impediments to registering their children who were born in Lebanon.

• **The Absence Of Any Personal Identification Document.**

Many Syrian refugees entered the Lebanese lands to escape the warfare. They did not carry any luggage or personal documents. Since the new birth registration procedures require both of the parents' identity, and because one of the parents is absent in some cases. It is impossible for the Syrian refugees to register their children born in Lebanon.

• **Out-Of-Hospital Births.**

Though the UNHCR covers 75 % of the hospital delivery fees, many Syrian refugees prefer to have births inside their residencies. The reason is sometimes the social customs, sometimes the fact that the family is not able to pay the rest of the hospital births fees amounting to 25 %. There are other impediments such as the impossibility of movement, and the long distance between the hospital and most of the Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon.

This is a pivotal problem. The out-of-hospital birth prevents the parents from having a birth document, signed by the physician or the midwife who supervised the delivery process. Thus, the birth can't be registered for that same reason.

• **Unproven Marriage Of The Parents.**

In order for the birth to be registered, the parents' marriage should be proven and registered. Otherwise, it is impossible to register the birth under any circumstances, unless lawsuits were filed to prove the marriage first, and the birth and the parental link second, according to the Lebanese laws.

The personal status directorates simply accept the Syrian parents' family status, and the by the Sunni Shari 'a court grants facilitations for the Syrian refugees wishing to get married in Lebanon. It accepts the couple's ID card without any other document or certification from the Syrian embassy in Lebanon or the Syrian ministry of foreign affairs. However, the prevalence of secret or undisclosed marriages in the Syrian refugees' societies prevented them from proving the marriage. It deprived the wife and her children from their rights that can be granted by a formally and legally registered marriage contract.

- **Incapacity Of The Parents To Go To Syria.**

Because of the fear for life and future, and of the Lebanese government decision that prevent any Syrian refugee from returning to Lebanon when they leave the country, the Syrian parents refrain from trying to complete the birth registration paperwork in Lebanon. They are also driven not to do so by fear of being arrested – if they were pro-opposition citizens-. They also refrain from visiting the Syrian embassy in Lebanon for the same reason, since Syrian citizens were subject to repeated assaults and freedom deprivation inside the embassy by Syrian security officers.

■ **Malnutrition And Health Situation.**

Syrian children refugees' malnutrition in Lebanon is due to many factors including the poor hygiene in the surrounding environment. There are many improvised camps containing thousands of overcrowded Syrian refugees. As a result, the area is transformed into a fertile land for spreading diseases and epidemics, especially due to the lack of immunisation, appropriate children health care and health facilities, and unhealthy practices as per giving nutrition to newborns and infants who basically need their mother's breastfeeding. The lack of the mother's health education, physical and psychological weakness, and her busy day push her to prefer artificial feeding of dried milk that does not contain the appropriate vitamins and minerals for the child development. In addition, the lack of clean and safe drinking water, and sterilised feeding tools lead to serious bacterial and viral infections for the child due to the lack of immune system.

The most vulnerable categories to malnutrition and associated diseases are the children under the age of five years. This occurs namely in the winter, when the season carries frost to the Lebanese highland areas where most of the Syrian refugees' camps are based, due to the absence of appropriate infrastructure to protect these vulnerable camps and residents from the yearly snow storms.

Malnutrition is from now on a serious and silent threat for around 2000 Syrian child refugees in Lebanon, they are in urgent need for relief in order for them to stay alive.

It is noteworthy that the prevalence of severe malnutrition cases in Bekaa and northern Lebanon has doubled in 2014 in comparison with 2013.

The nutritional situation of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon can worsen rapidly and dramatically. The reasons for this are the high food prices, the lack of food security, and the reduction of the UN assistance amount due to the high numbers of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

On October 13th 2014, “Elisabeth Rasmussen” deputy CEO of the UN World Food Programme (WFP), stated that the programme will reduce the provided funding. However, she pledged to deliver food for all, but with reduction of 40% of the assistance per capita. This decision will negatively affect the already deteriorated food situation of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

LIFE also recorded cases of Syrian children refugees in Lebanon who lost their lives because their parents were not able to take them to hospitals because of the economic situation (*Picture No. 53*).



(Picture No. 53)

Part Two

Recommendations

The Lebanese Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (LIFE) presents a set of recommendations for the concerned parties in order to improve the living conditions of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, until they can safely return to their home countries. They also help to follow up on the gross violations of the human basic rights, and try to address them.

LIFE submitted those recommendations for the Lebanese Executive, Legislative and judicial authorities. It also called for the help of the International community, since the Syrian refugees file is now a global cross border crisis, and needs humanitarian concerted efforts around the world.



Chapter One

Recommendations Regarding The Lebanese Authorities

Section One

On The Governmental Level

Back to the above-mentioned violations against the Syrian refugees in Lebanon rights, it turns out that most of their reasons are governmental decisions, or negligence, or due to the direct responsibility of the Lebanese governmental systems.

For that reason, LIFE demands the Lebanese government to adopt several measures as follows:

- To repeal the decisions that transform the Syrian refugee into an outlaw resident on the Lebanese lands, to facilitate the access of all Syrian refugees to all the legal paperwork, and to refrain from imposing on them any unbearable burdens.
- The Lebanese government must treat the Syrian refugee reasonably as a humanitarian case. It is unacceptable to compel the Syrian refugees to bear financial burdens while depriving them from the right to work and to earn money.

The Lebanese government must realise that some of its decisions do not protect Lebanon from the repercussions of the Syrian presence. They only transform the Syrian refugees into outlaws against their will.

- According to its tutelary powers on the municipalities, and through the ministry of the interior, the Lebanese government must prevent the municipalities from taking any illegal, inhuman, or racial measures against the Syrian refugees.
- The Lebanese government must practice censorship on the different Lebanese security systems with regards to its decisions for the Syrian refugees' affairs in Lebanon.
- The Lebanese security systems must stop their random and arbitrary arrests against Syrian refugees under the pretext of pre-emptive security.
- The Lebanese army intelligence, general security and state security systems must stop practicing torture and all ill treatments against Syrian detainees. They should comply

with the ministerial decision to abolish the “communication documents” or “subjugation documents”, and to refrain from arresting people according to such documents. They must only comply with the judicial warrants in this regard.

- The Syrian refugees must be respected and humanly treated, away from racism or any other forms of discrimination. Their rights must be respected and protected equally with any Lebanese citizen’s rights.

- Motherhood and childhood should be provided with special health and psychological care. The Syrian children must be provided with education, and the right to be immediately registered after birth without any delay, which would result in serious future unnecessary problems.

LIFE also stresses the importance of the cooperation between the UNICEF and the Lebanese ministry of Health, alongside with other local partners. The aim is to build capacities and mobilise the health personnel, in order to protect the Syrian women and children refugees from malnutrition and diseases, and to provide them with appropriate treatment and medical care.

- The implementation on the Lebanese governmental decision to prevent the Syrian refugees from entering to Lebanon starting December 31st 2014 must cease. Such decision is not consistent with the International Human rights Law, namely the Article 14 of the UDHR. Besides, asylum reasons coming from Syria still exist. In addition, the implementation of this decision on the Syrian refugees already living in Lebanon must cease.

- The deportation of Syrians to their country by the force of coercion must cease immediately, in accordance with the Article 3 of the Convention against Torture, that was ratified by Lebanon in 2000. The Lebanese government must stop warning the Syrians to leave, and grant them the legal residency documents when they apply for them before the General Security system without any illegal impediments.

- We demand the Lebanese government to understand the asylum seeking by Syrians who fled through informal crossings to Lebanon, and the exceptional circumstances that pushed them to do so. The government must not treat them as illegal migrants and arrest them for that reason. However, this procedure should not compromise the military and security measures adopted to protect the Lebanese borders from any danger threatening the Lebanese lands.

- The racial speeches and statements that instigate hatred against the Syrian refugees must cease. This prevention should be published among all the ministries and public administrations in Lebanon.

- The civil society organisations that work on assisting the Syrian refugees should be encouraged, not hampered, especially those where Syrian activists are working. It is not of the interest of Lebanon or the Syrian refugees to empty the Syrian refugees' societies of the Syrian educated persons, active in the medical and Human rights fields. These persons are practicing with the refugees many activities that stress the importance of awareness and positive engagements.

- Everyone who has been proven to commit violations against the Syrian refugees, illegally exploiting them in illegal acts must be prosecuted.

- Cooperation must be established with international and local organisations such as the UNHCR, in terms of managing the Syrian refugees' issues. There should be no decisions that affect the Syrian refugees' situation in Lebanon, unless consultations were conducted with the international bodies in this regard.

Section Two

On The Judicial Level

The Lebanese judiciary plays an important role when it comes to mitigating a huge part of the Syrian refugees' sufferings in Lebanon.

At a time when Syrian refugees human rights seem to be respected by certain Lebanese judges, especially when it comes to the Syrians who were arbitrarily detained, many courts, namely the military court cover the arbitrary arrests perpetrated by certain security systems against Syrian refugees.

Therefore, the Lebanese government must do the following:

- Stop the prosecution of any person who has been subject to arbitrary or extra judiciary arrest.
- Refrain from taking into consideration the interrogations that were conducted with Syrian detainees under torture or threat, and conduct a parallel investigation about torture cases in order to hold the perpetrators accountable.
- Prosecute the violators of the Syrian refugees rights on the judicial level, whether a public administration, a militia, or any other citizen.
- Prohibit the prosecution of any Syrian refugee who illegally fled to Lebanon, due to the exceptional circumstances which pushed them to do so, except those who were infiltrated to Lebanon in order to commit criminal and terrorist offenses.
- Stop the discrimination of judicial judgements between the Syrian refugee and the Lebanese citizen.
- Grant the priority to the ratified international conventions and covenants rather than to the national internal legislations. This applies in case any contradiction was found between them as per the way the Lebanese judiciary manages the issues of the Syrian refugees.

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- Avoid sentencing the refugees to forcible deportation to Syria.
 - Refrain from stalling the prosecution of the detained Syrian refugees, and exempt them from a bailment, given their bad economic situation.
 - Commute the sentences against the Syrian refugees who are illegally staying in Lebanon.
 - Cooperate with the international bodies and organisations, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Legal assistance office of the UNHCR, and the local and international Human rights organisations, document the violations and encourage the policy of accountability and impunity prevention.

Section Three

On The Legislative Level

In its capacity as the legislative authority in Lebanon, and one of the supervisory authorities for the activities of the government and its bodies, the Lebanese parliament has to assume its responsibilities that the people and the constitution charge it with. It is the authority that is – constitutionally- entitled to ratify the international conventions. It is therefore responsible for supervising the implementation of these international conventions, especially those about human rights.

For that reason, LIFE demands the parliamentary committee on Human Rights to conduct periodical unexpected visits to prisons and security and military detention centres, identify the torture practitioners and demand to refer them to the judiciary. They should be then prosecuted on the judicial, not the professional level.

Hold the ministers whose acts compromised Human rights in Lebanon accountable.

Sign the Rome statute that established the International Criminal Court (ICC).



Chapter Two

Recommendations For The International Community



(Picture No. 54)

The Syrian refugees' crisis exceeded the capacity of any Syrian neighbouring state to address such situations.

Lebanon is a small country with a vulnerable population structure. It is bearing the biggest brunt of the Syrian refugees, since it is located near the borders of the biggest Syrian districts (Homs and rural Damascus). These areas witnessed and are still witnessing the most violent military actions in the context of the Syrian armed conflict.

LIFE reminds the International Community of its ethical commitments about the Syrian crisis resulting from the armed conflict that last for more than three years. It is also responsible for its commitments about the tragedy caused by the conflict, and that includes the displacement of more than ten million Syrians in and out of Syria.

Therefore, immediately stopping the Syrian armed conflict is the main request of LIFE. Then, it is necessary to proceed into a calm transition to a democratic system that meets the expectations of all the Syrian people. They are the ones who made many sacrifices in order to restore its right to freedom and dignity, and to live in a promising thriving democratic state.

The neighbouring states that are capable of sharing the huge number of Syrian refugees are urged to do so, and to protect the Syrian refugees from any danger, whether those refugees are living inside Syria or in the neighbouring asylum countries. These refugees also must be protected from the human trafficking and human smuggling gangs.

The UNHCR and the international donors must increase their assistance to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, through the active CSOs in Lebanon, and the Lebanese government, provided that the expenditure and spending processes should be monitored in order to guarantee that the assistance reaches the real beneficiaries.

The United Nations and all the international donors must urge the Lebanese government to stop all the forms of discrimination against the Syrian refugees. They must refrain from accepting the practices of the Lebanese government or choosing to stop the assistance granted for it.

The United Nations and international donors must provide the Syrian refugees in Lebanon special programs for legal protection, special programs for motherhood and childhood care and physical and psychological safety. The WFP must double the amount of its assistance to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and refrain from reducing it under any circumstances.

Find a temporary solution for the Syrian refugees who do not hold passports or who hold expired ones, in order to facilitate their movement to the country they wish to live in. It is noteworthy in this regard that this procedure can lead to the reunification of many Syrian families who lost contact and capacities in the asylum countries.

Try to save a whole generation of Syrian children who missed their school years, given that there is not any legally recognised organ that provides them with education, and necessary degrees and diplomas, especially for those unable to return to Syria.