

# PROMOTE A CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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**C.L.D.H**

Centre Libanais des Droits Humains  
Lebanese Center for Human Rights  
المركز اللبناني لحقوق الإنسان



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## Project explanation

The project entitled “Promote a culture of Human Rights in Lebanon” addressed the capacity of objective reporting as critical value to the functioning of democracy in Lebanon. Through activities such as: workshops with journalism students, internship program for journalism students, Human Rights events at Universities and a press conference, the project addressed media reporting on Human Rights and access to Human Rights information to the general public.

The project’s approach was such that it gave the opportunity to future journalists to express themselves freely and it provided training and opportunity to get practical experience. The workshops were a chance to introduce the project and the values of objective reporting to journalism students, and encouraged them to apply for an internship program as part of the project. Human Rights events were organized in collaboration with Universities’ Peace Clubs. Introducing the general public to the project through press conference, Open Library Day and events at Universities were some of the objectives of this project.

This booklet includes some of the articles produced by the interns that were part of this project as well as some testimonies of participants of workshops and events.

## Suggestions for the media by the students that participated in the workshops:

- To be more objective and not biased, and to work to achieve issues and goals that serve the society.
- Media in Lebanon need to focus on people’s issues, problems and needs, and to follow these issues to the end to find solutions and stop focusing on the elite. It shall shed a bright light on human rights, in order to light up Lebanese minds on their rights and duties.
- To give the priority for the citizens on all levels instead of providing a large time and space to political issues and to politicians.
- Be less biased, respect people who are being interviewed more and finish a story rather than let it die down.
- The media in Lebanon have to offer more space to cover Human Rights issues by providing programs to introduce these rights to the public and by reporting human rights abuses and how we should deal with it.



## How the gained knowledge from the workshops will be transferred to students’ future work:

- I learned about human rights coverage in the media and I will use it to make my news writing and reporting more effective.

## What did you like about the workshops?

- I liked the fact that there was an open debate over various topics.
- I liked that we addressed the relation between human rights and journalism.
- The second session, it was very interactive and opened our eyes to new angles of covering human rights violations.



## A Media that Feeds our Ignorance

With the United States Supreme Court legalizing same-sex marriage, our side of the world has had an opinion outbreak on love. However people adopt the idea of affection, though, love remains a universal human right and an open door to peace.

Our reality and built perception is constructed and shaped by social norms instilled from childhood; a collection of thoughts that were given to us. Society around us has shaped our approach to the understanding of reality in a certain formula; one way society has shaped our understandings is the media. We all have been grouped into one big collective called the mass. From then onwards, it becomes easier to direct our speculations

in an understanding of what is right and wrong.

In the minds of many people, and because of this interference of media, the idea of same-sex love is mocked, hated, feared and has somehow built a misconception of its existence. This obvious approach frames society's perception in an angle that introduces the LGBTQ committee is a negative light. No, it is not just a 'trend' fed by foreign media; it is the lives of individuals that simply have different sexual orientations and tendencies, and has been present throughout history.

According to The Telegraph:  
*"homosexuality traces back to 5000*

*BC"*, where Neolithic and Bronze Age figurines around the Mediterranean were characterized and described as the *"third sex"*.

In ancient Roman times, the idea of homosexuality was quite common, poetry and theatrical performances expressed the notion of same-sex intimacy very often. One of the Roman Emperors that goes by the name Nero was believed to have married two different men: Sporus and Doryphorus. The practice of same-sex marriage was well tolerated in Roman rulings, until year 342 AD where the Christian emperor Constantius II and Constans banned same-sex marriage and later put forth the Theodosian Code and the Code of Justinian that sentences the union of two men or two women to death in the name of religion. From then on onwards, religious ideologies embodied the ruling power. Sexual orientations against the 'norm' – the norm that was implemented by that same ideology – were kept on the low and were gradually denied by society. That did not lessen from the sole idea that homosexuality was still around all the same, it just became banned to express its existence. In the nourishing of religious art, later on, in the Renaissance period, the Italian artist Sandro Botticelli was charged on the grounds of sodomy for having strong interest in the male anatomy and masculine figures. He went against the ruling power, and away from the huge huddle of mass.

In our days, the ideological authority is what we would call the media. In Lebanon and the Arab World, the images of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer approaches are dealt with mockery, sarcasm, and, quite sadly, disgust. This pre-conceived notion that the union between two of the same sex is always

linked to sickness and filthiness only feeds our ignorance. People don't like what they do not comprehend, and the publishing agenda of our region does not provide the privilege of alertness and understanding on the matter. It shapes our thought to conclusion that straight is right, gay is not.

With the United States Supreme Court legalizing same-sex marriage, and with social media granting us an open eye to an agenda and beliefs beyond ours, the realization that a considerable part of the world embraces LGBTQ rights triggers fear in our side of the world, and, well, adding fear to ignorance only generates intensified hate. In our region, and the entire MENA region (Middle East and North Africa), the actuality of homosexuality has been directly linked to mental illnesses and is criminalized. In Lebanon, the crime of 'having sexual intercourse contrary to nature', under article 534 of the Lebanese Penal Code, leads up to a year of imprisonment. The reading of article 534 is considered a violation of the human right to freedom in private affairs and has been continuously fought by the HELEM, the Lebanese non-governmental organization protecting LGBTQ rights, as well as Judge Mounir Souleiman from the Batroun court district who ruled against the article on December 2009.

Learn more, understand more and accept more. With the belief of religion or without it, homosexuality exists, and it trace way back in history. Let's not seek comfort in being the 'one-big-mass' we're trained to be, but rather delve into a kaleidoscope of diversity and believe in a love that embraces all.

**Maya Mansour**



## Dear ‘Most Powerful Man of All’

I am writing to you because you hurt someone I love; a lot of people I love for that matter. I am writing to you on their behalf and on behalf of every woman and child affected by you.

Did you know that you took away her “innocence”; that because of what you did, she does not believe in kindness anymore? Stripped away from every ray of hope that could potentially save her soul, she cries: “I live with constant fear that I might become my father one day”. A childhood drenched and soaked in bruises, violence, and dread. Did you know that her mother is carrying the brutality of her valueless existence because of what she takes from you?

Their house is not really a home, and they do not feel safe in what is supposed to be the safest place in the world; family. Her two brothers find ways to escape reality, for reality is merely a reminder of the unfair and unjust prison they find themselves trapped in. Constant episodes of a father forcefully claiming his power and ‘manhood’ and a mother repeatedly mumbling: “*It is not easy to escape, society won’t let me*”.

According to recent studies, there are more than 2,600 families with victims of Domestic Violence in Lebanon. Did you know that it is all because of you? Dear ‘Most Powerful Man of All’ and Law 293, where have you been?

For years, you have been blinded by the false assumption that ideas derived from cultural history, politics, and religious people of power indicate that domestic violence is okay and so you never took a step to change that. Well, in a society fed by criminals like you, people are finding more tolerance in a sight of a bruised woman than a divorced one, and that in itself is a crime. I can go on all day blaming the mentality of our society, but our understandings only derive from the grotesque architecture of our laws. I blame you and that Parliament backing you.

KAFA (enough), the local non-governmental, non-benefit organization established in 2005, has been fighting the discrimination and violence against women and children since then. It started off by initiating awareness on the subject among Lebanese families, offering a tangible approach to this struggle. “We needed to shed light on the matter, present it among our culture and society”, says Leila Awada, the co-founder of KAFA, adding: “It was very essential to have the media approach the malfeasance of such inequality and shed light on it as a current phenomenon.” In 2008, KAFA filed a plea for the parliament to implement a law protecting women and children from domestic violence. Protesters started voicing their demands. Meanwhile, the level of violence in this region remains consistently high, claims Human Rights Watch researcher Rothna Begum. A sad number of victims passed away because of the silence and the lack of legal protection beyond their homes.

Not until the year of 2014, did things ‘turn around’. The Parliament adopted a law entitled ‘Protecting women and all family members from family violence’ – Law 293

(That’s you). A good change has been noticed in the behavior of the Internal Security Forces after the ratifying of this law; a lot of cases have come forward. There are many more who still don’t. Nevertheless, a problem is still occurring and that is the lack of accurate reading under Law 293 that agrees on what characterizes as violence.

Dear Law 293, it is time to let go of all cultural and religious obstacles and focus on achieving the right for every human being to have safety and protection. Dear Law 293, you did not need KAFA to be a man; the most powerful man of all.

Yours,  
The People of Lebanon

**Maya Mansour**



## Disappeared in Lebanon: A Slow Progress Towards Truth

In a much awaited landmark decision issued on March 4th, 2014, the Lebanon's State Council finally recognized the right of the families to know the truth about their forcibly disappeared loved ones. Concretely, this obliges the State to deliver to the families all relevant documents that might help shedding light on the fate of their relatives who disappeared during the war.

However, the judicial body requested a stay in execution of this decision, arguing that giving away such information would constitute a threat to civil peace. The request was eventually rejected. In any case, that reaction is in line with the situation that prevailed in Lebanon ever

since the conflict ended – a situation that may give the feeling that things are always taking two steps forward and one step back.

For the past three decades, the families have spared no energy in trying to prompt the authorities to assume their responsibilities – namely by setting up an independent and impartial Commission of inquiry, creating a comprehensive database, locating and protecting sites of mass graves, identifying the bodies and compensating for the damages suffered by the families.

Excuses were always found to ignore their demands or even perhaps to reject

them altogether<sup>i</sup>, and with good reason, as continuing offences are explicitly excluded from the scope of March 1991 “general amnesty law”. And, precisely, one specificity of the crime of enforced disappearance lies in its continuous nature: the crime is not definitively complete until the fate of the missing is clarified and, therefore, the period of limitation starts running at this very moment, not before. It means that perpetrators can still be prosecuted and that some former militants among the leaders might be held accountable and face criminal charges today.

In any case, the March 2014 decision offers hope for significant changes. But it needs to be backed by a truly independent investigation in order to be fully effective. The three commissions created in 2000, 2001 and 2005 did not draw viable conclusions on the fate of the forcibly disappeared. Handing their reports over to the families is of little help – although it is symbolically important.

The lack of a comprehensive database is another obstacle on the way to truth: a report issued by the government in 1991 stated that over 17,000 persons had gone missing during the conflict. This figure is most probably overrated as some disappearances were reported more than once and some returns never were. Anyhow, the actual number of disappeared people remains unknown 25 years after the end of the war. International legal framework The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006) defines enforced disappearance as “the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons

acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law” (Article 2) and obliges the Parties to criminalize it. It was signed but never ratified by Lebanon.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998) adopts a similar definition but also includes in its scope the arrest, abduction or detention by political organizations; enforced disappearance constitutes a crime against humanity “when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack” (Article 7) and falls therefore under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

Lebanon did not ratify the Statute.

After being involved for nearly four decades in the tracing of the missing, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) took it upon themselves to collect as much detailed information as possible on the victims and the circumstances of their arrests/abductions, until the Lebanese authorities agree to collect saliva samples from still living relatives in order to conduct DNA analysis.

In 2012, SOLIDE and the CFKDL published – with the support of International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) – a draft law aiming to address the issue of missing and forcibly disappeared persons in Lebanon. The 31-article document<sup>ii</sup> echoed, point by point, the – already mentioned above – constant claims of the families of the disappeared. Somehow, civil society organizations were

compelled to take over and try to remedy the Lebanese State's shortcomings.

Another draft law is currently being examined by the Lebanese Parliament. Hopefully, the fate of the forcibly disappeared in Lebanon will soon be clarified. However, the issue of the disappeared still detained in Syria remains delicate. In particular, what about those who are now detained on territories that are no longer controlled by the Syrian regime?

### Anne Caillet

#### Key-dates:

1975-1990: during the Lebanese Civil War, thousands of people go missing at the hands of Lebanese militias and Lebanese, Syrian and Israeli armies

1982: the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon (CFKDL) is created  
October 22, 1989: the Ta'if Agreement ends the Lebanese Civil War

1990: Support of Lebanese in Detention and Exile (SOLIDE) is established  
March 1991: a General Amnesty Law grants amnesty to the crimes committed during the conflict: the perpetrators can no longer be prosecuted

January 2000: the first official Commission of Inquiry is set up. It only issued a "summary report" concluding that all those missing for over 4 years should be considered dead.

January 2001: a second Commission is established after the release of dozens of Lebanese detained in Syria discredited the findings of the 2000 Commission  
April 2005: families of disappeared start holding a permanent sit-in in front of UN House in downtown Beirut.

August 2005: a Joint Syrian-Lebanese Committee is created to investigate cases of enforced disappearances involving the Syrian security forces. It never published any conclusions.  
March 4, 2014: Lebanon's State Council rules that the families of the disappeared have the right to know the truth about the fate of their loved ones.

International legal framework  
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i In 2011, the Euro-Mediterranean Federation Against Enforced Disappearances reported that families' associations representatives' and forensic doctors' access to a potential mass grave in Shabaniyah was forbidden by the mayor, a military intelligence services representative and Internal Security Forces, after the authorities stated that the site contained nothing but bones of dogs and goats. Available at <http://www.disparitions-euromed.org/article.php?n=58>

ii "Law for missing and forcibly disappeared persons", 2012, available at <http://www.actforthedisappeared.com/sites/default/files/Publications/Draft%20Law%20for%20Missing%20and%20Forcibly%20Disappeared%20Persons-2012-EN.pdf>





## Is Sea Safer than Land?

### **A Story of Five Lebanese Migrants Gone to Greek Islands in Search for a Better Life**

Nearly two months ago, dreadful images of drowned toddler Aylan Kurdi circulated everywhere on social platforms and media outlets. The worldwide buzz happened overnight, touching people all over the globe, and prompting them to express their sympathy on social media; sympathy for the little boy's heartbreaking story of perishing in search for a better life.

The story eventually fizzled out, just like every other breaking news story, because of the incessant series of calamitous

events happening daily around the world. The story of the shocking incident died out until about a week ago when Lebanon was struck with a similar tragedy. On Thursday October 15th, five members of a Lebanese family were reported to have drowned while another four were reported missing after their wooden boat and a coast guard vessel crashed during a migrant rescue operation off the island of Lesbos, according to a Greek coast guard.

Relatives of the Safwan family, who reside in the southern Beirut suburb of Ouzai, told reporters that 12 family members had traveled to Turkey to take a migrant boat to Greece in hopes of

seeking asylum in the European Union. The Safwan family is originally from the Bekaa Valley, which is close to the Lebanese-Syrian border. In this respect, it would be fit to say that the displacement of thousands is one of the grave consequences brought about by the war in Syria, Afghanistan and Turkey.

According to the International Organization for Migration, an estimated number of 590,000 refugees and migrants have reached European shores since January, while more than 3,000 have died or gone missing. Furthermore, almost 400,000 people have arrived in Greece this year, according to UNHCR. This greatly exceeds the nation's capacity for absorption.

This incident has given rise to a lot of controversy, seeing as Lebanon is not a country at war. The reality we face in Lebanon today is certainly not all creams and peaches, for the country is struggling with several issues, namely with having to host more than a million Syrian refugees without even having a functional government. However, the Safwan family, among many other migrants, was criticized for having put their and their children's lives in danger by venturing on an unsafe trip to Greece for reasons non-vital. Mohammed Safwan, whose parents were among the 12 who set off from Lebanon on Sunday, said that the family had decided to travel to Europe because they had heard the borders were open to refugees.

With this angle in mind, officials have been quick to condemn such individuals, who, relatively speaking, are not considered to be living in menial conditions. One example is Australian Senator Cory Bernardi who believes that Aylan's family left a danger-free zone for

opportunistic economic reasons.

On a more positive note, Athens and the U.N. refugee agency have both called on the European Union to open up more legal channels for refugees desperately fleeing war and persecution, in order not to have to put their lives on the line in the pursuit of safety.

**Vanessa Herro**



## “I was Fired Because I Dared to Say NO”

### **Sexual harassment incidents commonly increasing in Lebanese universities**

During their juvenile years, many girls, enroll in universities to seek a long desired dream only to find themselves traumatized a couple months later by the reality of life in Lebanon.

We hear more and more stories every day about “decent-looking” girls being sexually harassed in schools, universities and workplaces. Recent incidents prove how common sexual assaults are in the Lebanese society which by turn raises the concerns of the administrations. This prompts them to integrate new policies regarding cases of harassment in all its

forms (physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, psychological, or even moral).

On October 21, 2014, AUB’s official student newspaper “Outlook” issued an article about cases of sexual harassment on campus. Seemingly, students dared to voice their concerns about the increase of tuition fees and all other trivial matters but when it came to the subject of sexual harassment, they asked if their real names remain disclosed.

The situation has blown out of proportion though as often these girls receive unjustified “zero” grades on their midterms and assignments. In most of the cases, the victims turn out to be the

scapegoats when the teacher decides to file a report to the administrating claiming that in fact, they were the one who were inappropriately approached by the student.

Fortunately, and after several incidents broke out in AUB, the university’s administration engaged itself in taking drastic measures in order to address this matter in terms of its codes and protocols. “The incidents are out there. People know about them, and the university is doing its best to examine these claims,” said Dr. Talal Nizameddin, Dean of Student Affairs. Today, AUB students benefit from having a direct access of a relatively new online system ([safereport.aub.edu.lb](http://safereport.aub.edu.lb)) that allows them to file their complaints anonymously.

On another note and in light of these widespread incidents, Annahar Newspaper interviewed Ghinwa, the latest victim of sexual harassment in well-known workplaces. She tells her story to Annahar with a tinge of repulsion in her voice. Losing her father at a young age and having a mother who remarried and built her own life, Ghinwa was left with no other choice but to pack her bags and leave her small northern village with the little money she had on her in the hope of getting a decent degree in psychology in one of Beirut’s known universities (which name wasn’t revealed). She worked in one of the university’ departments earning a modest salary that would help her cover all her needs in addition to getting a reduction on the university’s tuition fees. According to Ghinwa, her boss started showing an unusual interest in her by sending her inappropriate text messages. She claimed that she tried to elude his phone calls at the beginning until one day he sexually harassed her

and she consequently decided to inform the department’s head director of the incident.

Yet, to her surprise, the director dealt with the situation by transferring her to another department and did not fire the man. “Here in our society, the girl who is a victim of sexual harassment becomes guilty if she speaks” says Ghinwa in her interview with Annahar. However, her former boss didn’t cease to try to reach her and was determined to get the girl he had an eye for. “I was put under too much pressure in the department which I was transferred to, I wasn’t allowed to participate in any of the activities and I started feeling useless” said Ghinwa.

“My former boss kept on trying to call me so I recorded all of his calls and saved all of his messages. The administration asked me to resign and, back then, I didn’t have any other employment opportunities so when I demanded to ask the Dean of the university they took me to a psychiatrist accusing me of inventing unrealistic stories [...] I was fired because I dared to say NO!”, she added.

In this context, lawyer Kareem Nammour confirmed to Annahar that a new project is being implemented by various organizations in order to incorporate new amendments to the article number 7 of the Lebanese labor law. The amendments will include the requirement of the employers to ensure a sane working environment by integrating an article on sexual harassment in workplaces and the procedures the victim should follow in order to report the incident.

**Vanessa Herro**



## Beyond the Typical “Slap on the Face”

When someone has consciously decided to become a parent, they have automatically experienced a life changing event that has no return. However, in the case of unwanted or unintended pregnancy, taking responsibility over the bearing child is not only crucial but mandatory.

Unfortunately, in a world where humans are multiplying and spreading in masses, humanity is degrading. Studies and statistic around the globe have shown that millions of children are being subjected to violence, abuse and denied their rights to a safe and healthy childhood.

As reported by a UN study, in over 100 countries, children in schools suffer legalized corporal punishment. Moreover, in at least 30 countries sentences of beating are still being imposed on children in penal systems, and in most of the countries parents are lawfully allowed to physically punish their children. This harsh reality affects the Lebanese society as well. The official figures released by the ministry for the total number of reported cases of child abuse in Lebanon is a total of 21 cases of child abuse for the year 2001, and 22 cases in 2002. Extensive studies are being conducted currently in order to publish narrow results, taking into account that a significant number of child abuse

cases still remain unreported, especially if the child is handicapped in some way and has troubles expressing himself or is traumatized by the caning. But then again, even if a child did say he or she was abused, it is usually dismissed as the ranting of a spoiled child or a liar. Also, bearing in mind that the majority of child abuse cases include neglected children, who found themselves strolling the street of Beyrouth with no one to turn to, awaiting the sympathy of a kindhearted stranger or a rescue from an NGO.

“Every week there are reports of at least three abused children, give or take a case,” confirms Rita Karem, a social worker at the Nour al-Hayat, an NGO working with abused children. In contrast to the deceitful general assumption that poverty is the major contributor to child abuse, Karem affirms, “Class and money have nothing to do with it as there are rich kids being abused”. She adds, “While reasons vary as to why someone would hit his or her child, it is the general belief in most Middle Eastern countries that is “O.K. to hit a child till he or she is blue because the mother or father had a bad or stressful day”.

On a more positive note, it is uplifting to acknowledge the efforts of the Ministry of Social Affairs and all officially registered NGOs in Lebanon, who are working efficiently in order to improve the system of reporting child abuse in Lebanon. According to the Lebanese constitution, a child is defined as any individual aged between 0 and 18 years, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, sponsored by UNICEF in 1989. In fact, law number 422 was the first law to be issued concerning child abuse in the history of Lebanese constitution. It was issued in 1991, date which coincides with Lebanon’s adherence to the Convention

on the Rights of Child abiding by the definition of child abuse, and the goals set by the convention to help decrease all forms of maltreatment.

Law number 422 in its article 24 till 25 abides by the convention and defines child abuse as “any act that would expose the child to the risk of exploitation or threaten his/her health, wellbeing, morals and development.” As a matter of fact, law 422 was amended several times, the most recent draft, which was approved upon by the government, talks about creating two separate systems, one for social protection and one for legal protection, which will handle each case of child abuse on basis of severity. Law 422 clearly states that the judiciary is obliged to interfere according to “a notification presented by the child, his/her parents, caregivers, legal guardians, or the individuals responsible for him/her, social assistants, the public prosecutor, or any proclamation conveyed by an anonymous.”

As mentioned above, abuse is dealt with according to the severity of the incident. In cases of sexual abuse or life-threatening events, anyone should call the police (on the hotline 112) or UPEL Union for the protection of Juveniles in Lebanon (on +961-1-427973). Therefore, the informed party has the obligation to send a social worker or a police officer to investigate. They will then inform the juvenile court before further action is taken. In cases of physical abuse that are not life threatening, the reporter should call the MoSA (Ministry of Social Affairs) on the hotline 1714.

Reporting abuse cases usually starts by calling one of the many NGOs involved in children rights’ protection. These NGOs constitute the link between victims/



their families and the legal authorities in Lebanon. The director of Kafa, an NGO renowned for the protection of women and children's rights in Lebanon, stated that incidents of child abuse could be reported anonymously by anyone via phone calls.

The other less common way that the Social Welfare Institutions receive reports of abused children is through anonymous phone calls from neighbors or friends of families that are suspected of abusing their children "beyond the typical slap on the face."

Even though the system is present, major gaps lying at the core of the good functioning of the system remain unchanged. For instance, the number of public personnel involved is limited, their training is minimal, and their availability to receive reports ends at 4pm, when most incidents take place during nighttime when the parents are back from work. In these cases, when the situation is of utmost severity and in some cases deadly, it will be too little too late for the abused child since he/she will not have anyone to refer to.

Furthermore, citizens are also unaware of their right to report and access the system that currently exists but is not yet fully efficient. Besides, what contributes to the gaps of this system from a public standpoint is the lack of organization of the work of NGOs under the sponsorship of the government. In fact, half if not more, of these NGOs receive very minimal financial contribution from the MoSA.

In neat conclusion, reporting child abuse in Lebanon seems to be a novel promising system with the apparent work of NGOs and private hospitals. Yet, like every other imperfect system in

Lebanon, there exists an inconsistency in its operation management that necessitates refinement in every aspect. It is important to know that for a highly efficient process of reporting, the child is the key target to inform and empower for starting the chain of action. Projects such as the kidproof program must establish a yearly ritual for raising awareness among our youth. Awareness campaigns must be financed by the government to help spread the message all across the country, hoping that it would resonate in every home that is housing an abused child where he/she would be initiated into a world where they are welcome to start playing happy records again. Not to mention, the importance of increasing the exposure of this omnipresent issue prevailing in our society, with an aim to start a social stigma in order to understand the need of awareness and change.

**Vanessa Herro**

## “Closer to Finding a Solution”

### **Wadih Al-Asmar speaks out about garbage crisis.**

It all started three months ago, when the mounting trash crisis in the capital, Beirut, stirred the action of the Lebanese society who has always been labeled as apathetic to government related issues. The people have awakened from a lethargic sleep and are fighting tooth and nail for their basic prerogatives. Lebanon has, by far, bit more than it can chew with an all-out sectarian war raging in neighboring Syria, with a widespread refugee crisis as repercussions and a presidential vacuum for the last sixteen months.

This time they cannot blame Israel, Saudi

Arabia or Hezbollah, favorite targets for all woes. This time the matter concerns every Lebanese citizen who has been oblivious of the corruption that is lying at the core of the functioning of the system for the past twenty years. The manifestations and the protestors' diligence will surely not be dismissed as an urban myth.

For all those past years, the people were treating the symptoms not the causes of a national mental emergency. Now they finally understood that their health and the country's destiny are at stake.

Co-founder and Secretary General of the CLDH (Lebanese Center for Human

Rights) and human rights activist since 1996, Wadih Al-Asmar, had a few words to say regarding the prevailing situation in Lebanon. As a protagonist and a fervent supporter of the “You Stink!” movement, acknowledges that “for the first time since the breaking of the civil war in the 70s, Lebanon witnesses manifestations of this kind, of this size. Manifestations characterized for being inter-religious, transregional and trans-historical, which have on the basis of requests non-political claims.” He resumes by adding, “We are not addressing sectorial issues which are directly linked to a Lebanese group in specific, so I believe, in this respect, that we were able to achieve a huge success. As a matter of fact, thirteen people only were engaged in the first manifestation on August 22nd, and in a month time the number of the protestors jumped to tens of thousands of people.” Al-Asmar stresses on the importance of the diversity of the people involved in this movement, he says: “There are activists from the left and the right wing Party, and others from both the Liberal and the Conservative Party.” It is, in fact, the blending of all kinds of people with different ideology which constitutes a unifying power to fight for one specific cause.

Concerning the question of whether or not the mobilizing of the Lebanese society did help find a sober resolution for the garbage crisis issue, the protagonist answered that due to these manifestations the government was somehow forced to search for a “less dangerous” solution for the Lebanese citizens. “We haven’t reached a solution yet, but I think we are closer now to finding one than we were three months ago” he confirms.

In the course of observing the evolvement of the waste landfills issue, it would

be quite impossible not to notice the worms that have entered the system letting the rot set in, blocking every form of progress in the Chehayyeb trash plan. In this context, when asked for his opinion on why the Chehayyeb plan is still facing obstacles, Al-Asmar replied with no hesitation: “The problem is that there is still no accurate Chehayyeb plan. Chehayyeb introduced what I call a “wish list”. He presented for action a marvelous plan with its grand outlines. However, he did not succeed in convincing the people of his plan. There is something missing that we are not able to see so we can’t invest our trust in it.”

The fate of the country is juggling between the hands of Lebanese political parties, who their main interest rotates around the ways on how to outdo one another culturally, politically and fiscally. After having to deal years with Lebanon’s sectarian issues and inequitable division of the powers the silence of its citizens has broke into riotous and endless waves of transformation.

The future of the “You Stink!” movement remains a mystery. Al-Asmar made it crystal clear that he has no definite answer when inquired how he envisions the movement in the upcoming years. After all the movement is still an embryo created three months ago, therefore, they are still exploring who they can be and what can they do to implement change. “The group’s main goal is to transform this movement into a non-political citizen movement who will keep on working to find a solution for the garbage crisis and who will later on tackle other issues in order to come forward and form a government that will meet the people’s needs”, he recapitulates.

**Vanessa Herro**





## Syrian Palestinians seek Refuge in Lebanon

### Background of their lives in Syria

After the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, better termed as 'Nakba' amongst Palestinians and Arabs, more than 700,000 Palestinians were forced to flee and to establish new lives elsewhere. Those who took refuge in Syria, who currently reside in Lebanon, are some of the most vulnerable Palestinians in the world. Ironically, before the Syrian conflict, Syria was perceived as the most effective country for Palestinians in the Middle East. Contrary to countries like Lebanon, that doesn't permit work for Palestinians, Syria's 1957 law granted Palestinians

the same rights and duties as Syrians, despite voting rights and nationality. Palestinians were allowed to work, and had proper access to education and health care. In Lebanon, however, the work policy forbids any foreigner from work, but points at Palestinians in particular. In a 2010 study conducted by Asem Khalil exploring the socioeconomic rights of Palestinians in the Arab region, Khalil explains that "the work of Palestinians in Lebanon, as much as other foreign nationals, is subject to regulation included in Presidential Decree No. 17561 of 18/9/1964. A Palestinian willing to work in Lebanon must satisfy three conditions: firstly, the obtaining of a work permit, secondly, national preference, and thirdly,

reciprocity of rights and obligations (Suleiman 2006, 15-16). As was the case with Egypt, the reciprocity clause disenfranchises stateless Palestinians (IFHR 2003, 13)."

Moving forward to the circumstances of the right to education, the stance against Palestinians in particular becomes much more explicit. According to the 1968 Decree Law No.820, public schools in Lebanon are restricted to Lebanese nationals, unless there are free places. However, Palestinians are restricted entry to secondary schools at all costs according to Sayigh 1995, 44; Arzt 1996, 46. Syria's law, contrary to the Lebanese one, permits both undergraduate and raduate studies for Palestinians just as much as to Syrians, keeping in mind that elementary and secondary schools are offered by UNRWA schools before pursuing education in national schools and universities.

### Palestinian Syrians' living conditions in Lebanon

The drastic contrast of Palestinians living in Syria who moved to Lebanon can be understood through the basic comparison of Palestinian rights in each, Lebanon and Syria through Andrzej Bolesta's 2002 paper, when stated: "In Lebanon, Palestinian refugees seem to be the worst affected. Being constantly denied any rights they are forced to struggle for life. International assistance is insufficient, and although effort is put into securing refugees' basic needs it does not change in a significant way their standard of living. In Syria, Palestinians enjoy almost the same rights, or rather their lack, as Syrian nationals. However, the conditions of the refugee camps do not seem to vary from those in Lebanon or Jordan."

Moreover, upon seeking refuge in Lebanon after the Syrian conflict, not only are they immensely troubled financially, but they don't have their basic human rights of shelter, food, education, and health care. According to the research conducted by ANERA and the National Institute of Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT), Syrian Palestinians' conditions in Lebanon are shockingly vulnerable, reaffirming that resources are unmet and psychological health is not even slightly taken care of.

### Obstacles faced by Palestinian Syrians in Lebanon

In May 2014, the Lebanese authorities imposed a law on Palestinian Syrians entering Lebanon. The requirements in which the Lebanese authorities inflicted on the refugees were meant to guarantee their temporary residency in Lebanon, as Lebanon is reluctant to welcome them for various reasons. Palestinians from Syria had to declare that they are either transiting through Lebanon, or that they will abide by particular conditions as part of a temporary residency in Lebanon. These conditions are granted if they are lucky; many Syrian Palestinians are denied entry in Lebanon altogether, despite their proof of documents or otherwise. In the case of Palestinian Syrians already residing in Lebanon prior to the law, many of them are unable to renew their temporary residency visas. They wind up without a clear status in the country, consequentially at risk of deportation.

A 2014 study by AMNESTY International, "Denied Refuge", on Palestinians from Syria seeking safety in Lebanon, tackles entry problems into Lebanon for Palestinian Syrians. This study explains

the two changes in entry law which placed a huge impact on the status of Palestinian Syrians. First, in August 2013, and next in May 2014. Prior to August 2013, the average case for a Palestinian refugee from Syria to enter Lebanon was to get authorisation from Syrian officials by holding a Palestinian Refugee Identity Card. Upon receiving authorisation from Syrian authorities, they could automatically receive a temporary visa in Lebanon which would last them for a year on a 3-month basis renewal. They could pay around 200 US Dollars if they wanted to extend it beyond that year, renewing their stay on a 3-month basis. Many Palestinian Syrians were denied entry for no apparent reason, some even waited for days at the borders and were still denied entry.

Although never published officially, NGOs confirmed that “border officials were reported to be enforcing a practice of only allowing Palestinian refugees from Syria to enter Lebanon if they had one of the following: a valid pre-approved visa which required an application made by a guarantor in Lebanon; a valid visa and ticket to a third country – meaning they were only transiting through Lebanon; a scheduled medical or embassy appointment; or if they were able to prove they had family already legally in Lebanon”, according to AMNESTY International’s 2014 study.

The same study clarifies the changes in policy since May 2014 by the Lebanese authorities intended for Palestinian Syrians’ entry into Lebanon complicated their status even more so. Like the previous policy amendment, it was not fully acknowledged by the government, but was reported to be true. On May 3 2014, Palestinian Syrians were denied entry into Lebanon evidenced by a leaked

document from Beirut Rafik Hariri Airport which stated the following:

*Issued by the airport branch of General Security*

*To all airlines  
Date 3/5/2014*

*Subject: not allowing the transportation of any traveller who is a Palestinian refugee in Syria*

*We request that you do not transport any traveller who is a Palestinian refugee in Syria to Lebanon no matter the reason and regardless of the documents or IDs that they hold, under penalty of fining the transporting company in case of non-compliance as well as return of the traveller to where they came from.*

*[signed by head of airport general security branch for Rafik Hariri airport]*

## Statistics on their lives in Lebanon

According to ANERA’s study reports on the lives of Palestinian Syrian refugees, more than 90% of the refugees from Syrian lack income. Many families resort to child labor as a means of survival. ANERA’s reports confirm that two-thirds of all families are not able to provide three meals a day. They receive relief mainly from local and international organizations.

In January 2013, ANERA reported that 74% of the interviewed households are crowded with more than 10 people. 60% of all households are reported to be crammed into one room. Rents range between 150-300 US Dollars per month. Syrian Palestinian families are

continuously concerned with the rent payment, fearing that they may not be able to pay and wind up losing shelter in Lebanon. Their vulnerable conditions keep intensifying, and they are unable to lead decent lives with their basic human rights because of the restrictions and imitations placed upon them.

## Hiba Abou Ghazale





## Torture in Lebanon: Between International Conventions and Reality

Jason Donohue once said, *'I see humans, but no humanity'*. If we take some time to think about it, we can't but agree with him. What is currently happening around the world is truly devastating: killing, torturing, crimes, abuse, and the list goes on. International conventions frown upon all of this. But, are people really referring to conventions? In Lebanon, in the recent years, Human Rights were and continue to be violated on regular basis. An example of this is torture. What is torture and what is the current situation in our country?

**The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** defines Torture

*as 'any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity...'* By referring to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 5 clearly states the following: 'No one shall be subjected to torture or to

cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'. Is this really happening? Can we apply this on the current events in Lebanon?

Torture takes many forms. Sadly enough, it has become a regular way to deal with many people, including non-Lebanese as well. Perhaps, over the years and with all the terror surrounding us wherever we go, we have become desensitized and accustomed to the idea of torture. Many examples can be given in our society.

### The case of detainees

Torture and the case of detainees are probably very interrelated. People often start debates about this. Some would say that even if a person is detained, s/he should be treated in a "good manner". This includes the right for food, visits and consultation with his/her lawyer. For the past two months, protests have been happening in Lebanon. Without going into details or taking sides regarding the situation, many protesters or 'activists' ended up being detained without a logical reason. Once out, the detainees told the media that some were tortured and beaten up inside the prison, with the absence of their right to consult a lawyer. Furthermore, parents who were able to visit their detained children explained to the media the devastating situation in prisons. The case is definitely not generalized because in many prisons, detainees are treated in a good manner. For example, they are treated with respect and dignity and are given the right to talk to a lawyer or see their parents.

CLDH (The Lebanese Center for Human Rights), a local non-profit, non-partisan Lebanese human rights organization based in Beirut, interviewed 44 women

arrested between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2014, in order to understand and evaluate the situation these women face inside the prison. The results of this research were devastating: 24 out of 44 women had been subjected to physical and psychological torture. The research, published in a report in April 2015, explains that 'in 76% of the documented cases, the Internal Security Forces and police stations would be responsible for torture. Several women alleged having been subjected to torture by men in civilian clothes from the army or the police intelligence services, or by militia men outside the official places of interrogation.' Moreover, a video went viral on social media outlets in June 2015 revealing footages of detainees being beaten up inside Roumieh prison. Is it acceptable to treat detainees in such ways? How can laws and regulations be applied inside the prisons?

### The case of LGBTQ

The LGBTQ community is exposed to torture on regular basis. There are many cases where police officers end up beating homosexuals for the sake of getting more information regarding places they go to or people they meet. In an incident that occurred early July 2015, L'orient le Jour discussed the case of Omar and Samer who were stopped at a checkpoint and taken to a police station in South Lebanon because one officer found 'half a gram of weed' with Samer. The two men performed a drug test that turned out negative. However, one of the officers checked Samer's phone and found a contact by the name of 'Habibi'. As so, officers accused both men of being homosexuals. According to BlogBaladi, Officers 'started beating Omar violently and torturing him by putting his head back and forth in cold water. Samer got



his share of the torture and both were even electrocuted and forced to spill out names of homosexuals and drug dealers in Lebanon'. They both spent 6 days in prison and were tortured on daily basis to reveal names and places. Having weed is definitely wrong. However, badly treating individuals accused of being homosexuals after a negative drug test is even more wrong. Again, how can laws be applied inside police stations? Who can supervise and inspect what is happening in such places? In addition, we can't but stress the issue of 'anal tests' performed on individuals suspected of being homosexuals. These tests are considered, by many, a form of torture and rape. The case of domestic workers Stories of domestic workers who are exposed to torture in Lebanon are endless. When they are accused of stealing something from the house they work in, they are directly taken to the nearest police station for further investigation. This is the regular procedure that any individual does once faced with a similar situation. But, what happens inside the station is something the human mind can't and shouldn't accept. Sadly, domestic workers are heavily tortured and physically abused until they tell the truth. Sometimes, they admit of things they did not do in the first place just so they stop torturing them. This definitely doesn't happen in all police stations. However, it is the common case. Officers often 'brag' as well about how much they have beaten up a worker for him/her to tell the truth of something s/he did. For example, stealing.

## The case of protesters

Two months ago, protests started to reoccur in the country. Many were peaceful ones, located in Martyrs Square

or Riad al Soloh, Beirut. Despite the fact that it was peaceful, Security Forces and Police Officers have beaten up activists and many were severely injured. I am definitely not taking sides. After all, officers were following orders and were doing what they were told. However, I am stressing on the barbaric and cruel response the protesters were exposed to. Is this really the correct way to deal with peaceful protests?

## Conclusion

Torture is a definite human rights violation. In many countries around the world, the statistics can be frightening. A Study on torture in Lebanon was conducted in 2014 by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as a part of the U.N. Committee against Torture's (CAT) annual report. It says 'Torture in Lebanon is a pervasive practice that is routinely used by the armed forces and law enforcement agencies', the law enforcement agencies that are the ones who should implement laws in the first place.

As mentioned above, there are many types of torture. Other than the ones listed in the first section, we add the following: torture in schools, torture towards Syrian refugees, torture against women and many more. The consequences of such are immense, and truly heartbreaking.

In Lebanon, and with a relatively increase rate in torture, many organizations and/or associations have taken the initiative to deal with such cases. Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture works in this domain. The center offers services to assess the situation of each individual who has been exposed to torture and provides

the needed help. Moreover, it makes sure that laws and legal frameworks are enforced. In addition, Centre Nassim for the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Torture, a project created by the SOLIDA movement (Support of Lebanese Detained Arbitrarily) and CLDH, works with victims of torture. The center's main objective is to facilitate the rehabilitation and the social reintegration of victims of torture living in Beirut and in Lebanon. Dealing with such cases can be relatively hard in a small society like ours.

In a Utopian society, there will be no torture. In reality, torture exists. In Lebanon, what is needed is an implementation of laws and regulations to prevent it, or at least punish people who use this way to deal with others. Both the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior should join their efforts in order to implement all the needed laws. In prisons, a strategic plan is necessary to make sure that basic human rights are not violated. After all, detainees are humans and should be treated based on that concept. But, the question remains: if laws and regulations were perfectly applied, will it be enough? Can we obey rules or should each individual's personal conscience interfere with his/her work? Shouldn't we stop considering torture a way to express or to reach something? In a cruel world with many unfortunate accidents, the question has no clear answer.

**Ziad Azar**



## Syrian Refugees: A Question of Human Rights

Refugees, Syrians, war and asylum are words we are now hearing on a regular basis, whether in our daily lives or in the media. In March 2011, a war started in Syria. Since then, the Middle East and Europe has faced a very damaging and dangerous crisis: the refugee crisis. Surrounded by bombs and missiles, thousands of Syrians fled their own country searching for a safe place to live with dignity. Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan were among the many countries that refugees went to. According to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), the number of registered Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, last updated in August 2015, has reached 1,113,941. By adding the number of unregistered

refugees who entered the country in an illegal way, Lebanon hosts now nearly, if not more than, 1.5 million refugees and people seeking refuge. The number is clearly gigantic for a small country like Lebanon to handle. Thinking they are headed toward a better future, the refugees have found themselves facing problems that have made their situation worse: lack of housing and of any form of help from the state, unethical treatment by the surrounding, and many more. What does the future of this crisis look like with more refugees fleeing to our country for security?

### Refugees and Human Rights.

Before debating the issue of refugees,

we need to understand what defines refugees, and what their rights are. According to Migration Watch UK, a confusion always occurs between a “refugee” and an “asylum seeker”. An asylum seeker is a person who “has applied for asylum under the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees on the ground that if s/he is returned to his country of origin s/he has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political belief or membership of a particular social group. S/he remains an asylum seeker for so long as his application or an appeal against refusal of his/her application is pending.” Meanwhile, and according to the same source, a refugee is an asylum seeker whose application was accepted. In other words, s/he is a person fleeing but a well-founded fear of persecution is a condition for being granted the status as defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention. *(The 1951 Refugee Convention on the status of Refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, his/her rights and the legal obligations of states.)*

Some articles of The Universal Declaration of Human rights also applies to refugees. For example, article 9 states the following: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”. In Lebanon, many refugees were arrested without a logical reason simply because they are “refugees” or “Syrians”. Moreover, article 13 states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state”. In many Lebanese villages, refugees were forbidden to leave their houses after a certain time of the day, usually 7 or 8pm. Finally, article 14 includes the right to enjoy the provided asylum. “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum

from persecution.” However, are these rights truly effective? Are we referring to humanity when dealing with this crisis?

### Role of organizations: refugees and social inclusion.

With over one million refugee in the country (including a very high number of children and teenagers), something had to be done fast. The Lebanese Red Cross Youth (LRCY) is one of the many organizations in Lebanon that have been working with refugees.

Sandy Mazraani, a volunteer at the LRCY – Koura sector, believes that working with refugees was very challenging, but beneficial at the same time. “As part of our HVP program (Humanitarian Values and Principles), we worked many times with refugees residing in Al Qalamoun - North Lebanon. The program is not targeted towards the refugees, but we thought that it can be beneficial for them as well. As volunteers, we wanted to make sure that they understood each value through a game we played together. These values include acceptance, equality regarding the race and gender, and many more. We were amazed by the things they knew and everything they were capable of. They want to return to their country, a country that they absolutely love. We wanted to break down the tension happening around them. We wanted to make them feel just like everyone else in a country different than theirs”, Sandy says. This is what social inclusion means: to respect the differences within a society. For the refugees, these differences are numerous. Sadly, social inclusion seems hard to achieve. As such, refugees are continuously subject to mistreatment or abuse of all kinds.



During a short interview, a social worker (who preferred to remain anonymous for privacy concerns) assured that working with refugees is very critical. According to her, one of the most damaging problems the refugees are facing now is the cost of living raise, from rent to buying daily items (food, clothes, water...). The financial aids they receive from the United Nations and other organizations, is not enough to cover their needs. Moreover, before the beginning of the school year, some parents are having difficulties registering their kids in schools. *“We work and provide assistance to the refugees within a psychological aspect. We provide psychological services with the help of neurologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists and psychologists. We deal with people who are having emotional issues such as Schizophrenia. Some even have problems dealing with their daily lives in Lebanon, because of the different circumstances that had faced them in their home country, from bombs and the overall war”.*

When it comes to Education, as mentioned above, some parents end up unable to register their kids in schools for different reasons. However, many organizations took the initiative of opening centers and/or schools dedicated only to refugees. One of the teachers who worked in such schools (she wants to remain anonymous as well) describes her experience with refugees. *“Teaching Syrian refugees was a unique experience. I witnessed students who are eager to learn and conquer all the obstacles they previously faced. The ages ranged from 6 to 14 years old. They all shared the passion of taking advantage of this opportunity to learn as much as they can. They learned through active learning techniques and reflected the sense of using everything even the simplest things*

*to create application on the lesson. One of the difficulty I personally faced was challenging myself to deliver the lesson in an interesting way, especially because many students were out of school for 5 years or more. The outcome though was very motivating: a smile on their face when they learned something new”.* As such, many organizations are helping the refugees on different levels. This help is necessary. But, is this the case with everybody?

### **Refugees and general belief: the current situation.**

After the tragic death of Aylan Kurdi, the toddler who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while escaping on a boat with his family to Greece, the refugee crisis reached a new level worldwide. Everybody became concerned, whether directly or indirectly, with this crisis. In the media, we noticed how citizens in countries like Germany and London gathered around to help and welcome the refugees coming to their country. But, is this the case in Lebanon? What are citizens doing for the refugees?

A good number of Lebanese feel compassion toward the refugees and their situation. It is definitely hard for people to leave their country, some say, uncertain if they will ever return to it or not. For many as well, the number of refugees Lebanon currently has is extremely high. The country is definitely incapable of dealing with it. As some would argue, the country is not providing the basic necessities for its own citizens, not to mention refugees themselves. With the current worldwide crisis, many Lebanese blamed developed countries in the Gulf for example, for not opening their borders for refugees. *“This will take*

*some of the burden off the shoulders of countries like ours, who is still accepting and welcoming Syrians more than its capabilities”*, a Lebanese citizen said.

Former Portuguese politician Antonio Guterres says *“Refugees are not terrorists. They are often the first victim of terrorism”*. In our country, many Lebanese often look at refugees as terrorists, or people who are here to sabotage or jeopardize the situation. The majority of the Lebanese often tend to forget that after all, they are people just like us. We can't ignore the fact that the government or responsible authorities can't deal with the crisis anymore. Moreover, some Syrians cause trouble within their environment. However, generalizing the case is definitely not the right thing to do. Organizations and personal initiatives have been taken in order to help refugees. It is a great step to prove that people with good intentions still exist. But, is it enough?

What is needed at this point is a clear plan and strategy from the government to deal with the crisis we are facing in our territories. The refugee crisis can't be ignored anymore. This crisis was added to a long list of problems the country is unable to find solutions for. However, we should not forget that, as citizens, humanity should always be our main concern. After all, this is what grips us all together. Coming from different countries, different sects and social backgrounds, humanity is our key holder. It's true that refugees have occupied a huge part of the country. It's true that the number has surpassed the expectations. But, what are we without humanity?

**Ziad Azar**



## Detainees in Lebanon: The Reality of Their Rights

Nelson Mandela once said, *'To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity'*. On a simple level, these rights are numerous: the right to play, the right to eat etc... On a more sophisticated level, human rights are infinite and endless. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights within its 30 articles, defines these rights and is considered a 'common standard' for everyone living on this planet. Sadly, violations are happening in many parts of the world. Many individuals are deprived from numerous rights, and examples on this are countless. To put things into perspective, we will target the issue of detainees and their situation in Lebanon.

First of all, the difference between a 'detainee' and a 'prisoner' must be clarified. A detainee (المعتقل) is an individual 'who is kept in jail even though s/he has not yet been convicted of a crime...'. On the other hand, a 'prisoner' (السجين) is anyone 'who is deprived of personal liberty against his/her will following conviction of a crime...'. In Lebanon for example, the situation prisoners are put in is terrifying and many studies lead to alarming conclusions. However, the following article will target the issue of detainees in Lebanon.

When we say 'detainee', the term 'arbitrary detention' comes with it. What is an arbitrary detention? According to

a report published in 2013 by CLDH (The Lebanese Center for Human Rights) entitled 'Arbitrary detention and torture in Lebanon', an arbitrary detention takes place 'when it does not comply with national legislation, other relevant international standards set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant international instruments ratified by Lebanon.' The report states and explains that this method spread fast in the country. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention defined three categories of this: detention without a legal basis for the deprivation of liberty, detention of a person for exercising his/her rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and detention of a person after a trial which did not comply with the standards for a fair trial set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments. Many examples on people being arbitrary detained can be given.

### Protests and activists

On Thursday October 8, a protest took place near Al Nahar Building in Beirut. The protest was part of the overall movement that has been happening in the country after the garbage crisis in early July 2015. During this protest, many activists were arrested without a logical reason for doing so. Two of the protesters/activists, Pierre Hachach and Waref Sleiman, were detained on October 8, and released on Monday October 19. The civil society expressed its anger with what happened and demanded the release of the peaceful protesters. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Article 19, everyone has the right

to freedom of opinion and expression, and that includes protests. Therefore, it is unacceptable to detain protesters without a legal reason for it.

### The situation in prisons

As many reports and studies have shown, the situation of prisons in the country is critical. Some prisoners are deprived of their rights, and prisons are often overcrowded and lack the minimal standards. In an LBCI report (The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International) discussing the situation of the prisoners in Al Qobbeh prison for women, some cases revealed showed that detainees were subject to many human rights violations. If we put aside the terrible situation of the prison itself, some prisoners are currently facing many legal problems. Women explained that, since they can't afford to pay the bail, they are still detained. Moreover, some shared their problem of not being able to consult their lawyer regarding their case. Is this not considered an arbitrary detention in the prison? This should be a clear problem that forces concerned authorities to seriously evaluate the prisons' situations, as well as the prisoners' and/or detainees' .

### Legal aid in Lebanon

CLDH, in a report entitled 'Legal aid in Lebanon' published in 2013, explains that legal aid, as a means of ensuring a justice system that is accessible and available to all, should be available for everyone who cannot afford the costs of justice. It enables citizens to 'bring the lawsuit, proceed in it and achieve the necessary investigation procedures until the judgment is delivered, notified...'. In a separate study, CLDH concluded that there are four main reasons why



detainees did not benefit from the legal aid, two of which are the lack of information and the lack of clear understanding of the role of the lawyers. Both are considered serious problems that need to be solve immediately. Every detainee should have the right for a legal aid, or at least should know this right, as well as the right to consult a lawyer regarding his/her case.

In 2012, CLDH initiated a program called 'legal assistance to vulnerable inmates in the Lebanese prisons'. It aims to reduce the number of inmates in prisons and assure a better access to justice for vulnerable people by giving them access to an appropriate legal aid. CLDH's legal assistance program have worked with Syrian refugees, domestic workers and inmates in prisons across Lebanon.

## Challenges inside the prisons

According to the same report mentioned above, many challenges are faced when working inside the prisons to provide legal aids for detainees. For example, the case of torture. Since the situation of detainees is very interrelated with torture, torture continues to increase with more judges covering for it. The source acknowledges that nearly 60% of men and women are tortured during investigations, which is considered a human right violation itself. In addition, the LGBT community continues to be exposed to torture. For example, many people are 'detained' simply because they are accused of being homosexuals, or caught in 'gay places, not to forget the case of 'anal tests' or 'tests of shame'. Moreover, many detainees don't know that they have a right 'to have a lawyer free of charge'. Others also complain about their lawyer not giving them any

updates regarding their case, which is proved by the report of the women in Al Qobbeh prison mentioned above.

## Conclusion

The 'Informative Brochure on the rights of detainees and pre-trial detainees', published by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, discusses the many rights detainees and pre-trial detainees have. For example, the right to personally contact a lawyer and have the necessary time for it, being in an adequate room, the right to be treated with dignity and humanity, and many more. These are all accurate and must-be-obtained rights. But, is this the current situation in our numerous prisons? The answer to that questions is a definite 'no'. Every human being has rights, and s/he should have access to these rights in a suitable environment. When it comes to detainees, it is important for them to understand their situation: their rights and their duties. In Lebanon, the issue of prisons, detainees and/or prisoners is one of the many subjects that needs rethinking to set new objectives. Humanity doesn't and shouldn't end when a human being enters a prison, for one reason or another.

**Ziad Azar**

## Child Abuse and Human Rights Violation

In his book entitled "*A Child Called "It"*", Dave Pelzer wrote "*Childhood should be carefree, playing in the sun; not living a nightmare in the darkness of the soul*". And how many kids did we see playing in the sun, who were in fact living in an absolute nightmare because of abuse?

Canadian Red Cross defines child abuse as "any form of physical, emotional and/or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that causes injury or emotional damage to a child or youth ..." Emotional abuse, exposure to family violence, physical abuse and sexual abuse are all forms of child abuse. When we say abuse, two sides are taken into consideration: the abuser and the person being abused.

In this case, the latter is a child. What can we say about Child Abuse and the Convention of the Rights of the Child? What is the situation in Lebanon, and what is being done regarding this issue? Rights under the Convention on the

## Rights of the Child

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is any person below the age of 18. As such, just like any other person, s/he has rights. Article 19 (protection from all forms of violence) states that "Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children

are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them...” In addition, Article 34 affirms that it is the government’s duty to protect children from any form of sexual exploitation and abuse. Finally, Article 39 discusses the cases of Rehabilitation, where “Children who have been neglected, abused or exploited should receive special help to physically and psychologically recover and reintegrate into society...” By looking at these three articles and comparing them to actual incidents and/or cases of child abuse, we can say that they are definitely not applied. Sadly, the right to be protected from being hurt is being violated on regular basis, if not even daily.

According to a factsheet published by the World Health Organization - WHO<sup>i</sup>, abuse has many consequences. Aside from bruises and physical injuries, it can lead to development delays, drug abuse, depression, stress disorders, self-harm and many more. The fact sheet also states that parent training and home visiting programs can be implemented in order to prevent child abuse or at least help reduce child maltreatment rates. Since child abuse has become a global problem, many countries took the initiatives to deal with and solve this issue.

### **Himaya: for the innocence in danger.**

NGOs like Himaya took the initiative to raise awareness about abuse in order to have a needed impact on our society. Himaya is a Lebanese Non-Governmental Organization that aims to break the silence regarding child abuse. Its work is dedicated to making child protection

a right for everyone in the country. In 2014, Himaya dealt with 711 cases of abuse, nearly half of which are considered psychological ones. According to a study published on Study.com, psychological abuse “*can be defined as the systematic use of malicious manipulation through nonphysical acts against an intimate partner, child, or dependent adult...*” Himaya works with children, their families and surroundings as a whole. Since December 2014, the NGO have worked with 3560 children and 849 parents.

Kim Heshmé, head of the Communication department in Himaya, says that the main targets they reach for are the youngsters and their parents. The NGO wants to give them the needed strength to speak out. *“Even after we launched our first controversial campaign in 2011 to break the taboo about child abuse, we noticed that the impact was an important one but was not enough. It is a daily struggle to get people to speak out and report abuse when they see it. Our aim is to keep persevering by raising awareness among youngsters and their parents in order not only to provide them with the self-protection tools they need, but also to give them the strength it takes to say ‘This is not okay and it’s my right and duty to report!’, Kim says. “Dealing with abuse cases is not the hard part of our work. Our main challenge is to get victims of abuse or their surroundings to have the courage to speak out and trust that there are both dedicated people and organizations out there willing to help.”*

As mentioned above, 711 cases of abuse were detected by Himaya in 2014. Given that many cases of abuse could not be detected, partly because concerned people did not have the courage to speak out, the actual number should be truly tremendous. Himaya provide an ongoing

support system for victims of abuse.

### **The story of Sarah**

This story goes back to October 2014. It is just a typical example of stories happening in our small society. Luckily, this one was acknowledged. Sarah’s parents separated when she was only 7 years old. Shortly after the divorce, the father left and never came back. Soon enough, Sarah’s mother got married to Samir, thinking he would be the support she needed for Sarah and her brother Rami. Everything was okay at the beginning. After a while, Samir’s behavior started to change. Rami was his first victim. For wetting his bed, Samir used to continuously punch Rami in the face. One day, while the mother was not home, Samir took this chance to approach Sarah. “I don’t think you really love me, because if you did, you would have sex with me now”, he would say. The sexual abuse went on for 5 brutal years. Sarah was ashamed to tell anyone, even to her mother, in fear of her thinking that her husband was cheating on her own daughter. Samir’s behavior was noticed by the neighbors, who asked Sarah one day, when she was having lunch with them, about what was happening in the house. For she hesitated between telling the truth or “protecting” her family, her answer was ambiguous. Following their instincts, the neighbors contacted Himaya and convinced Sarah to speak out. At first, she only told what happened with her brother. Himaya’s psychologist provided the needed environment for Sarah to finally speak out about her own experience. Devastated by the terrible news, Sarah’s mother admitted she had been feeling that something was happening, but was too scared to say anything because of her husband’s uncontrollable behavior. Sarah’s mother

got the guidance she needed to file a lawsuit against her husband for physical abuse, sexual abuse and rape. Samir was soon convicted and taken out of the household. Today, Sarah’s relationship with her mother needs a lot of work. That work is supported and provided by Himaya’s social workers and psychologists. Sarah was traumatized and Rami has isolated himself from any social interaction. It is a long way to go. But soon enough, they might both realize that there are no victims of abuse, only survivors.

### **Child abuse: the reality**

Child abuse can have many causes, which differ from one country to another. In Lebanon and according to Himaya, the highest number of cases (278 cases) was detected in the North followed by 211 cases in the Bekaa valley. The main problem with child abuse is how to detect the cases, because many of them remain unacknowledged. Therefore, people have to understand the importance of reporting a case of abuse once noticed. According to Himaya’s procedures, any citizen can report a case of abuse to the concerned authorities: the Juveniles Division in the Ministry of Justice: (مصلحة الأحداث في وزارة العدل) or the Juveniles Protection Division in the Ministry of Social Affairs: (دائرة حماية الأحداث في وزارة الشؤون الاجتماعية). If the case turned out to be false or inaccurate, the person who reported would not face legal prosecution in any way. What is needed is the name of the person being abused (if it is known), his/her address and telephone number, or any type of information that can be helpful to contact the concerned people.

Dealing with child abuse can be a very risky and challenging task in a society



and country like ours. People are still hesitant, even afraid, to report a child abuse case once noticed and recognized. Many cases remain unknown to the competent authorities and the concerned organizations. Abusing a child, whether physically, sexually or psychologically, is very dangerous and will lead to many harmful effects. On the other hand, it is the people's duty to report a case to the concerned authorities in Lebanon. They need to be aware of the fact that hesitation or ignoring a case just for the sake of a family's own reputation is wrong. When we report a case, we are definitely saving an innocent child. We are limiting the negative consequences on his/her life. It's time to act and report now.

**Ziad Azar**



<sup>i</sup> Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs150/en/>



كفى تحويل طفل صغير الى هرم ثقيل كاهله  
الحياة باكراً

هذه صورة عمالة الاطفال المقتنعة المخبأة تحت  
غطاء المال و الموهبة. جورج و كريم لا يقلان شأننا  
عن ذاك الطفل الذي يجول الشوارع يومياً يشهد  
المال ليتنعم به والديه و يبقى هو أسير الأرقعة  
مهما كانت الظروف المناخية فيبقى سجين لأنه  
وقع ضحية لظروف الحياة القاهرة لا خيار آخر له  
بل أمنية يستطع بريقتها في عينيه فتكسر جدار  
الصمت لتطلق صرخة "عطونا الطفولي".

Mirella Bou Khalil

فبدأ عام ٢٠١٣ عن عمر الـ ١٤ سنة. في رصيده أغنيتين  
الأولى عام ٢٠١٣ "القلب الأبيض" و مؤخرًا "منك  
بريئة" كما وهناك لكل أغنية فيديو كليب. هو في  
صدد التحضير إلى أغنية ثالثة جديدة.

الدخول إلى عالم الفن يحتم على الفنان السهر  
لإحياء الحفلات و معظمها يكون في الملاهي  
الليلية. وجود طفل إلى هذه الأماكن ممنوع و  
لكن صوت و موهبة، زغيب و عبدو، مؤثر دخول  
يسمح لهما السهر أينما يحلو لهما. العمر المحدد  
لدخول الملهى هو الـ ٢١ و ذلك لأن ما يحصل في  
الداخل يجب ألا يراه و يتعرض إليه الطفل، من  
التدخين إلى المشروب، و الأوضاع الحميمة بين  
الحبيبين فالنظر عنهما يكون محجوب في ظل  
إعدادهم الإضاءة ناهيك عن المشاكل و أحياناً إطلاق  
النار لأن الموجودون لا يكونوا في حالة و عي كامل  
بل "سكرانين". من المتوقع أن يكون الطفل في  
هذا العمر غارق في ثبات عميق يحلم بما سيكون  
في المستقبل البعيد أما جورج و كريم إكتشفا  
حلمهما باكراً فاعتزلا التفكير و التخطيط و بدأ  
بالتنفيذ.

بالنسبة إلى القانون اللبناني فيحق للطفل أن يبدأ  
بالعمل عن عمر ١٣ عام و لكن ضمن شروط معينة  
من المتوقع توافرها، أهمها ألا يكون دوام العمل  
بين الساعة السابعة مساءً حتى الساعة صباحاً و  
عليه العمل كحد أقصى يصل إلى ست ساعات في  
اليوم الواحد فقط و صمنها ساعة فراغ. إذا أخل  
رب العمل بحاسب بدفع غرامة مالية او يدخل على  
السجن. و لكن هل من يحاسب؟؟

جورج و كريم عملهما يحتم عليهما العمل خارج  
الدوام القانوني المحدد، ما يجعلهما خارجان عن  
القانون و لكن على الرغم من ذلك فجورج إنتسب  
إلى نقابة الفنانين.

ليست تجارة بالأولاد بل عرض لمواهبهم، على  
الرغم من الإختلاف في التسمية لا يزال التقارب  
من حيث المعنى موجود. فعرض موهبة طفل  
تكون من خلال برنامج تلفزيوني للهواة، معرض  
فني، مهرجان للأطفال أو أي مناسبة أخرى شرط ألا  
تكون المشاركة على حساب حياة الفرد كطفل. و  
ألا يصبح الهدف تجاري فيجب أن يكون التعامل مع  
الموهبة بشكل حضاري.  
كفى تهشيم بالطفولة  
كفى قمع لحقوق الطفل  
كفى سلب للبرائة

## كفى كفى كفى دمعي كفكفا مال صبري مال مال مال و إكتفى

عنوان " المعجزة يغني للعمالقة" و تبعه الالبوم  
فيديو كليب لأغنية "وجعك يا وطني" بمناسبة  
عيد الاستقلال، ومؤخرًا فيديو كليب لأغنية "محتاج  
لوفى". و مسيرته الحافلة تظهر التعب المطلوب  
لإنشاء هذا الكم من الاعمال ناهيك عن الحفلات  
التي يحيها الى جانب المهرجانات.

و غيره من النجوم اصبح لحياته منحى آخر و نمط  
عيش جديد من الصعب التأقلم معه و مع نمط  
عيش طفل عادي يرتاد المدرسة يومياً، لذلك حلق  
جورج بعيداً عن سريره، ترك المدرسة و بات يحرس  
على يد أساتذة في البيت.

جورج ليس الظاهرة الوحيدة في هذا المجال  
فهناك أيضاً الطفل كريم عبدو الذي لم يكتفي  
بالموهبة المتواجدة لديه بل أيضاً لجأ إلى الفيديو  
كليب لتسويق لنفسه و زيادة نسبة الأرباح. و هذا  
كان هدفه الأساسي الذي دعمه والديه لتحقيقه

بهذه الكلمات تؤج الفنان جورج زغيب مسيرته  
الفنية بعمل جديد تحت عنوان "محتاج لوفى". لعل  
ما يحتاج إليه جورج ليس الوفى فحسب بل محتاج  
إلى حياة عادية تليق به كطفل بهذا العمر. محتاج  
إلى أصدقاء من عمره محتاج الى وقت ليلعب و  
يصنع ذكريات الطفولة التي تحتل ذاكرة الانسان  
حتى يشيخ أبية أن ترحل. محتاج الى مدرسة لينضج  
مع أقرانه و أخيراً محتاج إلى أدنى درجات حقوقه  
كطفل لم يتجاوز الـ ١٥ من العمر.

منذ نعومة أظافره تأثر زغيب بموهبة والدته  
الغنائية فكان يفضل الاستماع الى الموسيقى  
عضواً عن اللعب مع الاصدقاء. شارك في برنامج  
للهاواة. بعدها بدأ بالغناء مع مدرّبه في مطعم  
عندها سمعه صاحب شركة إنتاج و تواصل مع  
والد الاخير الذي وافق على إمضاء عقد مع الشركة  
وبذلك اصبح لجورج مدير أعمال. عام ٢٠١٢ و هو  
بالثانية عشر من العمر وقع اليومه الاول تحت



"شبو بسيطة بعدا مع جوزا من بعد كل شي عملو فيا". المجتمع لن يكف عن التكلم و التعليق و في النهاية ما يهتم هو قرارك أنت قبطان سفينة حياتك قد تجري الرياح فيما لا تشتهي السفين و لكن تبقى المسؤولية على كاهل القبطان فالقرار بيده أكان سيعيد الأمور إلى مجاريها أم يترك السفينة و مصيرها في مهب الريح.

**Mirella Bou Khalil**

أصبحت هي المعيلة الوحيدة مع العلم أنها لا تملك أي شهادة جامعية لذلك فرص العمل ضئيلة جداً. مع ذلك كدت، تعبت و ناضلت كي تعلم الأطفال أما زوجها ، عوضاً عن دعمها أقله معنوياً لم يحرك ساكن بل على العكس كان يعاملها بطريقة غير حضارية ما "زاد الطين بلة" إلى أن طغح الكيل و أخذت القرار و طلقته. أطلاق أي التحرز من الشريك لم يكن الحال كذلك في وضع ريتا لأن زوجها بقي معها في المنزل نفسه اذ لم يعد له مكان ليبيت فيه و لا أحد كي يخدمه فهو عاجز عن الحركة. لذلك تعمل حالياً ريتا لإيجاد مأوى يستقبل حالة طليقها.

بدأ التكلم مؤخراً على الزواج المدني الذي بدوره ينصف المرأة و يضمن لها حقها و يدعمها لتقوم بخطوة الطلاق و بطريقة أسرع من ما هي الحال في معظم المؤسسات الزوجية الأخرى. لعل ما أثار الجدل حوله هو النظرة الدينية حول هذا الزواج أما على الصعيد الآخر فلما يعطي من تسهيلات للمرأة في حال أرادت الطلاق لأنه يساويها بالرجل ، وهذا من المحرمات التي بدورها غير مرغوبة من قبل الأكثرية في المجتمعات العربية.

فهل فعلاً ينصف الزواج المدني المرأة؟

الزواج المدني هو عقد قانوني بين شخصين تحت شروط معينة أولها تقديم طلب الزواج قبل ١٥ يوم من إبرام العقد. صحيح أن التسهيلات في الطلاق موجودة و لكن بعد ثلاث سنين من تقديم طلب الزواج. من إيجابيات الزواج المدني الابتعاد عن الاختلافات الدينية، أما من ناحية الإرث فإذا كان الزوجين من طائفتين مختلفتين و توفي أحدهما لا يستطيع الآخر أن يرثه. الزواج المدني ليس فقط لمن هم من طائفة مختلفة بل لمن يشاء و هذا ما يحقق المساواة في الحقوق و يعتبر حق من حقوق الإنسان.

الزواج المدني يضع النقاط على الحروف من بداية الطريق كي لا تتعقد الأمور عند حصول الطلاق و يسهل الإنفصال بين الزوجين لأنه لا يتطلب وقتاً كثيراً كما هو الحال في الزواج المقترن بديانات معينة. على كل امرأة إتخذت هكذا قرار أن تكون قوية و لا ترضخ للضغط الذي سستواجهه. ليست المسألة مسألة تطرف للنساء و لكن لأدنى الحقوق الإنسانية و العيش بكرامة.

أن يقال "مطلقة حرام" أفضل بكثير من أن يقال

## مطلقة حرام

رذة فعل عائلتها أولاً و من ثم المجتمع بعد أن تفتح عليها حرب متعددة الجبهات.

ريتا أم لخمسة أولاد، اضطرت للزوخ إلى ضغط المجتمع و بقيت مع زوجها على الرغم من ما سوى فيها. زوج ريتا يعشق المال و يسعى وراءه "عل عمياني"، أغرته امرأة أخرى و وعدته أنها ستعطيه الكثير من المال فالتزم معها إلى أن أنجبت منه ولد، لكنها ما لبثت أن وضعت الطفل حتى تركته ، ذهبت و لم تعطه المبلغ الذي وعدته به فلم تعطه سوى الطفل و كل ما يأتي معه من مصاريف ليعيله وحده. وحده بمعنى آخر ريتا ، التي شفقت على الولد و رثته كأنه أحد أولادها على الرغم من وضعها المعيشي السبخ. مع مرور الوقت تعرّض زوج ريتا إلى إطلاق نار أراده طريق الفراش بعد أن أصيب بشلل نصفي. أصيحا التخت و التلفاذ صديقاه الوحيديين و زادت النفقات في المنزل و ما من معيل إلا ريتا، فمدت تلك اللحظة

و كأن هاتان الكلمتين نسبا لبعضهما، مع كل كلمة مطلقة كلمة يا حرام. لماذا لا يقال مثلاً "طلقت برافو علانيا"؟ السبب معروف و واضح، نظرة المجتمع اللبناني الذي يوجه أصابع الإتهام إلى كل امرأة مطلقة لينعتها بأبشع النعوت. خاطئة، قوية أو تبعد كل البعد عن الأخلاق، لأنهم يظنون أن الهدف من طلاقها هو القدرة على الخروج مع رجال آخرين براحتها فمعظم الأحيان يقع اللوم على المرأة في حال وقع الطلاق.

"ليش طلقتي؟ كرمال ولدك لازم تسكتي و تصوني جوزك" "عم يضرني" "لو ضريك! هلاً أحسن؟ لا بيت ولا جوز شو بدا تقول العالم؟"

ليس بحديث جديد على مسمع أحد، حديث طبيعي ينهال على المرأة المطلقة و عليها تحمّل



تحتسّر على أيّام الماضي، حين كان كلّ جندي من المخطوفين يخدم بلده، يعود إلى منزله رافع رأسه. يطلّ بنظر أولاده و عبدة يتمثل فيها أولاد كثر. يعود ليرتاح في المنزل الذي يتنعم فيه بدفء العائلة التي بعد رحيله لفها الخوف و الغلق. لم يبق خيار لديها سوى إنتظار سماع خبر عن ولدها على أمل أن يكون خبر سار يعبد كل البعد عن الخبر المشؤوم خبر وفاته. شقيقة العسكري جورج خوري تتمنى لو أن "هؤلاء الجنود قد استشهدوا في الميدان، بدل أن يموتوا كل يوم". اليأس هيمن على الأهالي حتى أنهم باتوا يفضلون الموت لأبنائهم عوضاً عن التعذيب الذي يتعرضون له.

المعاناة باتت للأهالي خبزهم اليومي، مصير أولادهم يشغل بالهم لا ينفكوا عن التفكير فيما حصل و ما سيحصل. الجندي برتبة أب كسر برحيله أساس عائلته و أمست إمرأته تلعب الدوران، فزاد الحمل عليها و لا يمكنها سوى التأقلم مع القدر المفروض عليها. الجندي برتبة الإبن الوحيد أقفل برحيله بيت أهله، لا يعرفون إن كان سيعود "ليفرحوا فيه" و يكمل مهمته ببناء شجرة العائلة. الجندي برتبة أخ برحيله أخذ الأمان و يتّم إخوته. أمّا إذا كان عريس جديد فيحظى بتعاطف أكبر من الرأبي العام خاصّة على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، تعدّدت الرتب و لكن المهمة واحدة، فرد في عائلة سئمت من الإنتظار، إنتظار المجهول. كيف لهم أن يثقوا بعد بدولة لا سلطة لها على أراضيها؟ فالمخطوفون في بلدة عرسال و لم تتمكن الدولة على الرفع من كل المحاولات إسترجاعهم. الخيم قابعة في رياض الصلح تطالب بعودتهم و لكن مؤخراً بات مطلب الساحة مختلفاً، "طلعت ريحتكم" حملة نظّمها الشعب مطالباً بإزالة النفايات و الطاقم السياسي أيضاً. ليس من الأفضل لو أنّ القوى الأمنية تظافر جهودها لإسترجاع المخطوفين عوضاً عن التهجم على المواطنين؟

Mirella Bou Khalil

## عاجل: أهالي العسكريين المخطوفين لدى داعش يلتقون أبناءهم في هذه الأثناء في جرود عرسال.

من العام المنصرم، أهدى تنظيم الدولة الإسلامية و جبهة النصرة الجيش أجمّل هدّية، خطفوا عدد من عناصره إلى عرسال و أمسوا في ضيافتهم الأكل و المنامة مؤمنان و من دون أي خلفه. ضيافة من نوع آخر ترتكز على التعذيب و الترهيب. من المسؤول؟ ما العمل؟ ماذا سيحصل؟ أسئلة وضعت في رسم المعنيين و لكن هل من يسمع؟ عام مضى و لا بصيص أمل يطمئن بال أهاليهم، وعود كثيرة و لكن الشلل ضرب هيكل المسؤوليين فالتحرك بشأن الموضوع معدوم و "على الوعد يا كمون". باتت ساحة رياض الصلح مركز للمطالبة بإسترجاع المخطوفين، مركز للصلاة و مناجاة الله، مركز يجتمع فيه المسلم و المسيحي جنباً إلى جنب رافعين الصوت عالياً للمطالبة بعودة الأسرى.

صرّح والد الجندي المخطوف محمد يوسف أن "ساحة رياض الصلح وحدها، تشهد على الدموع التي يذرفها أهالي المخطوفين يومياً". دموع

الجهة الخاطفة تتصرف و كأنها دولة مستقلة مع العلم أنها تتمركز في دولة لبنان و "على عينك يا تاجر" لا من يحرك ساكن، جهود تكاد أن تكون ضئيلة حيال هذا الملف، يتنقل من طاولة إلى أخرى و لكن "مكانك راوح". ما إن يفرّج قلب الأم، الإخت، الزوجة و الأولاد ليروا ذويهم حتى يأتي خبر يصعق قلوبهم.

عاجل: أهالي المخطوفين لن يتمكنوا من لقاء أبنائهم في جرود عرسال.

التلاعب بمشاعرهم ليس يتصرف غريب صادر من جهة لا تعرف الرحمة و لا تتعامل إلا بسياسة الإرهاب.

شرف تضحية و فاء و لكن يبدا أن العزل بات يرافق ما سبق، عزل الفرد من أحضان أبنائه، عائلته و مجتمعه. في اليوم التالي لعيد الجيش في آب



إلى جانب راكان و خليل هناك الطفلة إيلا طنوس التي بدورها أثارت نقمة على الطاقم الطبي في لبنان بعد أن بترت يداها ورجلاها جرّاء خطأ طبي فتلك الحادثة إستقطبت عطف الكثيرين. مسلسل الضحايا يتجدد مع كل موسم جديد لتلك البرامج. ضحية تلو الأخرى تقع و ضحية تلو الأخرى تسقط بين أيادي الإعلام لينقل واقعها، منذ إصارتها النور حتى إنطفاء وهجها لتصبح في خبر كان، بعد عجزها عن تأمين التسهيلات للجمهور و بعد أن يكون مل من مجرياتها.

يبقى الإعلام سيف ذو حدين، يخدم القضية من جهة و من جهة أخرى يتمادى إلى أبعد من صلاحياته فيتحول مقدم البرنامج من اعلامي إلى محقق قضائي، يسعى للفوز بالقضية و يصدر الحكم لصالحه.

Mirella Bou Khalil

القضية بل كل شخص قادر على المساعدة لم يتأخر عن تقديمها. انتشر على فيسبوك تحليلات عدّة لفيدويوات كاميرات المراقبة في منزل ركان التي أوضحت تحركات العاملة الأجنبية و عزمها على قطع الكهرباء عن المنزل لإخفاء الأدلة على أنّها من ارتكب الجريمة.

فتح الإعلام الباب أمام الرأي العام و المجتمع المدني و جمعياته الموالية للطفل و حقوقه و الأخرى الموالية للدفاع عن العاملات الأجنبية في لبنان. زاد التدخل في قضية طفلة لم تتجاوز السنّين من العمر لتصبح سيرتها على كل لسان، فتح الباب أمام محبي التثيرة لتكثر الشائعات؛ منها أن لدى سيلين تشوه خلقي منذ الولادة و لا دخل للعاملة في موتها من ناحية أخرى إدعى البعض أن " فيسا" سيلين لم تجهز كي تسافر مع سائر أفراد العائلة لذلك قتلها والدها، و غيرها من الأقاويل التي لا تمت للواقع بصلة.

ضح الإعلام و مواقع التواصل الإجتماعي في هذه الحادثة لمدة تفوق الأسبوعين على الرغم من عدم تواجد العائلة في لبنان فتم التواصل معهم عبر وسائل الإتصال المتاحة كي يتمكّن الجمهور من متابعة مجريات الحادثة.

### الضحية الثانية: جورج خليل

من المعتاد التعريف عنه على أنه المجرم لأنه كان المسبب في مقتل إيف نوفل و ليس الضحية. لكن في هذه الحالة وقع جورج خليل ضحية الإعلام حيث فاق التكلم عليه نشرات الأخبار و البرامج الحوارية ليصبح له إعلان خاص على إحدى المؤسسات التلفزيونية يعرض بين الفينة و الأخرى ليذكر الجمهور بالجريمة و كأنها الوحيدة في لبنان و هو الوحيد المجرم الغار و ذلك طبعاً قبل أن يتم القبض عليه من قبل القوى الأمنية. ذات ليلة في كفرديان وقع إشكال في مقهى ليلي تطوّر لاحقاً إلى تبادل إطلاق نار ما أدى إلى مصرع إيف نوفل و جرح صديقه و إعتقل المسبب جورج خليل و بعض من عاونه في تلك الجريمة. التضامن مع إيف بات واضحاً عبر مواقع التواصل الإجتماعي و المؤسسات الإعلامية كافة إلى أن تمّ القبض على المتهم و بوشر التحقيق.

توبعت مجريات الحادثة حتى اللمرّق الأخير لأنها مادة أثارت إهتمام الجمهور و جذبت الرأي العام بمختلف أعمارهم.

## مكان، زمان، متبارزون، جائزة

الجمهور و تطوّل مدّة الحديث عنها إلى أن يؤمّن البديل.

٥٤٤، للنشر و حكي جالس، برامج تتّحت عن هدفها الأساسي، توعية المشاهدين إلى إلهائهم و صرف نظرهم عن الأمور السياسية .

### الضحية الأولى: سيلين ركان

سيلين الطفلة التي قتلت على يد العاملة الإثيوبية بحسب ما أفادت به المتّهمة التي زعمت أنه أغمي عليها و عندما استفاقت وجدت نفسها تجلس فوق الطفلة التي كتبت أنفاسها بيدها بحسب ما كشف في التحقيق، ما حرّك قضية سيرين كان ما كتبه والدها على حسابه عبر فيسبوك لينال تضامن الرأي العام ما أوصل القضية إلى نشرات الأخبار و البرامج المذكورة. ألتعاطف مع سيلين بات واضحاً، لم يستلم القضاء وحده التحقيق في هذه

المكان: التلفاز خاصة المحطات اللبنانية

الزمان: الإثنين بعد نشرة الأخبار المسائية

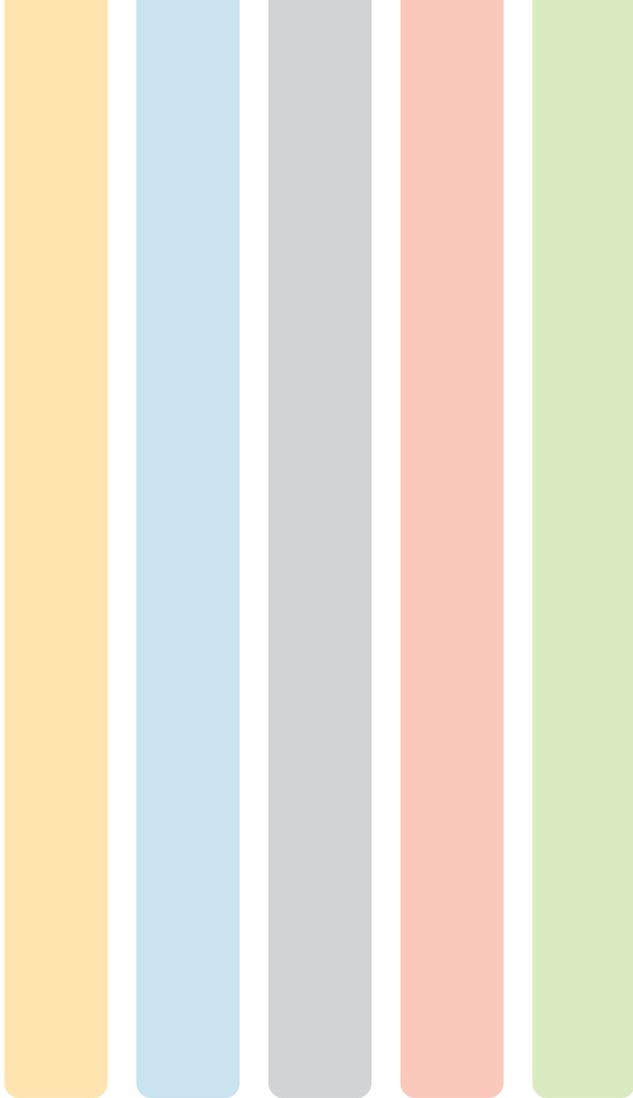
المتبارزون: المؤسسة اللبنانية للإرسال / أم تي في / تلفزيون الجديد

الجائزة: نسبة مشاهدة أعلى

حلبة الصراع بين التلفزيونات اللبنانية تتوسّع، المتنافسون ينزلون إلى الحلبة، مكشفيين عن أنيابهم لنهش الخصم من دون أي رادع لأنّ الجائزة مغرية و تزيد بدورها، ما هو الأهم، نسبة الأرباح.

بات ليل الإثنين نقمة على بعض المشاهدين بعدما أصبحت المحطات تتناقل المواضيع عينها و إذا شحّت الأحداث أو الأخبار السياسية المحليّة و الدولية يأتي ما ينوب عنها، حالات إنسانية تسلي





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