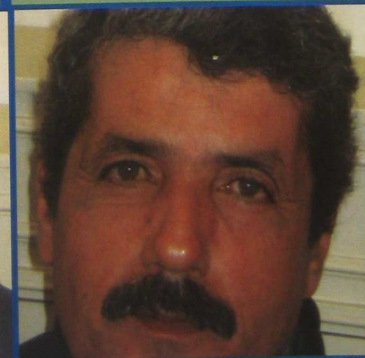


Lebanese Center for Human Rights



# From Darkness to Light

Testimonials of Beneficiaries



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Centre Nassim for the rehabilitation of victims of torture was founded in Beirut in 2007 by the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH), an organization active in the fight against arbitrary detention, torture and enforced disappearances.

Centre Nassim brings to victims of direct or indirect torture, physical or psychological, a multidisciplinary management that allows them to rebuild, move forward, and regain their place in Lebanese society or in a third countries.

Centre Nassim operates with the support of those who believed and still believe in the importance of this project including:

- The Embassy of the Netherlands in Beirut
- The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
- The Oak foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust and IRCT (International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims)
- The World Organization against Torture (OMCT)

- The Danish government
- The Arab Human Rights Fund
- The Danish Refugee Council
- La2mit Mahabbe association of Archbishop Antoine Nabil Al Indari
- Working Together for Human Rights
- The French Embassy in Beirut
- The Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of support to Human Rights Defenders
- Individual donors

In this booklet, seven beneficiaries of Centre Nassim have agreed to tell their stories, and to share publicly what Centre Nassim has brought them. We are most grateful for their contribution.

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## **Magui Andreoti: Devastated by war, she found the taste for life at Centre Nassim**

My name is Magui Andreoti: I am married with two children. I was a housewife and my home bathed in love. The war started, and a bomb killed my second son who was nine years old at the time. Two years later, the Syrians took my eldest son, Stavro, who was seventeen and was still at school. I was then pregnant with my third son, who, to my sorrow, died at the age of one and a half while we took shelter in a refuge. We thus found ourselves without children.

No longer able to live in our house, now empty, my husband went to live abroad for five years. Now alone, I started to drink and smoke day and night, so as to forget. My body and my mind left me, all I thought about was suicide. When my husband heard this, he returned. His sadness was such that he died of a heart attack. My only choice left in this life was now suicide. I was on the verge of doing it five times, but every time I heard a voice saying to me “you’re a woman of faith”, which made me reconsider my decision. This was until God’s will lead me to meet a young lady from Centre Nassim and I got to know this great center.

I was able to get to know the administration and doctors who offered me all the sympathy and tenderness that I had lost: I really needed to be saved from loneliness and destruction. I then met the center's psychotherapist, Eli Abou Chakra, who in turn restored my strength, my hope, my love of life and honestly saved me from death since from then on I thought no more of suicide. He was my friend, brother and savior and he treated me for over a year. I will never forget him. All of this thanks to the center, Centre Nassim that I love as I love my home, as I love myself. When I enter the center, I feel as if I'm not alone in this world because God sent me brothers and friends who helped me, because thanks to their hospitality and the attending physicians at this center they saved me on several levels: doctors gave me drugs for free, I was reimbursed the transportation, they found me work in an association. They are my only refuge. I don't know how to thank them. Thanks to them, today I am happy with my life. I very much love the center. I ask God Almighty that this center remains the hope of every person in need and the savior of anyone ill.

Honestly, I had knocked on the door of several charities, help centers, and unfortunately no one helped me. I swear by Almighty God that I never found a center such as this one, a center that was sent to us by God. This center is a miracle in his favor through its employees, its directors and doctors. Even

when I needed a lawyer for issues with my home, they provided me with one. I don't know how to thank them, and I ask God that their door be left open and that they be for us the hope and goodwill we so need. May God prolong their life and help them save those in need. You have, Centre Nassim, all my affection, my greetings and my wishes for long life and success, while hoping that we will keep touch you and I.



**Itidal Itani: Widow and mother of  
two detainees, Centre Nassim  
brought her comfort and  
support.**

I am a widow. My husband died in 2007, and I have a daughter who has been working in a company for four years. I have two children who are at Roumieh prison. The eldest has spent six years in building D, the youngest is in prison since 2008, in building B. Both have experienced torture, oppression and humiliation, while I struggled to manage to live from my only daughter's salary who had become the sole breadwinner. Sometimes I would work in a sewing workshop in order to meet the needs of my home and support my two children prisoners, and this until fatigue left me helpless. I could not work because of calcification, and pain in the stomach and nerves. It was by chance that I met a lady who took me to Centre Nassim and there they helped me medically and morally. I turned to them often for treatment, psychotherapy, health, and they were affectionate with me, and polite. They helped me time and again by providing me with my medicines, as well as laboratory tests and x-rays. All the physicians sympathized with us and consistently helped us to obtain the drugs we needed. Furthermore, the Centre

provided me, as much as possible, with various material things as well as drugs, for free. I thank all those who work for this distinguished humanitarian center, I wish it to prosper and resume its humanitarian activities more completely. May God perpetuate your charity (the messiah said “love one another”) and we, without your help, become weak and regress.

We ask for your continued support, and that God’s blessings abound on you. We are grateful for your loyal and discreet charity work. Without you we would be weak, without means to heal ourselves. I wish for more health and wellness to everyone who participates in Centre Nassim project. May God be with you.

## **Amer Ahmad El-Naboulsi: Former detainee of Syrian prisons, Centre Nassim gave him hope**

I work in agriculture with my father since I was little. I have sixteen brothers and we live in a one-room house. When I turned fifteen, I worked in a bookstore run by our neighbor and member of the Islamic Community. A year later, the Syrian Intelligence Services led a raid on the library claiming the presence of weapons, and they arrested me and kept me for one year in Halba prison belonging to their section. After I was tortured in prison, they apologized. Two months later, I worked at a gas station in Chekka. Every time I came home, they questioned me at Syrian checkpoints. I then left my job at the gas station and left to work in bakery in Beirut. However, on my return trip home, I was arrested at the El-Madfoun checkpoint belonging to the Syrian intelligence services. They arrested me and put me in a prison under a bridge, in a dark room for two days. They released me after having tortured me, and I was hospitalized for a week without being able to speak. After some time I was at home with my family when Syrian intelligence services raided my

house. They took me blindfolded to Halba prison where I remained for a week, and after that they took me to prison in Syria, then to the so called Palestinian branch. I remained there one year and three months. I was tortured barbarically, in the wheel, with electrical wires, beatings, suspended by rope...they told me that my one-year-old son was deceased, to torture me mentally. The food they gave us was awful. When I left prison, I was again hospitalized for a month, and I couldn't find work afterwards.

After all of this, Ms. Leila Meraachli came to me and brought me to Centre Nassim that took care of all the necessary interventions in terms of medical care, psychotherapy, physiotherapy, dental care, visits to an ophthalmologist and to a neurologist. They offered me all the means of comfort. This center is one of the best centers and without it I would be exhausted from all the diseases caused by my imprisonment. For a year and a half now, I've been very healthy. We wish to support the center, for without it we would have not been alive. "They gave hope to our souls..."

# **Adel Abdallah Mohamad: Iraqi refugee in Lebanon, Centre Nassim brings him the necessary support**

Warm greetings to the respectable Centre Nassim,

Centre Nassim offers great humanitarian services as well as outstanding activism for victims of torture, social, medical and legal services, as well as employment opportunities. It provides quality services to improve their living conditions in Lebanese society. It gives them a dignified and respectable life through its quality services, its high moral principles and well-intentioned employees. For this, they must be taken in consideration!

I am Adel Abdallah Mohamad Al-Bakal, born in 1959, of Iraqi nationality, and a refugee.

I started coming to Centre Nassim three years ago. I was in the worst situation in terms of health, as well as socially and legally. The center immediately took me on and helped me on all three levels, and with great professionalism and remarkable humanism.

The physiotherapist Elie followed and treated me naturally. He helped me a lot in the treatment of my

pain and allowed me to recover to regain my ability to walk normally. He alleviated the pain my body suffered due to torture and gunshot wounds received at the hands of the militia of my country. His method of treatment is excellent; it has worked well and allowed me to live my life normally.

Dr. Imad diagnosed my illness and gave me drugs that have reduced my pain

Lawyer Hasna Abdul Reda followed my legal file and oversaw it with the UNHCR and the Australian embassy with professionalism and in coordination with the team at the center.

Greetings to all those working in the center. I hope the center will grow and expand its activities so that it continues to offer services that meet the needs of those who require it. I ask that this center remains in place and continues to live.

## **Vahe Geryes: Centre Nassim changed his life**

I am from a family made up of a father, a mother and three brothers. I have an older brother named Edward, and a younger brother, Pierre. My name is Vahe.

It's been so long that I need to express what I feel inside as pain and suffering that I carry from my childhood that repression and I have become great friends. I struggle so much with my feelings, I suffer so much pain, oppression and deprivation that I started to have a strong sense of inferiority against all persons enjoying good health. Maybe I'm not ready to return now to my past, but I will touch on some episodes, the most important of my life.

Since the death of my father thirty-four years ago, I worked as a merchant in the markets. Over time, I got a regular clientele. When my stock of merchandise was exhausted, I went in search of new products to sell. At that time, my motivation to work increased day by day: I was making money. This taught me to learn how to relate to people: I was not asking for pity from anyone and God gave me good fortune. I was beginning to save. I opened accounts with several

banks and I bought a cottage in the region of Amchit and another in the region of Annaya.

I was used to living with a feeling that followed me day and night: impotence. This feeling caused unbearable pain in me: being a young disabled man, no women would accept my company. Many did not understand the disability. I began to frequent bars to satisfy my appetite and compensate for this feeling of impotence, and this until the day I fell in love with a girl with whom I had a relationship for eight years. I loved her and I became attached to her. I spent everything I earned for her, and I lived under the illusion that she loved me and that we were going to marry. It was too late when I realized her true motivation. At that time I had about six hundred grams of gold that I wore to offer a picture of me that was superior to how I felt: weak. Gradually, my situation regressed from a financial standpoint and I began to sell my gold to spend for her. I also began to withdraw money from my bank accounts. I was like a ring on her finger. I did not listen to my family telling me to leave her, and she, meanwhile, distracted me from my weaknesses. This is how I lost all my money and my cottage: She ran away from me and disappeared...I began to drink, and one night when I was looking for her, I had a car accident from which I came out with multiple fractures. Having taken a big blow to the head, I had to stay in bed, and that was the end for me. My room became my prison and I stayed



there for fifteen years. I did not want to see anyone: I became impolite and I insulted my family members who came to visit me. So I began to adjust to a new lifestyle, consisting of continuous sleep, despair, rage and pain, inside my room.

The second blow of my life, which worsened my condition, was when my brother was arrested for murder when he was innocent. I was sure of his innocence because my brother is a good and tender person. Although he took drugs, he was not a murderer. He loved me, looked out for me, and helped me. He was saddened by my state. So the years passed, and I lived in fear for my brother and I found myself in a permanent state of anxiety over his future, because I had no one else but him. Suddenly, the court issued its judgment sentencing him to death. The announcement of this news was frightening to me. I became completely obsessed with it and with fear that his sentence be executed while he was innocent, and suffered from heart disease and high blood pressure. The appeal led to the reconsideration of the judgment but his arrest lasted a long time, and all this time I could not go see him because of my condition.

Before my brother entered prison, he had come in contact with Centre Nassim and went there to take medication. During his imprisonment, the center was providing him with his drugs within the prison. My

brother was appreciating them a lot and often said they were good people. Furthermore, the lawyer for the Centre undertook his defense, and my brother was always grateful to Lawyer Hasna.

When I met the Centre's team, my life changed. I would like to thank Dr. Imad, the psychotherapist, physiotherapist and Ms. Manal. I do not know how to return the favor. I was dead, desperate and they helped me, and got my brother out of prison. I also thank lawyer Hasna who worked for us for free. I thank especially Ms. Manal for her kindness and sincerity: she deserves all the good of the world. I would also like to thank the center that helped my mother, either through its support of her shop, or by buying her wool so that she works and is able to support her and her children. The center also helped me to buy food so I could sell them on the street next door to us, and that did me a lot of good. Thank you for your attention to my mother, my brother and me regarding care, medications, and free doctor visits. You gave us back our souls, and thanks to you we are alive again.

I love you very much, and I hope with all my heart that God protects you because you have no idea how much you give back people's lives. Thank you.

## **Leyla Meraachli: Victim of the worst kinds of torture, Centre Nassim is her new family**

I am the sixth child of a middle class family, whose first and last concern was having a boy. My mother gave birth to this boy and he became the center of this family. Therefore, my only problem was to prove to my family that the girl was like the boy, and that he could even be inferior to the girl. Nobody paid any attention to me. All the attention, treats, comfort, love, and affection were for that boy. For this reason, I wanted to stand before this corrupt society. I undertook the battles of my life, struggling left and right without anyone looking at me. I felt this lack of love, affection and tenderness. I lived in an atmosphere of injustice, oppression, and deprivation when by chance I heard of the movement “The Union Movement” which calls for justice and the banning of injustice. It often made mention of human rights, and its duties. For these reasons, I joined the movement and I found what I was missing at home. I taught Islam, and I was a presenter at the Islamic radio programs. I was then eighteen, and I appreciated the Sheikh of this movement. I listened carefully and did everything he ordered me to. In the shadows, however, the bitter war was strongest. I was living

with the excitement of youth where one forgets oneself in favor of a social and human cause. My goal was to help the needy, on a social and human level. Was I then fated to pay the price, as I young girl, of my devotion to those in need? Was my arrest the price I needed to pay when my only wrong was my love for people and the needy?

The reason for my arrest was an ungrateful and tendentious person who wanted me to fall into the hands of Syrian intelligence. I was arrested on March 8th, 1989 when I was in my shop located at Mina, Tripoli, and in which I was selling Muslim statutory clothing. A group of elements of the Syrian intelligence service came into my store, headed by Major Mohammad Makhlof, who introduced himself and invited me to drink coffee with them. Had I known that the cup of coffee would take five and a half months of my life, I would never have agreed. If only I had not agreed. There, they used every means imaginable to torture me. I was taken in all branches, and in each branch, I was asked to write the story of my life until I came to them.

Mar Maroun was the first center where I was taken. I spent a whole day, then I was transferred around midnight to the main branch, the branch called "Americans". There I made the acquaintance of Major Mohamad Al Char Kazam: he put me in the wheel. I wondered how they would put me in the wheel, it was

a car wheel, and I was tough but I still found myself inside. The executioner began to flog me with electrical cables all over my body and my face. One of the shots struck my eye, from which blood spurted to the point of covering his whole shirt. But he paid no attention, or took pity on my condition and instead redoubled violence and beatings. After that he tied my hands to a rope and I was suspended against the wall in the evening until morning. They tore out some of my nails with a crowbar: the pain was such that I lost consciousness. They put the electrical cables in my ears, and I felt a concussion due to the strength of the electric shock. He put out cigarettes on my body and burned me with the pin of the boiler. I felt as if my heart was detached from where it was supposed to be. I was whipped forcefully again and again. Elsewhere, at the regional branch of Major Naasan in Mezzeh, Damascus, I was received with such sweet words: “is it not a pity that a child like you join these murderers?” I replied innocently, thinking he was a good person who was afraid for my well-being. I replied with kindness and tenderness: “these people are those who allowed me to move from ignorance to light. They are those who have taught me my religion and this why I stayed with them.” I then took a slap that made me fall to the ground, unconscious. I was awakened by a bucket of water, and there I saw a wooden stick in his hand, and a moment later, he beat me with it all over my body, my joints, to the point that I was bruised everywhere. I lost consciousness

for two days without knowing where I was or even who I was.

Not a day passed without me being interrogated, beaten, flogged on the back or all over my face, or crushed under their feet. They put me in a 1.5m<sup>2</sup> cell, of which they opened the door only to give me food: red sauce, cracked wheat full of worms, or pieces of potato or eggplant in dirty water. They also opened the door a few moments when we went to the bathroom and they addressed us only in the masculine tense.

Every day, morning and night, they took me to the interrogation room, and when they wanted to torture me, they would put in a cell where I could see all the people they tortured mercilessly.

When I was transferred to the women's section, section 14, I made the acquaintance of women who were imprisoned before me, having been arrested unjustly and aggressively. I was the youngest: the eldest one was in her eighties. She was disabled and sick, they tortured her like they tortured me. After spending fourteen days there, I was taken to brigadier Kamal Youssef who told me that I was released, I was innocent, and that the report that had been written about me was falsified. I started screaming about all the torture I had suffered.

I was released and transferred from one place to another. I was very happy to see my family and my mother. My condition was awful because throughout my arrest, I had washed only once in women's branch. I smelt very bad...I knocked at the door, my sister opened but didn't recognize me because of the weight I'd lost. Then she shouted "Leyla...Leyla!" and then my mother came and she lost consciousness at the sight of me.

I went from Syrian prison to prison of life. I saw the looks of people who watched me: looks of fear. I felt so much pain in me, and kept myself isolated from everyone. I stopped going to university, and even to the store.

Shortly after my release from prison, 108 prisoners were released: among them was the man who became my husband, father of my children and whom I loved very much. I married him against all odds, but since our first day of marriage, he started to become aggressive while I harbor hate for domination and molestation, physical and verbal violence. At home, all we had to talk about was what we went through in prison. Our incarceration had a great influence on our life as a couple, and especially on our children. Not a day passed that we did not speak of our imprisonment, whether in the home, the street or even in our workplace, which led to a constant animosity in our conversations. We would argue over mundane

things or even nothing at all. All this was due to anxiety, one of the many disastrous consequences of prison. We spent many years together; we had a beautiful girl and two equally beautiful boys. They suffered from this vicious cycle, and some time later, we parted ways. Each went to his side. The children found themselves lost. They chose the strongest party, their father's. By losing them, a great aloofness instilled itself between us, which was also one of the consequences of imprisonment. I then found myself a mess psychologically and I could not stand life, which had lost meaning to me. I had lost everything: my children, my husband...and I started to fear for the future.

On a sunny day, I saw one of my old friends who was in prison with me, and he asked me what was wrong and why I was so anxious. I then told him my sad story, I told him that I had separated from my husband and my children and that I had been deprived from seeing them, that depression was beginning to take over, as was the anxiety and I did not know the cure for this disease. He told me he was going to a center in Beirut where he was treated, that there were good people who I would love and with whom I would feel better. I did not believe him, but I still took their details. We had already come across a number of associations who had treated us like commodities, who had abused our names and our files treated them like articles to be sold to the highest bidder. I will



neither identify them nor do them harm. After reflecting on the matter, I decided to call and make an appointment in the hope that they really were as I was told. I made an appointment, and I made the acquaintance of Ms. Manal and Chantal, and they were even better than what I had heard. I told them my story, and I felt their compassion for me. I left with lots of hope in my heart, not for anything in particular but it was an inner feeling that made me want to embrace them. A few days later they called me to give me an appointment with the Psychotherapist Elie, and Dr. Imad (general health). Arriving at the appointment, my heart was beating fast for fear of a nasty surprise after having loved the center thus far. I was met by a brilliant psychotherapist who understood me in every way. After speaking with him for about half an hour, I left with hope that made my face glow. Shortly after, I met Dr. Imad who I appreciated even more. He gave me an appointment with Dr. Jihan (psychiatrist) and the medication she gave me was pure magic. Every time I feel secure and comfortable with my new family. Everyone working in this center are my brothers who wish me good health and provide it to all their patients.

They assured me the first surgery for my eye, and they helped me make many laboratory tests. Every month, they provided me with all my medications, while many of them were very expensive. This all

happened in Centre Nassim. I felt as if there was now someone who cared for me. If I went away and I had to delay an appointment, they called me to make sure that everything was fine. When Chantal gives me an appointment, I feel as if my time between them is long. Consequently, I start to hope that everyday goes by more quickly to the day of my appointment.

I loved my new family with a sincere love. For their supervision of my treatment and assistance in everything (transportation was covered, as was all drugs), all they want is to see us happy and content. They always try to help us with everything and anything: they have so much energy. I love them all, especially Ms. Manal, who supports us and listens to all our problems, big and small, with a smile on her face. This good, human, delicate and honest person, we have loved with all our hearts, and we wish her well. We ask this center, which stood on our side, does justice to this person because she is genuinely good. May God protect her and her children from any misfortune. There is also our good brother, a psychotherapist who took a place in our heart: Dr. Ghassan, carrying our pains, always with a smile on his face and kind words to offer. He gives hope to our hearts, and puts a smile on our face. We eagerly wait for the day we go to see him, talk to him, and express our troubles.

How could we forget this center and these good people who work there? I love them...I love them with all my heart and I ask God to enable them to continue to grow and advance. Thank you.

## **Story of a prisoner from Israeli prisons: Despite the weight of its mission, Centre Nassim manages its resources fairly**

As a prisoner from Israeli prisons for about three years and until the liberation of the South, I thank Centre Nassim and I am grateful for its careful attention throughout the years following my incarceration to alleviate the destructive moral and material consequences of my time in prison. Here is part of my story that I will try to summarize in order to remain loyal to the unfettered goodwill of the center of rehabilitation for victims of war and torture.

I was captured during a military operation that I was leading with a brother from the political party named Amal. This operation aimed an Israeli convoy at the heart of the occupied territories, and was to bring about the destruction of a Hamfi machine that was carrying soldiers. We were then about one kilometer from the occupied Palestinian border and our target was between five Israeli posts that formed a circle beneath hovering spy planes, among five hundred Israeli troops and police dogs. As we were carrying explosives and communication devices, we hid them underground in case either the trained dogs that we

heard barking came towards us or the spy planes had filmed us during our operation. At that moment, we could not immediately retreat because of the lack of support from the rest of the team that wasn't able to follow us into the heart of the occupied territories. We were surrounded seventeen hours later. Having captured us, they could have killed us but didn't. One of the agents told me that the Israelis didn't allow it. That's where our journey of torture in Israeli prisons began.

I was eighteen when I entered prison; and it was difficult to adapt to torture that aimed to destroy ones human health and ones nerves to the point that you are unable to think. My only concern was then to stay alive and preserve, as much as possible, my physical health. Nonetheless, I lost sight in one eye because of serious infections due to numerous slashes to it, to a deliberate violence, to the lack of medications, to staying in a dark cell for weeks on end alone with insects and scorpions, seeing nothing but a slit of light from under the door and having been brought outside suddenly under the mid-day sun knowing I would want to look right into the light after all the weeks I spent in the dark, thus losing instantly my eyesight after having felt an electric shock at the point of my optical nerve of the same eye as it came in contact with the light. I knew they had deliberately provoked the blindness in my eye. When they put me with the other prisoners once the interrogation period had

ended, I found myself horrified by their state; I could not then share my suffering with them as some of them were literally on the verge of death.

Upon seeing them I could only feel severe pain. When I asked them if someone had died in this place, they told me that someone passed away shortly before I was arrested; that the Israelis had taken him by dragging him in front of their eyes and by telling them that they were going to throw him outside. The prison conditions were thus barbaric; aiming to destroy one's belonging to humanity, reducing him to nothing but someone who clutches to his survival instinct. When we asked that the quantity of food be increased and that there be more variety in meals, they replied that this meal plan was the result of a study they had done and that they were solely trying to keep us alive, not to satisfy us.

Just as the Lebanese population distinguishes itself by its religious, cultural and political diversity, this was reflected inside the prison. The treatment of prisoners was different in the degree of punishment according to political allegiance, security and military prior to being arrested. Those who were captured during a military operation (as I was) suffered the worst treatment when it comes to torture, and this throughout my incarceration. Those who worked as intelligence officers for the Lebanese army were much better treated than I was: they ate better, they

saw the sun much more and left prison after a short while. However, I saw in the diversity of those who were imprisoned a chance to get familiar with persons from various intellectual and religious backgrounds who were there, to sit with them, talk, eat - all of this in spite of the objections of my comrades who reproached my social integration with them. We became very close friends: one of them managed to get me an ink pen and I started to collect empty Picon cartons to write English on them and the math that I recalled from high school so that my mental capacity wouldn't recede. I then became known among the prisoners for my great culture and intelligence.

The days went by slowly, heavy with sadness, wrought with worries and pain. The day I waited for came by surprise. The people of Khiam opened the doors of the prison suddenly, after the escape of agents in Occupied Palestine during the liberation of Southern Lebanon. It was a freedom and a feeling of returning to life that cannot be described. We returned to the spirit of nature, to our parents and our loved ones.

My life changed. After having been a cultured person in the prison world, I had to use my education and my mental capacities in the real world. Nevertheless three years of prison had transformed me into a person from another sphere, experiencing pain and suffering,

plunged into a tumultuous past that won't let me go, with health in ruins. How could I handle it?

The development programs put in place by the state and by humanitarian organizations after the end of the war are considered to be at the foundation of the development of war victims. The South-Lebanon council had delegated to the council of ministers the task to cover expenses pertaining to the treatment of physical trauma for which treatment existed. They also decided to provide me with a monthly salary of four hundred thousand LBP for a year, and to indemnify the loss of my eye with five thousand dollars. My file was supposed to be transferred to the minister of finance who was to decide whether my monthly salary should be fixed or annulled. The special decree for prisoners says that the fixation of salaries applies to those who are left with a deficiency or a handicap for life. This applied to me since I had lost sight of an eye. However, at the finance ministry, one of the officials asked me with a strange tone to bring him a medical report from the Israelis showing that I had lost sight in one of my eyes. Another official told me: "Don't say that you are from the resistance here!". They violated my right. What made things worse was the termination of the budget of the Southern Council by the government for political reasons. The Southern Council no longer guaranteed the treatment programs and the health support for liberated prisoners. The worst enemies of Lebanon are



inside before being outside. Despite the injustice done to me, I persevered and made use once more of patience to face sacrifice and deprivation.

All our enemies want for us is a sick, ignorant and impoverished society, wrought with faith-based political conflicts. Since education is at the foundation of human development and the key to overcoming dark forces, I decided to return to high school. I finished eleventh grade but wasn't able to finish twelfth grade the first time because I was working in a bookstore. I restarted twelfth grade as a free student and succeeded in graduating. My time in University started here. I signed up to the science program at the Lebanese University in Nabatiyeh, but I was unable to pass my first year because of my inability to see the blackboard. I went to see the administration about it but they told me there was nothing they could do. I decided to transfer to the science campus of Hadath but I had the same problem. My problems even worsened because by moving I had to leave my job. I found a solution by going to a private University, and after speaking with the direction of Amal they agreed to pay half my tuition. I enrolled at the Lebanese International University where they allowed me to take the computer sciences program after a year of catching up. During this time, I was living at my aunt's house in Beirut. Soon after, the 2006 war started and my parents' house was one of the first to be destroyed. Most of my family was unscathed but

some were injured more or less seriously. My aunt's house was destroyed shortly afterwards and I was left without a home after the war. I looked for work for a long time and eventually found a job with the Islamic message Scouts of Lebanon for a salary of three hundred thousand LBP per month. I asked them if they could house me and so they reduced my salary to one hundred and fifty LBP, to include rent. Considering my dire financial situation and with no place to live, I was left with no choice.

During this time, an official at the Islamic message Scouts introduced me to Centre Nassim. He said that the services offered by the centre could save me. They had me undergo medical tests that I needed, they provided treatment and medications, and they helped me with paying some of my university tuition. I then transferred from LIU to the American University for Culture and Education in order to finish the last two years I had left to graduate in computer sciences. However, my residence at the Islamic message Scouts was far from ideal. It was incessantly noisy and since I was always there, I was often asked to work outside my work hours making me very stressed and exhausted. I then decided to get married to get myself back on my feet and reclaim my private life. It would be a difficult task to accomplish as I hadn't finished my University studies, my income wasn't stable and I had no social security. Despite this, I managed to rent an apartment and get married. I then engaged in

married life. However, after seven months of marriage my financial problems got the point where I needed to choose between paying rent or paying tuition. I asked a few religious leaders, those who are supposed to be the successors of Sayyed Moussa El-Sadr, but they refused to help me even though they have the means, that it be their duty and their religious responsibility under God, the history and the nation. Miraculously and by the grace of God, Centre Nassim paid for my studies and continued to support me until I graduated and obtained my computer science license. Several people then started to come to my place so that I program their computers after many stores had previously failed, especially when the hard drive data had been lost. At the same time as I obtained my diploma, my first son Ali was born. He is nine months old today. Without the help of Centre Nassim, I would have had to suspend my studies. It happened the same way as when I was in prison and had trouble finding an ink pen and one of my comrades of another religion, who has all my respect and affection, got me one. Our friendship was then criticized by many other prisoners who were in the same cell, and who wanted him to suffer in solitude. Thus, justice in time and space revealed itself through Centre Nassim at a time when many had abandoned me, including fellow soldiers with whom I almost died on several occasions. Centre Nassim was the only one to remain at my side through its services,

medical, material and legal (providing me a lawyer) to keep track of my business and this, until today.

The services provided by this centre fill a void brought about by the lack of development policy for war victims, a void caused by a succession of governments that have strained the capacity of the vast majority of its people, leaving it under the weight of discrimination and subordination to political sectarianism. Despite the weight of Centre Nassim's mission, it manages its resources fairly, which reassures those who turned to the center asking for help. Personally, I hope to one-day give back to the administration and staff of Centre Nassim.