

Syrian Refugees Arrested and Tortured in Arsal during September

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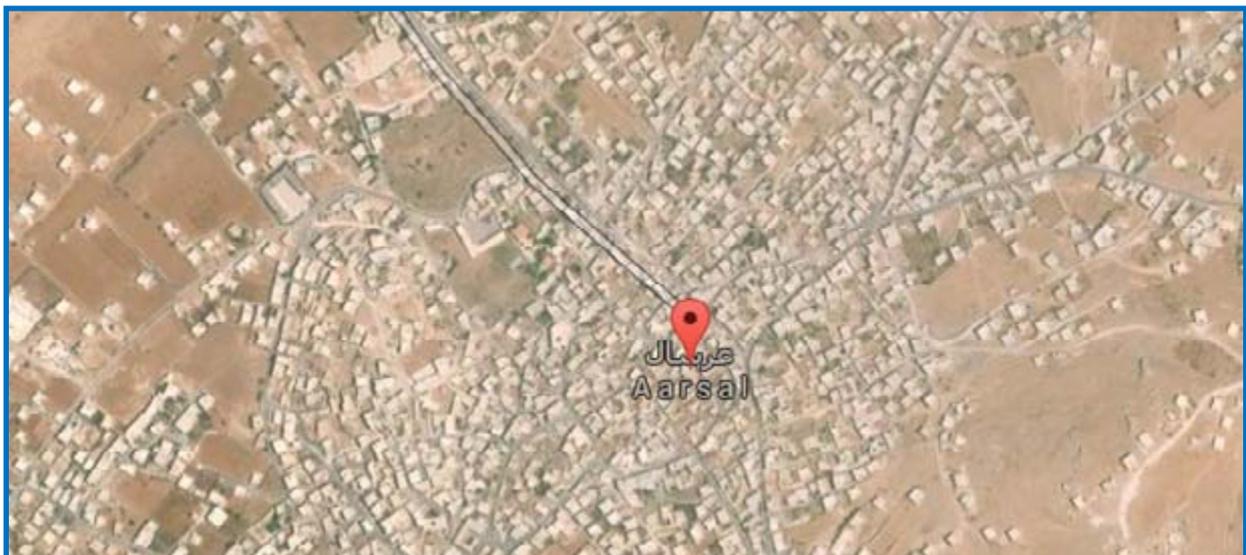
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Background information about Arsal

Arsal is a village located in Lebanon – Baalbek – Beqaa governorate. Arsal is relatively isolated, it is 38 km away from the judicial center of Baalbek, 75 km away from the center of Beqaa governorate, and 122 km from Beirut. Arsal is 1400-2000 above sea level and is located in the eastern Lebanese mountain chain. Arsal has a 50 Km border line with Syria which is known for smuggling.

Arsal provided Syrian refugees with shelter and aids after they were displaced from Al-Qalamoun and Homs. In the last few months, huge waves of refugees fled to Arsal.

Arsal location on Google Maps :



Details

A squad from the Lebanese army, the eighth squad (airborne), raided a number of the refugee camps: (Al-Baraa, As-Sanabel, ECU, Azout, Flieta, and Al-Inmaa' refugee camps).

450 Syrian refugees were arrested including children over accusations of terrorism. The two-stage campaign started on Friday 19 September, 2014 when approximately were arrested while the second stage begun on 25 September, 2014 where 200 refugees were arrested including 16 people who were under younger than 18-year-old. They were released gradually afterwards.

There are 30 refugees who are still prisoners. Their fate is still unknown.

Lebanese forces displaced the remaining refugees from Al-Baraa' camp, including children, women, and elders, and then burned all the tents which were more than 150 tents. SNHR affirms that most of the camp residents fled from the following towns in Al-Qalamoun (Yabroud, Al-Mashrafa, Ras Al-Ma'ra, Housh Arab, Qara, and Jrajier). The camp is located in Al-Jafar area behind Ras As-Saraj which is close to Al-Laboua Al-Hizbiya.

Some of the Lebanese squad personnel beat and insulted Syrian refugees in Al-Baraa camp. The squad didn't only beat youngsters but also elders where it executed an injured man after he was beaten and insulted; Karam Abdulkarim Az-Zain, 60-year-old, from Damascus countryside – Al-Qalamoun, he was shot in front of a big crowd of arrested witnesses. The Lebanese forces kidnapped his corpse after killing him.

This campaign was after an IED targeted a car for the Lebanese army in Aarsal – Jaroud. The IED killed two servicemen and injured four others.

On the second day of the arresting campaign, the Lebanese intelligence apparatus informed three prisoners' families about their death. Their dead bodies were delivered on 29 September, 2014. The three prisoners who died were:

[Ahmad Durra](#), 38-year-old, from Damascus countryside. Signs of brutal torture can be seen on his dead body, whom the Lebanese authorities delivered to his family.

Mahmoud Abdulwawla, from Damascus countryside – Yabroud, died under torture inside the Lebanese army prisons after he was arrested on 25 September, 2014 in Aarsal.

Mahmoud Zuhra, from Damascus countryside – Al-Qalamoun, died under torture after he was arrested in Aarsal.

It should be noted that many victims' families refused to talk to SNHR out of fear of retaliatory acts being done against them by the Lebanese army.

Furthermore, SNHR confirms that 15 vehicles and tractors and more than motorcycles were burned by the Lebanese army. Also, many pre-made rooms that were used as aid warehouses were sabotaged.

A Medical Corps' medical team in Arsal told SNHR that dozens of wounded and injured Syrian refugees were transferred to the corps hospital as a result of the Lebanese army campaign against Syrian refugees on one day (Thursday 25 October, 2014) as follows:

15 injured who had bruises caused by the beating that they were subjected to inside prison.

42 cases of mental breakdown.

25 suffocation cases resulted by the fires that broke out in the camps.

Two injured by gunshots.

Two injured suffering from burns.

Zaher, an eyewitness to that happened in Arsal, told SNHR:

“On Thursday 25 September, 2014, the Lebanese army forces raided Al-Baraa camp. At the beginning they used military vehicles and armed soldiers to surround the camp and then they used microphones to call any male between the age of 15 and 50 year old. After they were gathered, the army started humiliating and beating all of them regardless of their age. When they found a man that was injured in the shoulder during clashes, they all started hitting him on his injured shoulder until they fractured it. Afterwards, they started to displace the refugees. They sent one of the refugees to change his clothes, Karam Az-Zain, then they shot him and didn't allow anyone to get near him.”

“Afterwards, they gathered women in a separate group under the threat of weapon and started insulting them and shooting in the air. Some of the women heard some of the soldiers telling each other to take photos to make it look that they were saving these women from terrorists. Subsequently, the army burned the camp and other ten cars and started displacing the detainees while opening fire. They said that Karam Az-Zain, the man whom they killed, was the one who burned the camp and was killed because of that. After the army withdrawn, bottles that was filled with gasoline and diesel.”

Appendixes and Attachments

SNHR documented that 131 Syrian refugees were arrested including 16 children on 25 September, 2014. [The following URL](#) contains all the details.

Names of the camps and estimated numbers of the detainees:

1- Al-Baraa camp: 15 detainees.

2- As-Sanabel camp: 100 detainees.

3- ECU camp: about 86 detainees.

4- Azout camp: 50 detainees.

5- Flieta camp: 50 detainees

6- Al-Inmaa' camp: 100 detainees

7- Random arrests: 49 detainees

Pictures show Syrian refugees being arrested by the Lebanese army



Video footage of testimonies of some of the Syrian refugees in Arsal whose camps were burned and were arrested and beaten

Female Syrian refugee in Arsal talks about his tragedy where her tent were burned and husband was arrested

Female Syrian refugee in Arsal cries after her tent was burned

Pictures1 show signs of torture on some of the Syrian refugees who were detained

Pictures2 show signs of torture on some of the Syrian refugees who were detained

Pictures3 show signs of torture on some of the Syrian refugees who were detained

Pictures4 show signs of torture on some of the Syrian refugees who were detained

Pictures5 show signs of torture on some of the Syrian refugees who were detained

Elder Syrian refugee who was arrested in the morning of 25 September, 2014 and released after he was insulted and hit in the head with a barrel

Syrian refugee camps being burned in Arsal on 25 September, 2014

Recommendations

The Lebanese army

The Lebanese army should launch an investigation regarding the violations against the Syrian refugees and hold the individuals responsible for the killing, indiscriminate shelling, and all the other violations that occurred while Aarsal was being shelled accountable.

The Syrian refugees were completely uninvolved in the recent events, including the emergence of armed groups and clashes. These events resulted in racist and violent reactions by segments of the Lebanese society who called for the expelling of the Syrian refugees and, in some cases, killing them. The protection of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon is the direct responsibility of the Lebanese government.

Acknowledgment

Our thanks go to the victims' families, eyewitnesses, and all the activists who contributed to this report with their testimonies and pictures.

