

The Annual Report on the Prominent **Human Rights Violations** Against Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Lebanon – May 2022



This report highlights the **violations** against Syrian refugees in Lebanon during 2021 by reviewing primary information from monitoring and documenting various human rights **violations** involving refugees. This report comes in light of a sharp **economic deterioration** affecting most of Lebanon's population, and an escalation in the Lebanese government and parties' official speech on the return of refugees to Syria and the exercise of **pressure** to that end.



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Introduction on Access Center for Human Rights





Who are we?

Access Center for Human Rights ACHR is a non-profit and non-governmental human rights organization founded in Lebanon in 2017, and was re-established in France in 2020, and consists of a group of human rights defenders with experience in law and local and international advocacy. ACHR launched its activities in Lebanon, due to its belief in supporting refugee rights, at a time of a rise in serious violations against them. ACHR is specialized in monitoring and documenting the refugees' human rights situation and publishes periodic publications with the aim of raising awareness and contributing to national and international advocacy efforts to ensure the refugees' rights in the countries of asylum until their voluntary, dignified, and safe return to their country of origin.

In this regard, ACHR works on protecting refugees from human rights abuses by monitoring and documenting violations and providing awareness on refugee issues and conditions in host countries, as well as offering legal support and assistance.

ACHR also works on supporting host communities by making accurate information available to civil society, the private sector, decision makers, donors, and international organizations to help them understand refugees' conditions in a fact-based manner, with the aim of developing policies that restrict human rights violations and contribute to finding durable solutions for these issues.

Moreover, ACHR works on creating a joint workspace for human rights defenders to assist them in submitting complaints to the special mechanisms of the human rights council, as well as provide them with the necessary tools and information to conduct their human rights and media activities.



ACHR activities in monitoring and documenting violations

The Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR) launched a series of interactive activities with activists and human rights defenders, focusing on the documentation of **violations** with victims, and published dozens of reports and press releases interesting the public and the international community, and has continued in 2021 to concentrate its work on observing the human rights Syrian refugee situation and documenting human rights **violations** against them, notably **arbitrary arrest, torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary deportation and other grave violations**.

Among the most prominent publications by ACHR during 2021, which relied on monitoring and documentation:



"Refugees Without Protection"

A Report on the Human Rights Situation in Lebanon.¹

21 May 2021

This annual report sheds light on the various human rights **violations** against Syrian refugees ACHR had observed and/or documented during the year 2020 which consisted of 158 human rights **violations** against Syrian refugees in Lebanon including cases of **arbitrary detention and arrest, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary deportation, sexual violence, identity documents confiscation, forced eviction and forced disappearance**.

Field research entitled: "The Needs and Challenges of Refugees amid the COVID-19 Pandemic":²

30 July 2021

In April 2021, the Access Center for Human Rights ACHR team conducted field research involving around 217 Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon to measure the impact of the COVID-19 **pandemic** on the situation of refugees across the country and to determine their difficulties amid this pandemic. This field research demonstrates the level of awareness on the pandemic, and the importance of the vaccine available against COVID-19, and the role of the authorities in providing awareness services and medical assistance without **discrimination**.

A report entitled: "A Year after the Beirut Port Explosion, a Needs Assessment for Syrian Refugees Impacted by the Beirut Port Explosion":³

04 August 2021

At least 34 Syrian refugees lost their lives as a result of the Beirut port **explosion** while about 124 others were **injured**, including 20 individuals with serious **injuries**. The report presents the most important outlets of international support that Lebanon received as a result of the **explosion**, and the challenges that accompanied the provision of aid. It also focuses on the **suffering** of Syrian refugees affected by the **explosion** during the past year.

A Joint Report in Preparation for the Universal Periodic Review session: Human Rights Violations of Arbitrary Arrest and Torture of Returnees and IDPs:⁴

01 December 2021

ACHR participated with a group of Syrian civil society organizations in a report on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic in the context of the Universal Periodic Review of the human rights file for Syria in the Human Rights Council scheduled for 24 January 2022. The report included **violations** committed against internally displaced persons and refugees upon their return to Syria, including **arbitrary detention, torture, violations** of housing and property rights, and the effects of **violations** exacerbated by the systematic shortage and inaccessibility of identity proof and other documents.

A policy paper entitled: "Refugees in Lebanon: An Unknown Path":⁵

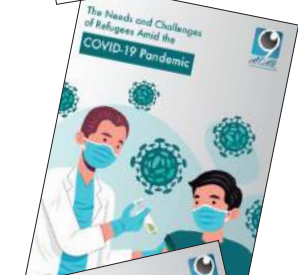
08 December 2021

Within the framework of launching an advocacy campaign for 2021 in cooperation with partners, a series of meetings were held with various international organizations, donors, and representatives of countries. ACHR issued a policy paper aimed at shedding light on Syrian refugee issues in Lebanon, by providing donors, the international community and United Nations bodies with legal recommendations that may contribute to amending the Lebanese government's policy of dealing with refugees, urging it to abide by international law.

A report entitled: Refugees Migrating from Lebanon... Violations Along the Way:⁶

16 December 2021

The report tackled the conditions of migrants from Lebanon towards various European countries across land, sea, and air borders, and all the human rights **violations** they were subjected to during their journeys. Cases of **forced returns, arbitrary arrests, and kidnappings** were documented, during which migrants were subjected to **ill-treatment** in addition to **forced return**.



The Database on Human Rights Violations

In July 2019, ACHR established the first database specialized in documenting human rights **violations** against Syrian refugees. This database is crucial in ACHR advocacy and awareness activities with governmental, local, and international non-governmental actors. It is also analyzed and incorporated in ACHR research papers and reports.

Violations are reported through:



During 2021, 273 cases were reported to ACHR, including individual and mass cases, through reporting forms approved by ACHR. After submitting the report, the team reviews the case and communicates with the person concerned to obtain more information and verify its accuracy.

The ACHR team observes the human rights field situation, collects information on **violations** against Syrian refugees, and verifies it for documentation purposes by directly contacting the victim or his/her family or first-degree relatives through field interviews or calls using secure, encrypted, and open-source programs, individually, guaranteeing independency in their statements and anonymity of **at-risk** individuals.

Documentation Methodology

The documentation process begins with ACHR team providing the victims with their personal information to gain their trust and introducing the intermediary that assisted in achieving communication, as well as introducing ACHR and its mechanism of action. The team is committed to the principles stipulated in its workplace policies, including confidentiality of information, data preservation, and consent prior to obtaining information.

Communication is conducted either physically or through secure, encrypted, and open-source communication means depending on security risks for the team, the victims and their families, and whether the information is transferable through voice communication. In most cases, the team makes contact through a secure means of communication to obtain preliminary information in preparation for the interview, and to build a direct relationship with the victims or their families.

In all interviews, the team is obligated to use secure means of communication to maintain the safety and privacy of the victims and commit to not publish personal data without direct authorization, to maintain the confidentiality of the information lists, to protect the confidentiality of the source, the evidence, the safety standards related to the preservation and archiving of information.

The interviews are based on a unified list of questions included in a survey prepared in advance by the team based on international documentation mechanisms, and the United Nations approved form for recording and reporting **violations**, in the original language of the interviewees, without any financial compensation. A medical examiner may be hired to document cases of gross psychological and/or physical **violations**.

In all monitoring, documentation, and follow-up processes, the team takes special precautions to evaluate and use the observed and documented information to determine its accuracy, by verifying the following: primary and secondary data sources, the level of detail, the presence of contradictions, the absence/presence of elements that support/refute the **violation**, the date of occurrence or recording, and the actor responsible for the **violation**.

ACHR adopts the definitions of **violations** of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its criteria, including “accuracy,” “objectivity,” and “impartiality” among its priorities in the documentation and preparation of research papers and reports.

The monitoring and documentation process includes many challenges in the Lebanese context, so it must be noted that all our efforts in monitoring and documenting **violations** reflect the statistical values of what we have been able to reach, thus remain inadequate in evaluating all **violations** by random samples that are scientifically represented, nevertheless they are useful in clarifying general patterns, and direct attention to the scale of the violations that occur in a systematic manner on refugees, in light of the pressing security, economic and security **restrictions**.

Report Summary



Background

In light of the social and economic **crisis** sweeping Lebanon, which remarkably worsened in 2021, the living conditions have become stifling due to **inflation** and the **devaluation** of the Lebanese pound, as the unofficial exchange rate reached 27,500 Lebanese pounds against the US dollar by the end of 2021,⁷ which made it difficult to access essential services such as fuel, electricity, and medicine due to the lack of financial resources and income sources along with the deterioration of economic activity in the country.

The economic **crisis** undoubtedly affects the entire population of Lebanon, whether Lebanese, refugees, and workers. Syrian refugees in Lebanon were **suffering** from harsh living and security conditions even before the deterioration of the economic situation in Lebanon.⁸ The current crises in Lebanon only worsened their conditions, especially with the escalation of the official "returns" discourse in Lebanon,⁹ which includes adopting the "return plan" by The Lebanese Government and implementing arbitrary mass deportations by the Lebanese General Security.

This is accompanied with hate speech by the political elite's parties and politicians affiliated to them.

The Lebanese authorities have adopted **stringent policies** to **pressure** Syrians to return to Syria. Lebanon has imposed on Syrian refugees a series of **crippling decisions**, including **curfews**, the **destruction** of their homes/camps, arbitrary deportation or eviction measures from their areas, in addition to **narrowing** the conditions for renewal of residency permits.¹⁰ Lebanon also adopted several official declarations calling for returns along with the Lebanese Government's approval of the "**General Policy for the Return of Displaced Persons to Syria**" plan on 14 July 2020.¹¹ In addition, the Lebanese Directorate General of General Security confirmed that it had "**repatriated**" 6,345 Syrian persons between 25 April 2019, and 19 September 2021,¹² as part of the implementation of the decision of the Higher Defense Council to deport Syrians who **illegally** entered Lebanon after 24 April 2019 without a judicial review.¹³

In terms of living standards, Lebanon has witnessed an increase in the **closure of businesses** and **layoffs**, which has inevitably led to a significant rise in the **unemployment** for both citizens and refugees,¹⁴ and as a result, the threat of **forced eviction** or the actual implementation of **eviction** due to the inability to pay the rent¹⁵ and/or it can be a retaliatory act by municipalities that issues without referring to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities.

The deterioration of conditions in the country and the increase **security pressures** have pushed many refugees towards **irregular migration** by land and sea from Lebanon to neighboring countries in search of a decent living. During 2021, the Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR) recorded 59 cases of **arbitrary deportation**, of which 51 persons had **illegally migrated** from Lebanon and **forcibly returned** to Lebanon, who in turn **deported** them to Syria under difficult and/or vague circumstances.¹⁶

At the health level, refugees have difficulty accessing primary healthcare services due to high medical costs, limited coverage, or even **discrimination** in their attempts to access medical service centers. Several cases have been monitored in which refugees were **denied access** to COVID-19 testing, appropriate treatment, and vaccination.¹⁷

On the educational level, many Syrians have difficulty accessing education for various reasons, including the Ministry of Education's imposition of a legal residence requirement for official examinations. As recent studies have shown that at least 84 percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon do not have legal residence in Lebanon during 2021.¹⁸ This may result from high fees for residency, either due to the complex procedures and conditions required by Lebanese general security, or bureaucratic administrative problems leading to significant delays in the review and determination of applications, or even because the general security rejects such applications.¹⁹

The lack of residency permits for refugees increases the **risk of arrest**, confiscation of official documents, **deportation**, **eviction**, and other human rights **violations**, especially considering that access to basic services, work and birth and marriage registration all require legal residency permit. In addition, the lack of legal residency permits **restricts** freedom of movement for refugees for **fear** of being **arrested** at security checkpoints and **detained**.²⁰

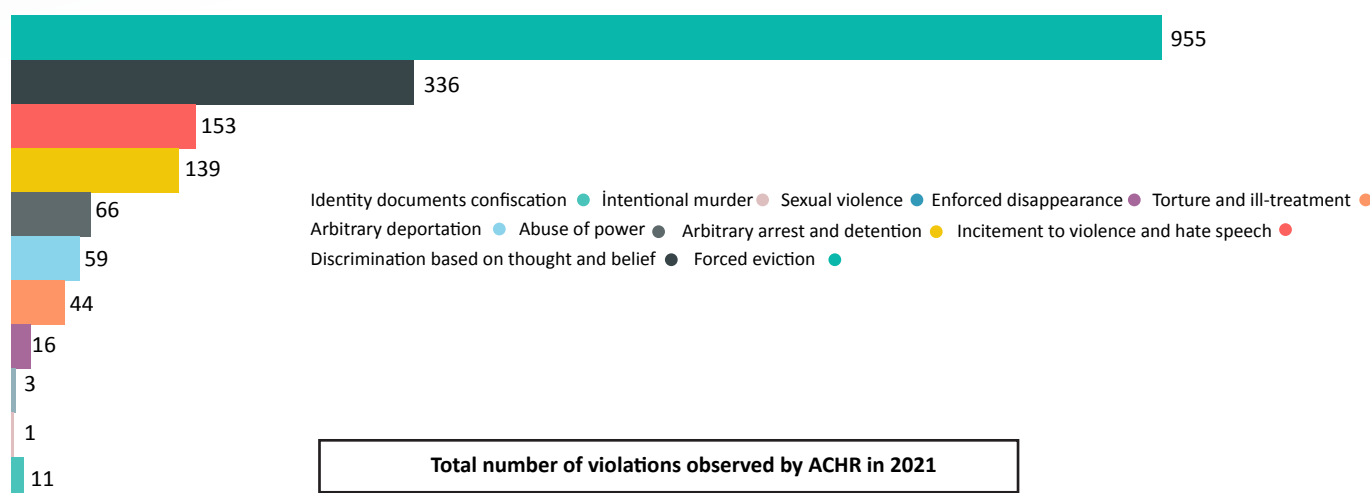
Report Significance and Purpose

This report highlights the **violations** against Syrian refugees in Lebanon during 2021 by reviewing primary information from monitoring and documenting various human rights **violations** involving refugees. This report comes in light of a sharp **economic deterioration** affecting most of Lebanon's population, and an escalation in the Lebanese government and parties' official speech on the return of refugees to Syria and the exercise of **pressure** to that end.

Subsequently, ACHR finds it crucial to present the results of violations monitoring and documenting activities to study the conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon from a human rights perspective to mobilize local and international advocacy efforts, with the aim of improving the human rights situation in the region by pressuring the parties concerned with refugee affairs in Lebanon at the national and international levels to take the necessary measures and policies needed for securing and protecting the rights of refugees.

Summary of Findings

Access Center for Human Rights ACHR recorded **1,738** cases of human rights **violations** against Syrian refugees in Lebanon during the year 2021, including:



Arbitrary arrest and detention

139 individuals subjected to **arbitrary arrest and/or detention** without any legal justification.

In most cases, 67 of the 70 people, do not have valid residency. Most of the **arrests** occurred at checkpoints or during the authorities' raids on the camps.



Arbitrary deportation

59 individuals were subjected to **arbitrary deportation**, 41 of whom entered Lebanon **illegally** and 57 of whom did not have valid residency permits.



Torture and ill-treatment

44 cases of **torture and ill-treatment**, 40 were subjected to **arbitrary arrest**. The cases were concentrated in the Beirut governorate and Zahle district.



Forced Eviction

955 individuals were subjected to **forced eviction**, mainly due to the economic conditions in Lebanon or problems between the host community and the camp residents. Most of the observed cases took place in the districts of Zahle and Baalbek and included 15 mass cases and six individual cases.



16 cases of **enforced disappearance**, 11 cases of **identity document confiscation** and 3 cases of **sexual violence** were recorded. 156 cases of incitement to **violence** and hate speech were also recorded including the official discriminatory discourse adopted by various municipalities and 314 cases of discrimination based on thought and belief, including **violations** against activists during the Syrian presidential elections.



Results



Arbitrary Detention

Arbitrary detention is the arrest of individuals "for no legitimate reason or without legal justification," which is prohibited in Lebanese laws and international conventions ratified by Lebanon.²¹

Fear of arbitrary arrests limits the movement of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Cases of **arbitrary arrests** in 2021 mainly occurred during the authorities' raids on camps and residential gatherings or during refugee visitation at official institutions for various reasons. Security checkpoints spread across Lebanon also limit the movement of refugees, bearing in mind that the majority of refugees do not have valid residency permits as a result of the Lebanese Government's restrictive conditions for residency.



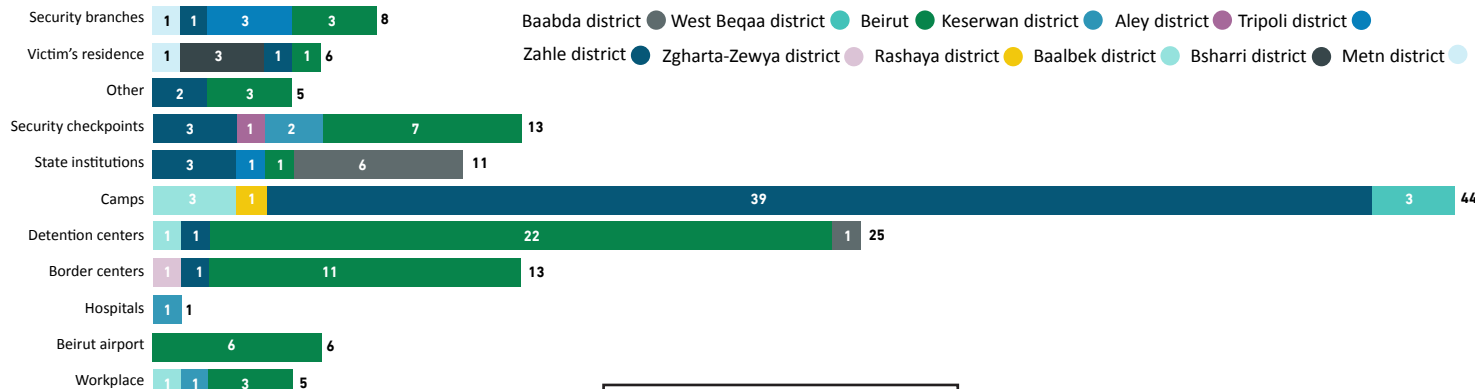
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Cases of arbitrary arrests during 2021

Places of detention

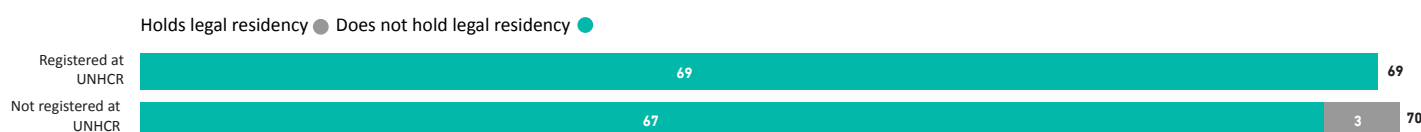


ACHR followed up on **139** cases of **arbitrary arrests** against refugees during the year 2021, and the highest percentage of refugees were **arrested** within the camps. **Arrests** at detention centers came in second place, where the person was summoned to review one of the security or official centers to be detained without an apparent reason. **Arrests** also often took place at security checkpoints or official institutions. Additionally, ACHR documented six cases of **arrests** at Beirut airport, six cases at the victim's residence, and one case at a hospital due to the detainee's lack of official papers.



Place and location of arrest

According to the cases that ACHR documented, only three of those **arrested** during 2021 had a valid residency permit in Lebanon and were not registered with the UNHCR, while 69 of those **arrested** over the past year were registered with the UNHCR. Registration with the UNHCR is not necessary to provide the necessary protection for a refugee in Lebanon, however the **risk of arrest** increases in the absence of legal residency, as people are more prone to questioning and **arrests** at security checkpoints, in state institutions, and even in primary service centers, including health services.



Legal status of arbitrarily detained refugees

What are the domestic laws and international conventions concerned with arbitrary detention?

Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) gives everyone the right to liberty and security. It prohibits the **arbitrary arrest, detention, or deprivation of freedom** of any individual except on grounds provided for by law and by legal procedures. This article also specifies certain rights of the arrestee, failure to respect them marks the arbitrariness of the arrest or detention. These rights include the right to know the reason for the arrest and the charges, be presented to a judge or officer legally authorized to perform judicial functions, be tried within a reasonable time, and be compensated if the arrest is illegal.

According to the **Working Group on Arbitrary Detention**, deprivation of liberty is arbitrary or unlawful if it falls into one of the following categories:²²

1. The absence of a clear legal basis for deprivation of liberty, such as keeping a person in detention even after the termination of his or her sentence.
2. Deprivation of liberty due to exercising the rights or freedoms guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
3. When it is caused by the failure to apply some international norms relating to the right to a fair trial.

On the National Level

The Lebanese constitution is keen on protecting and safeguarding personal freedoms; **Article 8** stipulates that: "Individual liberty is guaranteed and protected by law. No one may be **arrested, imprisoned**, or kept in **custody** except according to the provisions of the law. No offense may be established, or penalty imposed except by law."

The Lebanese Penal Code, specifically Article 327, penalizes directors, employees, and officers of prisons, correctional and disciplinary institutes, with **temporary hard labor** if they **arrest or imprison** people in cases other than those stipulated by law. Moreover, **Article 328** penalizes accepting a person without a judicial warrant or decision or retaining him for more than the legally specified time. In this regard, **Article 47 of the Criminal Procedure Code** states the rights of the individual upon **arrest**, which are:

- The **detention** period may not exceed 48 hours, renewable for a similar period based on the approval of the Public Prosecution.
- Contact a family member, employer, lawyer of his/her choice, or acquaintance.
- Receiving the visit of a lawyer appointed by him/her with a statement written on the report.
- Hiring a sworn translator if he/she is not fluent in the Arabic language.
- Allow a doctor to see him/her.

Torture and Ill-treatment

Torture is any act caused by severe **pain** or **suffering**, whether physical or mental, intentionally inflicting **pain** or **suffering** for specific purposes, by or at the instigation of or with the consent of an official or other person acting in an official capacity.

It is an exaggerated form of **ill-treatment** as a **violation**, except that it differs in the level and severity of **ill-treatment** and considers the victim's helplessness, such as the state of **detention**. In addition, **ill-treatment** does not presume the existence of a "specific purpose," unlike torture, which has a specific purpose, such as obtaining information, confession, **fear**, or for a **discriminatory** reason.²⁴

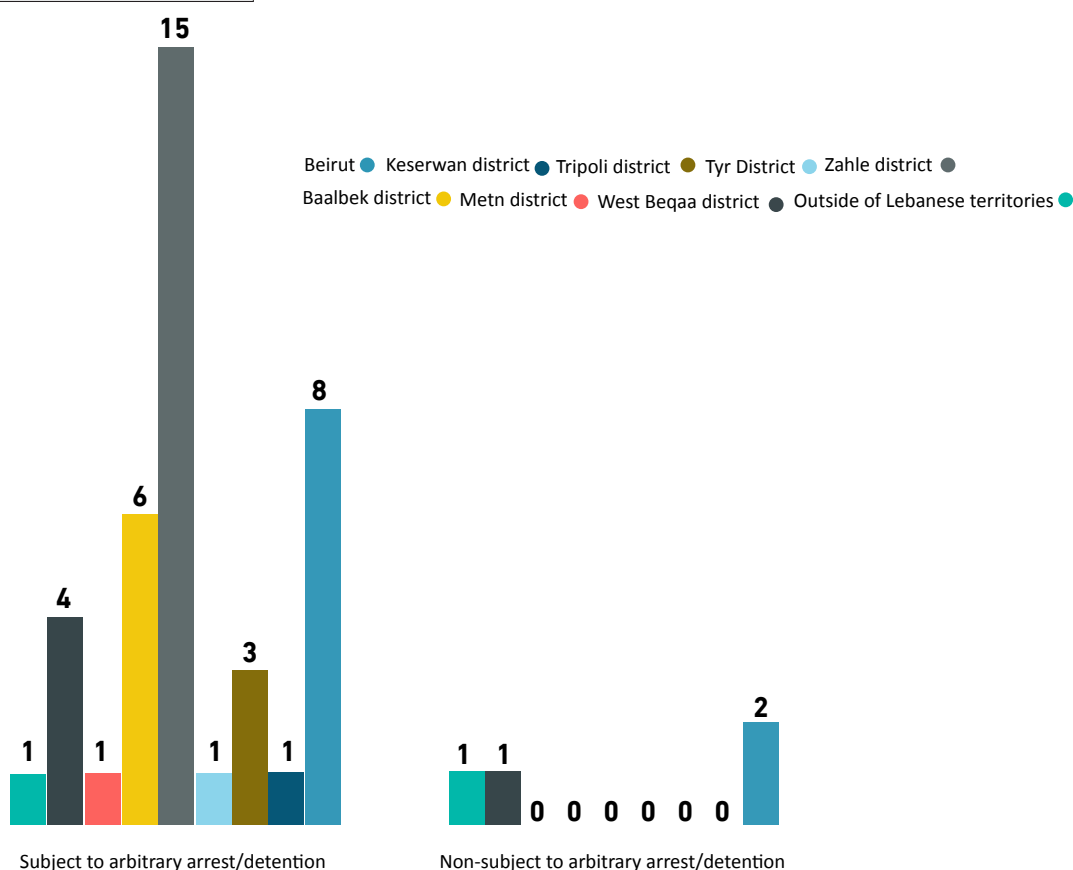


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Cases of torture and ill-treatment during 2021

The prevention of **torture** is an absolute principle that cannot be justified in any case or circumstance and is non-derogable; a state may not restrict it, even temporarily and under any circumstances, including in the event of **war**, **internal political instability**, or another **public emergency**.²³

ACHR followed up on **44** cases of **torture** and **ill-treatment** in 2021, including 40 cases of **torture** that occurred during **arbitrary detention**. 10 cases of the total number of **torture** cases recorded by ACHR occurred within Beirut, 5 in Baalbek district, 15 cases within Zahle district, and the rest within different areas without recording any consistent pattern.



Cases of ill-treatment and torture based on the geographical area.

The methods of **torture** used in the cases that ACHR documented included **severe beatings** on the face and legs to the point of **bleeding** and **beatings** with a **stick** and **electricity**. The detainee is often **suspended** from the ceiling or **forced** to stand or sit in **painful positions** for a long time. In one of these cases, the person was **suspended** on one foot for six hours until he **passed out**. The **"wheel"** method is also used, in which the hands and feet of the detainee are tied to the wheel from the abdomen or back or placed inside the wheel so that their hands touch their feet. Psychological methods of **torture** are often resorted to as well, by **threatening** the safety of the **detainee** or through **solitary confinement**. In one case, the person was **detained** for six months in **solitary confinement**.

What laws criminalize torture and ill-treatment?



On the international level:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

[Article 5](#) states that "no one shall be subjected to **torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.**" [Article 10](#) stresses the right of all persons **deprived of liberty** to humane and dignified treatment.

[Article 7](#) of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) states: "No one shall be subjected to **torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.** In particular, no one shall be subjected to any medical or practical experience without his or her free consent."

[Article 2](#) of the [Convention against Torture \(1984\)](#) establishes the duty of each State party to take the necessary and effective action to prevent acts of **torture**. The state is prohibited from invoking any exceptional circumstances to justify **torture**, such as **internal political instability** or **public emergencies**. In the case of a person charged with acts of **torture** within the territory under its jurisdiction, The state must bring him/her to trial.



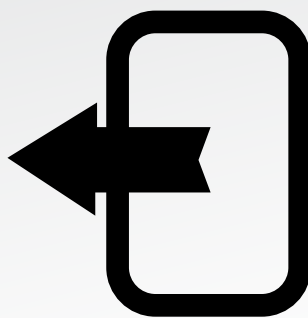
On the national level:

[The Code of Conduct for the Lebanese General Security](#) stipulates that officers and staff must refrain from "performing, enticing or condoning any act of **torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment** during investigations or carrying out any tasks assigned to them." It adds that general security agents in **detention** centers must refrain from committing, abetting, ordering, aiding, or condoning **torture** or any form of **inhuman or degrading treatment**. In addition, all forms of physical or psychological **violence or harassment of detainees** during their transfer to and from the **detention** center shall be prohibited."

[The Code of Conduct of the Lebanese Armed Forces](#), specifically [Article 7](#), requires members of the army to respect human rights and protect public freedoms in the performance of their duties. Furthermore, it stresses the need to refrain from, incite or condone any act of **torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.**" [Article 11](#) also prohibits the use of any form of **violence or cruel or degrading treatment.**

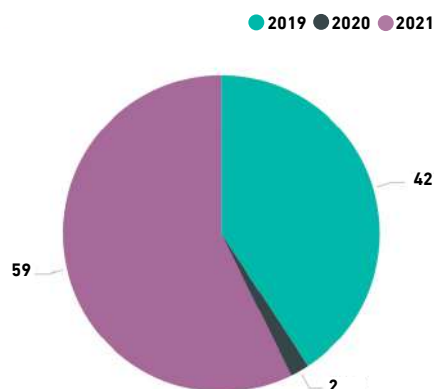
Arbitrary Deportation

The **deportations** violate Lebanon's obligations under domestic laws and international treaties not to deport any refugee residing in its territory to a country where they would be at **risk of death, torture, or persecution**.



59

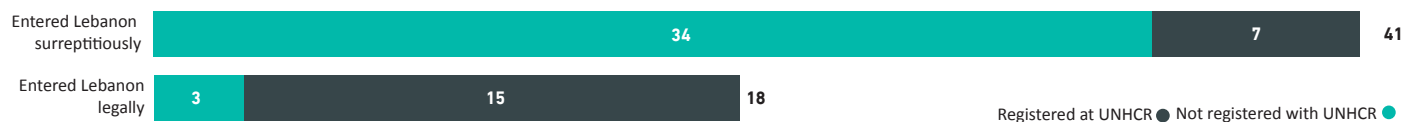
Cases of arbitrary deportation during 2021



Cases of arbitrary deportation from Lebanon to Syria in recent years

The Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR) directly worked on **59** cases of **arbitrary deportation** for the year 2021, a marked increase compared to 2020, when only two cases were recorded, due to the closure of the borders between the two countries as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, while ACHR recorded 42 cases during the year 2019. The **deportation** decisions usually come in the implementation of **the decision issued by the Higher Defense Council** to deport Syrians who entered Lebanon **surreptitiously** after the date of 24 April 2019, and among the most prominent cases of **deportation** during the year 2021, also in the implementation of this decision, were the cases related to **forced return** as a result of **illegal immigration**. 51 documented cases of **arbitrary deportation** from Lebanon to Syria were of people who left Lebanon towards Cyprus **illegally** by sea and were **forcibly returned** to Lebanon by the Cypriot authorities. Lebanon, in turn, handed them over directly to the Syrian authorities.

As for the legal status of people who were **arbitrarily deported**, ACHR found that 41 out of 59 people had entered Lebanon **surreptitiously**, and 34 of them were not registered with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). While 16 people had entered Lebanon **legally**, and most of them are registered with UNHCR.

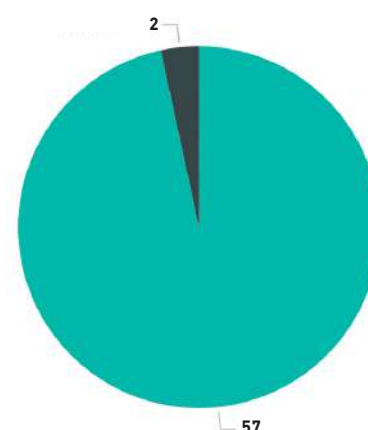


How the deported persons entered Lebanon

It is worth noting that 57 of the 59 people **deported** did not hold valid residency permits in Lebanon. The bureaucratic and financial challenges associated with renewing residency papers have resulted in a large segment of refugees at **risk of deportation** and other **violations** such as **arbitrary detention and ill-treatment**.

One of the most prominent cases of **arbitrary deportation** that ACHR documented during the past year was the case of a Syrian refugee residing in Lebanon who left **illegally** to Libya in October 2021 for economic and livelihood reasons. Once in Libya, he was surprised with the difficult security conditions and decided to return to Lebanon. He was holding a valid residence permit in Lebanon with UNHCR sponsorship; however, he was prevented from entering Lebanon at and was **detained** inside the airport. He was later informed that he would be **deported** to Syria the next day via the airport. He informed the General Security that he was wanted for mandatory military service in Syria and that there was a **danger** to his life in case of **deportation**. However, he was **deported**, and was **arrested** in Syria and transferred to the Political Security branch.

Number of those with valid residency ●
Number of those without valid residency ●



Legal status in Lebanon for people deported to Syria

What are Lebanon's obligations according to the international conventions it has ratified?

Although **Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees**, this does not absolve it from its other obligations at the international level.

According to [Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), "Everyone has the right to seek asylum in other countries or try to resort to them to escape **persecution**."

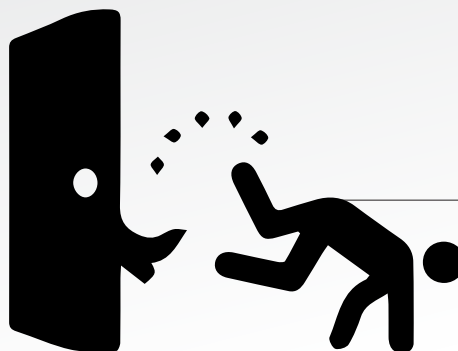
[Article 13](#) of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) prohibits **arbitrary deportation**. It provides that: "An alien lawfully in the territory of a State Party to the present Covenant may be **expelled** therefrom only in pursuance of a decision reached per law and shall, except where compelling reasons of national security otherwise require, be allowed to submit the reasons against his **expulsion** and to have his case reviewed by, and be represented for the purpose before, the competent authority or a person or persons especially designated by the competent authority."

[Article 3](#) of the [Convention against Torture \(1984\)](#) states that "no state party may **expel** or **return** any person or **extradite** him to another country if it has real reasons to believe that he is under the **risk of torture**." [Article 31](#) of the [law organizing entry, residency and exit in Lebanon \(1962\)](#) forbids the **deportation** of a political refugee to a country where his life or his freedom would be **at risk**.



Forced Eviction

The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights defines **forced eviction** as "the temporary or permanent **expulsion** of individuals or groups from their homes or land, against their will, without providing them with any form of legal protection or facilitating access."²⁵



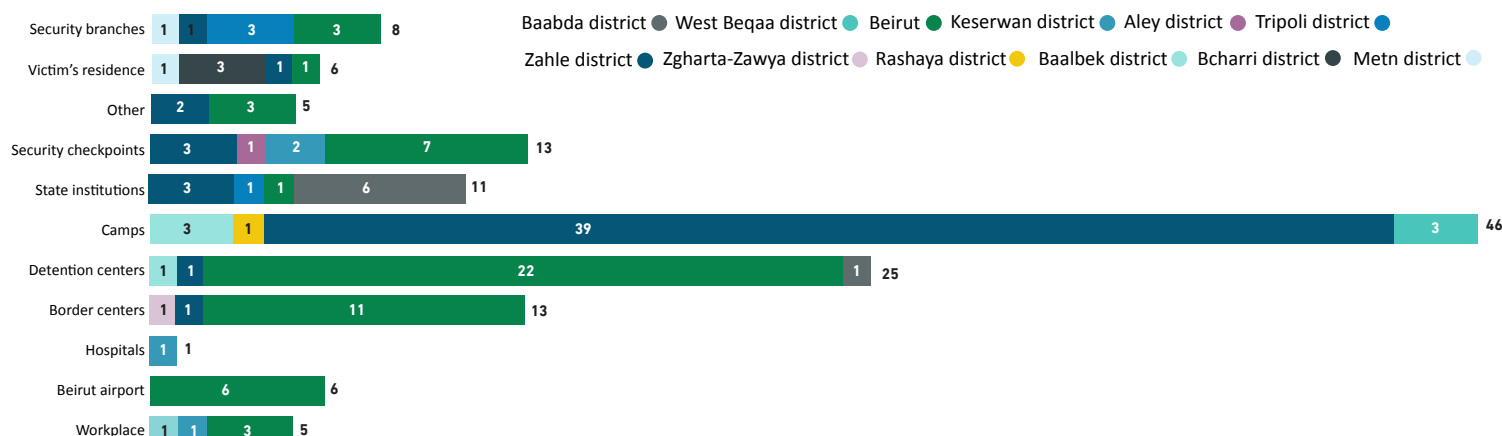
approximately

955

Cases of forced eviction during 2021

ACHR recorded approximately **955** cases of **forced eviction** during 2021, and most of the cases were in the context of collective **violations**, as 15 mass cases and 6 individual cases were recorded. Cases have seen an exponential increase compared to 2020 where 22 **forced evictions** were recorded at that time.

The graph below illustrates how the largest segment of the recorded cases, approximately 446 cases, occurred in Zahle District, followed by Baalbek District, in which approximately 266 **forced evictions** were recorded. **Forced eviction** violations were primarily committed by Lebanese citizens as landlords or as members of the host community, followed by the **evictions** that took place at the hands of the Lebanese authorities, approximately 341 cases in the Beqaa and Zahle regions.



Forced evictions by location

The economic **crisis** in Lebanon, particularly the **devaluation** of the Lebanese pound, contributes to the inability of refugees to pay rent and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various work sectors during 2021. Several incidents were also recorded, including incidents of Lebanese citizens **attacking** Syrian refugee camps and **expelling** the residing families. In August 2021, a group of people from a town in Rashaya district **attacked** a Syrian refugee camp after an individual dispute between a Lebanese citizen and a Syrian refugee. They **expelled** the residents, **threatening** them with sharp **tools** and **weapons**. More than 25 families **fled** the camp, leaving behind their belongings and personal items.

Another prominent cases that ACHR documented during the past year was the case of a camp in the Riyaq – Beqaa Governorate, accommodating approximately 350 people. In June 2021, the Lebanese army informed the camp residents to **evacuate** within a maximum period of one week in preparation for its **demolition**.

What are the rights of people according to local laws and international conventions?

The definition of the **Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights** includes the failure to secure an alternative that guarantees the right to adequate housing for those affected and the implementation of the **eviction** without the possibility of appealing the **eviction** decision or its process and without considering the procedures and the state's international and national obligations, or even the implementation of the evacuation during difficult weather conditions or periods of epidemics.²⁶

Article 25 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** affirms that "everyone has the right to a standard of living sufficient to ensure the health and well-being of himself and his family, especially concerning food, clothing, and housing."

Article 11 (1) of the **Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights** states that "the right to housing is part of the right to an adequate standard of living for an individual and his family." Therefore, according to Lebanese laws, the landlord is not entitled to evict the tenant without a judicial order; the tenant has the right to refrain from implementing it based on his right to housing.



Other Violations

Enforced Disappearance

Most notably, the case of six people who were kidnapped in front of the Syrian embassy building in Beirut.

Enforced disappearance is the **arrest, detention, abduction**, or any form of **deprivation of liberty**, carried out by state officials or persons acting with the authorization, support, or consent of the state or civilians, or non-governmental organization groups if acting on behalf of, with the support or consent of state authorities. This is followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or concealment of a person's fate or whereabouts, which deprives them of the protection of the law.²⁷



16
Cases

156
Cases



Incitement to Violence and Hate Speech

This **violation** includes the municipalities' adoption of a **discriminatory** discourse against refugees through decisions targeting the Syrian refugee community, most notably through the imposition of curfew in various areas and the setting a **discriminatory** wage for Syrian labor as well as direct threats of deportation in case of engaging in any quarrel.

Identity Documents Confiscation

The **Lebanese General Security** confiscated the official documents of Syrian refugees who held official identification documents when they applied for the renewal of residency, or in cases of **arbitrary arrest**. In some cases, when retrieved, a deportation order was annexed to the official document.



11
Cases

314
Cases



Discrimination based on thought and belief

It included cases of active or influential victims during the Syrian elections. A questionnaire was also handed over by a security apparatus of the Lebanese state to the head of a camp in the western Beqaa region, which included a question about political affiliation if the person is a supporter or opponent of the current Syrian government.

Sexual Violence

It included a case of **sexual violence** and extortion by civilians, including one case by the landlord, and one case by the employer.

Sexual violence is any sexual act or attempts to obtain a sexual act through violence, coercion, or trafficking regardless of the relationship with the victim.²⁸



03
Cases

Recommendations





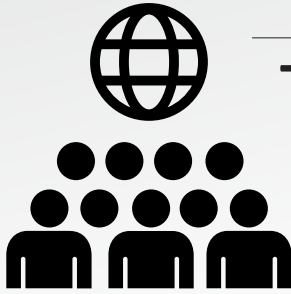
To the Lebanese Authorities

- Review the cases of detainees individually and closely and ensure that persons are not **arbitrarily deported** to Syria, especially persons **at risk** in Syria such as army deserters, men wanted for mandatory military service, activists, and unaccompanied minors.
- Allow **victims** at risk of **deportation** to appeal those decisions before the competent judicial authorities, in accordance with national law.
- Repeal the decision of the **Higher Defense Council No. 50 issued on 15 April 2019** and the decision of the **General Director of the General Security No. 43830 issued on 13 May 2019** which seek to **deport** Syrian residents who entered Lebanon through **informal crossing paths**.
- Take the immediate initiative to implement the **State Council decision No. 421/2017-2018 issued on 8 February 2018**, to ensure legitimacy and public order in Lebanon, and announcing the **suspension** of the procedures issued by the **General Directorate of General Security in 2015** and their amendments regarding the conditions for entry and residency of Syrian citizens in Lebanon.
- Establish the necessary legal mechanisms to stop **arbitrary arrests and detentions** and ensuring the right of detainees to contact their families and/or defense attorneys prior to the **investigation** processes.
- Ensure that human rights organizations have access to places of **detention** to verify the conditions of **detainees**.
- Annul all **discriminatory decisions** adopted by municipalities and adopt legal mechanisms that bind municipalities to receive prior approvals from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities before publishing circulars and decisions.
- Respect civil society principles and objectives, especially organizations working on the field, and provide them with the necessary space to implement their projects and facilitate their work and programs that contribute to building a society.
- Include civil society, notably the organizations working with refugees, in assisting the Lebanese government to organize the issues of refugees and vulnerable groups.



To the UN Refugee Agency

- Take action in following up on the cases of people subject to **deportation** with the Lebanese authorities by focusing on the **risks** they may be exposed to in Syria, including army deserters, those wanted for military service, activists and opponents of the Government of Syria.
- Activate a rapid response mechanism in providing legal support to detainees, especially those subject to **ill treatment and/or deportation**.
- Implement its annual funding appeals by supporting local civil society organizations working directly with refugee
- Respect refugees inside UNHCR centers, while stressing the privacy policy with the contracted security and protection company, monitoring their performance, and not tolerating those who **violate** work policies.
- Activate the complaints mechanism, listening to the demands of the people, respecting their opinions, beliefs, and ideas, and working to achieve their needs.
- Increase the active role of the protection office by providing legal support and representation through lawyers affiliated with the commission or independent lawyers assigned by the commission to defend individual and collective refugee cases and follow up their cases in the courts to ensure fair, impartial, and transparent trials.
- Take action in cases of official **documents' confiscation** and coordinate with the Lebanese authorities, to ensure that refugees receive protection, legal residency, and document personal status cases, in implementation of UNHCR priorities.



To the international community and donors

- Establish and activate a mechanism to monitor the **restrictions**, procedures and measures adopted by Lebanon against Syrian refugees and its **violation** to the international treaties and conventions, in addition to monitoring the **violence, ill-treatment, arrests and harassment** conducted by the Lebanese authorities against them.
- Contribute to pressuring Lebanon to respect and adhere to its commitments according to ratified international treaties and provide protection and security to all residents in Lebanon including Syrian refugees.
- Strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations and associations to enable them to influence government policy, participate in its industry, and provide political and human rights advice.
- Provide the necessary training to the security services of the Lebanese authorities on how to treat detainees in compliance with international conventions and accommodate detention centers with techniques that facilitate performance monitoring in detention centers and protect detainees.



To civil society coalitions and networks

- Initiate strategic communication between civil society organizations and international decision-makers and establishing formal mechanisms for effective cooperation and communication.
- Train civil society organizations on advocacy mechanisms and developing work policies to enable them to exert **pressure** on the Lebanese authorities and the international community concerned with Syrian issues.

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