

# Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Endure Racism, Deprivation of Rights, and Risks of being Banished and Extradited to the Syrian Regime

No Protection, No Rights

# SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria

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## I. Introduction and Report Methodology

Amid the shelling, massacres, the bombardment by warplanes that destroys building and shops, and many others forms of violations that the Syrian people suffered from, The Syrian people was torn apart, where more than half found no choice but displacement and refuge. The neighboring countries took in the majority of the refugees. And with the overlapping of Syrian and Lebanon lands and borders, and kinship ties, hundreds of thousands of Syrians fled to Lebanon, to which we are indebted for taking in huge numbers despite the limited resources and small area. Currently, about 1.7 million Syrian refugee are living in Lebanon

The Lebanese authorities didn't anticipate this overwhelmingly immense flux of refugees, and was unable, or unwilling, to develop a response plan for those refugees. On the contrary, the Lebanese authorities adopted laws that complicated the crisis, where it prohibited constructing wide official camps on its lands, which led to refugee spreading



in the forms of fragmented groups, and within small unofficial camps, as more and more people scattered in a non-uniform fashion. And the Syrian refugee crisis has complicated the chaos in the Lebanese society, and the Lebanese government's answer for that was more uninformed decisions that were also unfair to the Syrian people. These decisions ceased the Syrian influx into Lebanon, and created a wide window for exploitation and blackmailing. We have noticed that most of these decisions were made in the wake of terrorist attacks in Lebanon, which generated a retaliatory response against Syrian refugees who were seen as grounds for terrorism. This has reflected on the various aspects of their lives, and the very dangers that they fled, especially arrest, enforced-disappearance, and murder, are now following them to Lebanon. Furthermore, the lack of valid passports, on one hand, prevented large numbers of Syrians from leaving Lebanon, and on the other hand, they are not welcomed to stay in light of these decisions and the increasingly complicated reality they are living. This issue must be addressed, or it will become a societal timed bomb.

This report draws upon the interviews we have conducted with Syrian refugees in Lebanon, either via Skype or phone, or by visiting them inside and outside camps through SNHR member in Lebanon. We chose six accounts that were included in this report, and we used fake names to preserve the privacy of the witnesses and to avoid the possibility of them being harassed or pursued. We told all the interviewees of the purpose of this report, and asserted them that they have the right to refuse to go through with the interview or reveal information that might put them in jeopardy. The witnesses gave us permission to use the information they provided in the service of this report's goals.

Also, the report relies on SNHR archive that has been built through monitoring and documenting the violations against Syrian refugees in Lebanon, where this report sheds light on some of these incidents. In light of the difficulties and challenges we encountered and the refugees' fear of being pursued or chased either by the local authorities or unknown groups in addition to their hopelessness in talking after tens of local and international reports and researches that tackled the violations they experienced which failed to bring about any form of change, we have to say that we couldn't cover all the information and aspects with regard to the refugees' life in Lebanon.



## II. Requirements for Staying in Lebanon are the First Form of Persecution against Syrian Refugees

According to what the UNHCR in Lebanon has registered, there are roughly 1.1 million Syrian who fled to Lebanon in addition to approximately half-million unregistered refugees, where the Lebanese authorities approved a [law](#) that aimed to regulate the influx of Syrians into Lebanon on January 9, 2015. Through its representatives in Lebanon, the UNHCR declared that they won't be registering any new refugees as per a request and instructions by the Lebanese government, which meant that Syrians fleeing to Lebanon won't be recognized as refugees, but as foreign residents that are governed by the special regulations for foreign persons.

The Lebanese authorities have implemented a number of procedures to restrict the influx of Syrian refugees, and enforced extremely difficult requirements for a residency, such as requiring costly fees for a residency in addition to having to find a Lebanese sponsor. The vast majority of Syrians couldn't fulfil the residency requirements, which made them lose their legal status in Lebanon, and, thus, they became marginalized, exploited in work, and subject to ill-treatment and sexual harassment in some cases. Additionally, Syrians can't go to police or security in case they were abused, as they lost all forms of protection, which made securing the most basic needs for surviving a very hefty challenge.

On February 3, 2015, the Lebanese General Security issued a resolution that addressed the mechanisms used to regulate the entry and stay of Syrians in Lebanon. The resolution prohibited any Syrians from obtaining an official legal status, and banned any new Syrians from entering Lebanon unless the person seeking entry can be classified under one of the classifications specified by law which are: tourism, business visit, shopping, passing through Lebanon for the purpose of travelling. Any Syrians who managed to secure a Lebanese sponsor in accordance with a "Responsibility Pledge" were excluded from this resolution. This resolution forced many Syrians to seek a Lebanon sponsor in order to acquire a legal status, which gave birth to a trade that have become very popular – sellable sponsorships for no less than 1500\$, where many were hoping for more Syrian to enter Lebanon so they can sell them sponsorships on land borders or at airports, even though the sponsor can cancel the sponsorship, in some cases, before it ends.

The residency given to Syrian refugees (Excluding the ones who were given by the UNHCR which have been stopped since May 2015) must be renewed every year. The requirements for a residency renewal includes:

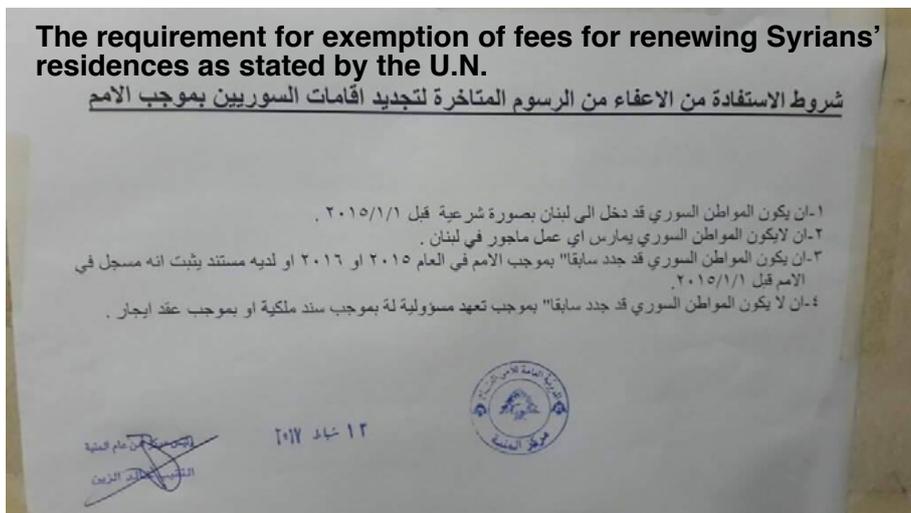


- An official identification (personal id, passport, an entry document). However, Many Syrians who fled to Lebanon have lost their official papers and entered Lebanon illegally.
- Renewal fees that amount to 200\$ for persons of 15 years of age or older. This price was steep for refuging families, as most of them have no staple jobs, which makes the acquiring of a legal status something extremely difficult.
- An address, with two personal pictures that have a stamp of approval issued by the neighborhood Mukhtar, an authorized person by the Lebanese government.

In some cases, the Lebanese authorities refuse to renew the residency for some Syrians, even if they met the aforementioned requirements, without giving any justification. Most of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon have lost their legal status because of this according to interviews with Syrian and Lebanese organizations that specialize in the issues of the Syrian refugees.

In February 2017, the Lebanese general security directorate issued a [decree with limited powers](#). The decree exempts the refugees who had registered at the UNHCR before January 1, 2015 from paying their late fees, granting them a renewable six-month residency status without the need to pay any additional fees, provided that they have been granted a temporary residency status before during 2015 or 2016. This decree doesn't include any Syrian refugees who acquired an entry visa (tourism, shopping, visit...) or on a pledge of responsibility work/personal or on a title deed or a rent contract.

Even though this recent decree is of a great importance for a segment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the decree excluded those who entered Lebanon illegally, which comprises a large section of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The decree requires that the refugee to be benefited from the decree has to be not practicing any paid work and has to have registered at the U.N. or acquired a U.N. residency.



Ziad Kleib, 30-year-old, from Talkalakh city in Homs governorate, has a degree in business, entered Lebanon illegally via a non-official crossing during one of the displacement waves in 2014. After he entered Lebanon, he tried to acquire a legal status several times. The complicated procedures, however, were always an obstacle in his way. We spoke to Ziad via the phone, and he told us the following:

*“I filed several requests for a residency to the Lebanese General Security, but I was met with rejection because I couldn’t find a Lebanese sponsor. They told me to file an appeal, and I am still waiting an answer for more than six months. I can’t leave the city I live in as I might get arrested, and I avoid any streets or places where checkpoints for Lebanese General Security or the Lebanese army are. Even if I was granted approval, I would have to pay 200\$ for every year I spent here without a legal residency, 600\$ for entering illegally, and 200\$ for a new residency. The amount of money they are asking for is just too much for me as a refugee.”*

Our colleagues at Human Rights Watch have published an extensive study entitled: [“How Lebanon’s Residency Rules Facilitate Abuse of Syrian Refugees”](#) that details the issue with all of its aspects and fallouts. Additionally, HRW worked on another report entitled: [“Lebanon: Residency Rules Put Syrians at Risk”](#)

### **The Ramifications of the UNHCR Stopping Registering Syrian Refugees**

UNHCR representatives in Lebanon have announced that they will stop registering new Syrian refugees in Lebanon as per a request by the government of the prime minister Najib Miqati. Since that decision was announced, the consequences were catastrophic on every social and economic level, especially that Syrian refugees use Lebanon as a crossing to seek asylum in Europe legally via the UNHCR. However, if a refugee is not registered anymore, this makes him ineligible for this right. Also, he will be denied the aids and protection provided by the UNHCR making him vulnerable to exploitation and various forms of violations. In many cases, the Lebanese security refused to renew Syrian refugees’ residencies even though they were issued by the UNHCR and asked for a Lebanese sponsor that must be present during the renewal.

As it didn’t sign the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Lebanese government don’t grant the refugee status for those who are eligible. Rather, they are deemed residents on the Lebanese lands, where the Lebanese government implement the local laws with regard to them. Nonetheless, the Lebanese government is bound by the customary international law and the international human rights law.



## **Exploitation of Labor**

As we pointed out earlier, meeting residency requirements have been a very difficult task for Syrians, which restricted their movements, and forced them to accept any jobs they could find in their areas, which usually are long hours and low wages. A large group of Syrians had to tolerate abuse and assault by their employers so they can feed their families, as many employers threaten Syrians that they would take them to the Lebanese authorities who might arrest them, and then send them to the borders and banish them, with no regard for the fact that most Syrians have fled Syria because they were afraid of getting arrested or conscripted in the Syrian regime army and local militias, which means that their going back to Syria would put their life in serious danger.

Furthermore, even if a Syrian was to acquire a residency, the ministry of labor in Lebanon has restricted Syrians to a specific set of jobs that they are allowed to practice with no consideration for their experience or scientific qualifications. Also, the Lebanese ministry of Labor assigned a number of jobs exclusively for the Lebanese people, saying that it wants to preserve Lebanese labor by doing that. Syrians are allowed to work in different fields of labor such as: construction, carpentry, blacksmithing, waitressing at cafes and restaurants, guarding buildings, sanitation jobs, or farmers, while Syrians who possess large capitals were also allowed to open businesses and invest, provided that they don't negatively affect any other Lebanese business or investor.

Most Syrian labor in Lebanon work without a contract, social security, or health insurance -Many Syrians were injured or died while working construction-related jobs- which deprived them of getting a financial compensation at the end of their services, or covering the expenses of treatment for any injuries that prevent them from doing their jobs. In some cases, the affected worker, or his family, might get some pittances. It should be noted that all registered refugees at the UNHCR sign pledges to not work every time they renew their residency, and they will be arrested or forced to leave the country in case they violated this pledge.

The [statement](#) issued by the Lebanese ministry of labor on the jobs that are exclusive to Lebanese and what jobs are Syrians allowed to practice:



## **Consequences of the Lack of Official Camps**

Syrian refugees face the crucial task of having to secure a place to live, given that there are no central camps, on one hand, and the high rent rates for them, on the other hand. Therefore, many Syrians work for other Lebanese families as farmers or constructors for free in exchange for a place to stay. The employer exploits all family members, including women and children, however he desires whether it pertained to the agreed-upon field of work or for other tasks such as satisfying his personal needs, buying groceries and cleaning the house, washing cars, carrying things. We noticed this phenomenon particularly in Baalbek and Al Harmal areas.

Due to the difficulties Syrians encounter to find a job in Lebanon, many rings use refugeeing families to plant and harvest cannabis (A plant similar to marijuana) and then disposing the remnants for no more than 20\$ a day. This phenomenon can be widely seen in border areas between Syria and Lebanon and mainly in Al Beqaa area.

Alaa Al Omar, from Homs city, a Syrian worker who has been living in Lebanon since 2011, he works for a carpentry workshop owned by a Lebanon person. Alaa gets 20\$ for every day of work. Alaa's employer gave him a sponsorship so he can get a legal status in Lebanon. We spoke to Alaa via Skype:

*“Even though my employer gave me sponsorship for a residency, he always threatened that he will withdraw if I got lazy on the job, or asked for a raise. Because he gave me a sponsorship, I have to endure everything I am subjected to at work. I am used to being treated poorly and yelled at all day. I was injured twice, and in one of the injuries, I almost lost three fingers. However, I had to personally pay for my treatment. There are times during the year when the workload and demand for carpentry get low. At such times, I don't get any compensation, and if we had something to work on, I would get only half my payment. Of course, the employer gives me my wage whenever he feels like it, sometimes at the end of the day, and sometimes every month or two. And I have no choice but to wait. If I was to leave my job, he would cancel my sponsorship and, if that happened, my situation would only get worse.”*



## **Racism**

From 2011 until early-2013, racism was more of isolated incidents. More particularly, by people who are with parties that support the Syrian regime, and despise the Syrian uprising – most notably Hezbollah.

With the beginning of 2013, we started notice how racism is surfacing more and more against Syrian refugees and their presence in Lebanon. Sometimes, it led to homicide cases, and tracking Syrians' places of work and threatening their employers. This phenomenon is concentrated in Beirut's southern and eastern districts. Racism has been escalating gradually. And one of the most notable reason behind it is a hate and sectarian incitement rhetoric that was adopted by some media outlets that support the Syrian regime- especially MTV, Al Jadid, and OTV- which was enhanced by organized social media campaigns. All of this elevated horribly following a number of terrorist attacks by ISIS and Fateh Al Sham Front on sites for the Lebanese army in Irsal area in August 2015.

Examples on racism and inciting hate against Syrian refugees in Lebanese media

On Monday November 14, 2016, OTV TV channel broadcasted the first episode of a show called "Haddi Qalbak" "Let your Heart Relax", which is a comedy show. The episode was a "prank" done by the program host on a Syrian worker at a karting park, where he asked for his papers after he set up a fake military checkpoint, and then he screamed at him asking him to kneel on the ground and take off his clothes, before insulting him in different manners. He made fun of his underwear and stuck a red flag in it. He, then, forced the Syrian worker to carry a banner and walk with it. The episode was deleted by the TV channel following an outrage by most segments of the Lebanese community regardless of their political orientations.

[Pictures](#) of [OTV's "Haddi Qalbak"](#) which shows a Syrian worker being ridiculed. November 14, 2016

On Monday November 14, 2016, a video was uploaded on social media showing a number of Lebanese girls at Al ALBA university in Lebanon answering, in French, a question if they would agree to go out with a Syrian guy. The answers were racist, and the video ended with an answer that showed its purpose: "I don't think there is a Lebanese girl that would agree to date a Syrian a guy, unless he doesn't look like them or doesn't talk like them."

[Video](#) showing a number of Lebanese girls at Al ALBA university answering a question if they would go out with a Syrian guy in a racist manner. November 14, 2016



In 2013, MTV TV channel showed a sketch in its program “Ma Fe Methlou” “There is nothing like him”. The sketch was of a Lebanese mother talking to her son in French. The mother was surprised by her son’s Syrian accent and that his friends at school are Syrians. The sketch reflected very explicit hatred and contempt for refugees.

A [sketch](#) broadcasted by MTV TV channel that reflected hatred and contempt for Syrian refugees. The sketch was broadcasted in 2013

Al Nahaar newspaper website, which is practically owned by Hezbollah, posted a [video](#) report where Lebanese people are asked about the issue of Syrian displacement to Lebanon, which the website called “horrifying” and supported a message of incitement and racism. Following a wide displeasure in the wake of the report, the website deleted it.

In 2013, the Lebanese newspaper “Al Balad” published an article on its website entitled: “A Spinsterhood crisis hits Lebanon. Syrian women refugees are favorites” where the newspaper blamed the rising spinsterhood rates in Lebanon on the Syrian women refugees. The report generated a wide displeasure that compelled the newspaper to delete the article.

MTV TV channel website published on November 13, 2016 a report entitled: “Having sex where no one else dares to”. The [report](#) addresses the issue of the elevating rates of Syrian newborns in Lebanon in an unprofessional and unethical manner.

[Video](#) showing a Lebanese family encouraging a kid to beat a Syrian kid in Lebanon – the video was posted on July 19, 2014. The kid that was beaten was confirmed to be Syrian after Al Jadid TV channel conducted an interview with the kid.

The [interview](#) with the Syrian kid

6 January 2015, Al Nahar newspaper published an [article](#) entitled: “Al Hamra is no longer Lebanese... The Syrians expanding has altered its identity”. The writer says that the Syrian demography in Al Hamra area in Beirut has rendered it a black area.

In addition, many towns in various areas of Lebanon have issued rulings prohibiting Syrians from leaving their homes after 8:00 PM, and specified particular times and places in which they can be. Also, Syrians were asked to pay 20\$ a month in order to stay in these towns, while other refugees were allowed to live for free on sectarian, ethnic, political, and material basis, such as allowing Christian refugees, or refugees who support the Syrian regime, while others only allowed opposing refugees, or rich people with excluding the poor.



Rayan Bitar, an engineer and a member of SNHR in Lebanon who helped with this report. Rayan says:

*“I have been living in Lebanon since 2012, and I was assaulted twice. First time I was attacked by unknowns who tried to beat me while I was in Beirut. A Lebanese security patrol only logged the incident at the time. The second time was in the area where I live by a Lebanese army patrol who accused me of wandering at night (after 8:00). Hadn’t my Lebanese sponsor intervened, I would have been arrested, as they only beat me and strongly warned me.”*

*“The town that I live in told Syrians that they have to pay 20\$ a month in order to be allowed to stay. They also announced via microphones that Syrians can’t leave their homes after 8:00 no matter what, or they will be arrested, assaulted, and exiled from the town.”*

### **Sexual Exploitation**

Female refugees and children were sexually exploited for their need for money after they lost their provider. Networks that worked on luring female Syrian refugees have emerged, where we documented in a detailed report: [“Bitterness of Humiliation”](#) one of these networks after they were exposed. The report highlights the magnitude of sexual violence against Syrian women refugees in Lebanon through networks of sexual enslavement that torture, disfigure, rape, force-abort, and threaten to expose their victims and publicize pictures and videos of them naked or while they are practicing prostitution among other sadistic practices that they have been subjected to. We haven’t recorded any incidents of sexual violence inside detention centers or inspection points affiliated to Lebanese forces.

### **Deprivation of Judicial Protection**

Syrian refugees who don’t have official papers or legal status in Lebanon can’t go to judiciary or police stations to submit a complaint, or even hire a lawyer, where the Lebanese government consider them in this case illegal refugees. Also, the racist treatment at many government departments made many refugees afraid to file a complaint, especially against a Lebanese party.

In addition to a number of news, many Syrian refugees told us that they were threatened that they would be killed or beaten if they tried to complain against military personnel or employers in order to seek their financial or work rights, not to mention that filing a complaint at Lebanese judicial institution or hiring a lawyer cost too much and exceed most refugees’ financial power.



Mustafa Al Mustafa, from Al Tal city in Damascus suburbs governorate, lives at Tripoli (in Lebanon). Mustafa entered Lebanon illegally in 2013, he works as a guard at a residential building for a monthly wage of 250\$. He was assaulted and severely beaten by a number of youths in his place of work. Mustafa couldn't file a complaint to the general security in Lebanon. Mustafa told us in a direct interview we conducted at his place of residence:

*“Four guys came to where I work and asked for my papers telling me that they are security. I was suspicious, and I asked to see one of their IDs. At this point, I was dragged outside the building and beaten and kicked, and they told me that they don't want any strangers in this neighborhood. Then, they got in their cars and got off. Some Lebanese people helped me to get up and revealed to me the identity of one of the guys that beaten me. I didn't file a complaint to anyone, because once I get there, they will ask to see my official papers, and if they know that I don't have it, then I will be in jail for a few days and then they will tell me to get a residency, and I don't want any of that, because I will be forced to go back to Syria, or the security will only log the incident.”*

### **Deprivation of Health Care**

The Syrian refugee relies on the health services provided by the UNHCR. However, with the increasing number of refugees, the UNHCR officialized a number of rules for the cases it can cover 75% of their expenses. The UNHCR service doesn't cover difficult medical cases such as cancer, thalassemia, and dialysis. In contrast, Syrian refugees can't go to Lebanese hospital for treatment, as most of these hospitals are private hospitals that charge too much for treatment. These hospitals don't take in any refugees unless they pay a deposit, or they won't admit him no matter how critical the case is.

Because many Syrian refugees live in unhealthy places -due to their financial situations- and the lack of any central camps, which is the case in Jordan and Turkey, the likelihood of them getting infected with communicable and infectious diseases is high.

### **Begging and Labor**

Begging and child labor are two of the most highly-common social phenomena among Syrian children refugees in Lebanon. Begging has also been widespread, but to a less extent, among other age groups whether they were youths, elders, or women, where younger children, especially those who lost their parents and providers, get into begging.



Those children are disadvantaged from both a social and health standpoint, and they are mostly 5-10-year-old, whereas older children sell flowers, gum, or tissues in the streets, or clean shoes and car windows.

Children walking in the street trying to sell whatever they have or begging has become something usual in various areas, where many refugee families are forced to get their children into begging and labor so they can secure their basic needs such as food and water. We received many reports on children who were exploited or subjected to ill-treatment as they were begging or working by rings that are active in theft, drugs dealing, prostitution, and organized begging networks, due to the fact that they are vulnerable and naïve. Begging and labor can be most found in Beirut and Tripoli and especially in Al Hamra, Koula – Tariq Al Jadida, and Ain Al Mreisa areas.

### **Deprivation of Education**

Lebanese authorities have allowed Syrian children to enroll in public schools and relieved them of the registering fees. In the past three years, public education has suffered from an underwhelming support by the Lebanese government. It is true that on paper, the ministry of education doesn't require that children refugees or their father have legal status in order to register them (which is something we thank them for). But in reality, many children were rejected because they didn't have a legal status.

The laws issued by the official authorities regarding residency and official papers have discouraged the refuging families to register their children at public schools. Additionally, most Syrian families can't afford to enroll their children in private schools.

There are also additional challenges such as the differences between the Syrian and Lebanese curriculums, the inability for most Syrian families to hire tutors for their kids, the absence of schooling programs for Syrian refugees in order to make up for the years they missed. Furthermore, many families expressed their fear that their children might be the subject of racist slurs and actions in school. Also, families can't deliver their children to schools because of the checkpoints that ask for a legal residency which they don't have, and finally the general feeling that there is no future for Syria and so enrolling their children feels pointless. Some local and international Lebanese and Syrian organizations and associations that are active in the fields of education and relief in Lebanon have worked on a number of education programs in some camps, where temporary elementary



schools have been established. However, the certificates that these schools give aren't officially recognized, which compelled many refugees to question the purpose of these schools and send their kids to work rather than education.

Yousef Al Jamal, from Aleppo city, a refugee and a father of three out-of-school boys. Yousef told SNHR in a direct interview that was conducted at his place of residence about the reasons why he doesn't send his kids to school:

*"We are barely securing money for food and some used clothes. I have three kids – Ahmad, the oldest, 13-year-old, Moath 12-year-old, and Ghiath nine-year-old. If they were all to go to school, that would mean that there is no money left for food. School costs money for transportation, books, stationery, and bags. The cost of living here in Lebanon is expensive. We are living in a tent, and no one is helping us. All of us have to work if we want to survive. I would very much love to see my children go to school like everyone else, but in this bleak place we are grateful, if we can secure our basic needs. Education is a luxury the children of this camp can't afford."*

### **No Registration for Thousands of Newborn Children**

For a refuging Syrian family in Lebanon to register their newborns, these steps, which were outlined by the Lebanese government, must be followed:

First: Acquire a Lebanese birth certificate from a certified doctor or a legal midwife.

Second: Acquire a birth document that can be found at one of the Mukhtars of the area where the child was born. A birth document cost between 10,000 and 30,000 Lebanese pounds depending on the Mukhtar. Then, another birth document must be acquired from the civil status bureau for foreigners which costs 5000 Lebanese pounds with an added 3000 Lebanese pounds for stamps (One stamp per document). Lastly, a birth document is to be acquired from the ministry of foreign affairs which costs 2000 Lebanese pounds.

Third: The process for registering newborn documents are split into two parts

A. Registering the birth document at the civil status bureau (judicial level)

B. Registering the birth document at the foreigner department which is affiliated with the Directorate General of Personal Status (provisional level).

Fourth: Register/acquire a seal of approval for the birth document at the ministry of foreign affairs.

Fifth: Register/ acquire a seal of approval for the birth document at the Syrian embassy in Lebanon.



Lebanon's personal status laws state that the first three steps must be finished within the first year of the birthdate. Otherwise, the newborn's family have to file a judicial case in order to finish the procedures for registering the birth.

Before all of the aforementioned steps, a legal status must be present, and as we pointed out earlier, there have to be papers to acquire a legal status. Also, most births are done outside of hospitals, considering the high cost, on one hand, and the fact that many marriage cases are not legally documented at the relevant government department in Syria or in Lebanon as the union was cemented after refuge, which means that the spouses only have a contract that was written by a cleric with witnesses and family present on the other hand. Finally, many Syrian refugees avoid going to the Syrian embassy out of fear of getting arrested or harassed. For all of these reasons, the number of unregistered Syrian newborns have been increasing alarmingly in Lebanon. We don't have reliable data with regard to this issue, and we haven't conducted a survey in this report, as we, rather, relied on interviewing a large number of the refugees for nearly a year. These children will face disastrous legal, economic, and social ramifications because they haven't been registered.

### **III. Arrest, Abduction, Torture, and Extradition to the Syrian Regime**

Rates of arbitrary arrests made by the Lebanese security forces have increased with the beginning of 2016. Arrest operations have been concentrated in Tripoli, Aarsal, and Beirut, which reflected on the economic and social aspects of the Syrians' lives, as they feel forced to limit their movement, stop working, and be careful when walking in the streets, markets, or outside camps as a precaution to protect themselves from being arrested and maybe getting banished to Syria.

Arrests included various groups of the Syrians that are living in Lebanon whether they were residents or refugees who didn't acquire a legal status in addition to writers, artists, and activists who are active in the fields of relief aids, education, and medical aid to the Syrians who are living in camps. Also, arrests included military men who defected from the Syrian regime. The arrests were made on various charges that ranged from supporting terrorism to violating the rules of residency for Syrians living in Lebanon.

Abdullah Erfan, from Al Qseir city in the suburbs of Homs governorate, he entered Lebanon illegally in 2013. Abdullah was arrested twice in Lebanon – The first was by the Lebanese army's intelligence in March 2016, where he was detained for two days in a deten-



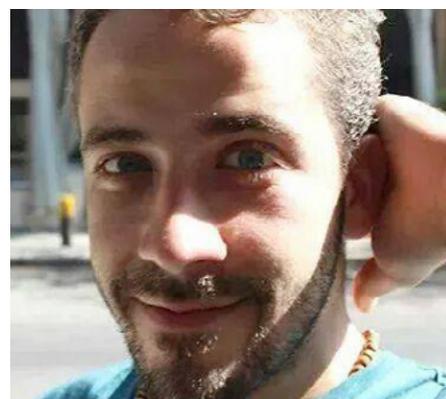
tion center in Tripoli, while the second time by the information branch which is affiliated to the general security, and was detained for five days in Beirut city with no charges against him. We spoke to Abdullah via Skype:

*“I was contacted by the intelligence of the Lebanese army who asked me to come there on the next day. I went there and was detained for two days, before I was released. I was detained in a small room which was in bad shape. There were about 50 detainees. The second time was when I was filing for residency in the general security center in Tripoli. They used violence and arrested me and then I was transferred to the general security in Beirut, where I was interrogated and insulted. I wasn’t tortured, but I heard sounds of other detainees being tortured in detention rooms. I was interrogated over my previous job at a hospital in a camp that provided medical service for wounded Syrians. I was released five days later.”*

What makes this arbitrary arrests particularly dangerous is the fact that Lebanese general security forces have extradited a number of wanted men to the Syrian regime via sea-ports, Beirut Airport, and land crossing points. Most of the time, the detainees are extradited to the Syrian military security forces, where most of them are held in branch 293 which is affiliated to the Military Intelligence agency in Damascus city. We have lost contact with many of them, as they have become forcibly-disappeared.

We recorded that the Lebanese general security extradited no less than 56 Syrian detainees to the Syrian Military Intelligence from the beginning of 2013 until the end of 2016, even though Lebanon is a signing party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which prohibits arbitrary arrest.

Dr. Abdurrahman Mamdouh Al Fatwa, from Homs city, a veterinary doctor, was 24-year-old at the time of the arrest, he tried to immigrate by sea from Tripoli to Turkey. The boat owner, however, was an informant for the Lebanese security forces. Abdurrahman was extradited to the Syrian security forces at Tartus coast in August 2014. His fate is still unknown to this moment.



Lieutenant colonel Omar Al Khatib, a defected military officer from Syrian regime forces. In March 2015, he was arrested by Lebanese security forces who raided his place of residence in Al Meneya area in Lebanon, and was extradited to the Syrian regime forces at Al Masna' crossing point. His fate is still unknown to his family as well as SNHR.

Most cases that were extradited by Lebanon to Syria were defected military officers, or Syrian detainees who were sentenced by the Lebanese judiciary and were serving their sentences at Romiya prison in eastern Beirut city. Those detainees had different charges ranging from entering Lebanon illegally to lack of official papers. Their sentences range from a few months to years. Lastly, some political opposition figures were extradited to the Syrian regime.

There is a coordination between the two intelligence apparatuses of Syria and Lebanon. Apparently, Syrian security forces provided Lebanese security forces with lists of names. The catastrophe, however, is that the exchanges are being carried out under complete secrecy. When we acquire any information, it is merely by accident, which makes that actual number of people who were extradited widely higher than we recorded. More importantly, the fates of those people which might be directly killed, or die due to torture inside the Syrian regime detention centers.

Even though Syria and Lebanon have signed a judicial agreement on extraditing wanted men and implementation of penal judgments, the agreement states, in its fourth article, that perpetrators of crimes of a political nature shall not be extradited. Also, article 6 states that extraditions shall be postponed in case they are under investigation or on trial until the trial reaches an end. Additionally, the agreement states that the state asking for the extradition must attach a memorandum that is issued by a [judicial authority](#) and contains the type of crime, and it must be also signed by the issuing judge, which contradicts all the cases that Lebanon extradited, considering that the wanted detainees were wanted based on security reports rather than judicial reports. Syrian and Lebanese security forces have disregarded the agreement completely.

## **Abduction**

Between May 2011, and December 2016, we recorded that no less than 108 Syrian refugees were abducted by unidentified groups, whether the abduction was for ransom money or for handing them to the Syrian regime.



The Lebanese authorities arrested one of those rings in August 2016, where they confessed to luring a number of military officers who defected from the Syrian regime forces and abducting them, and handing them to the Syrian regime in exchange for facilitation in the smuggling operations between the two countries.

[Shebli Al Eisami](#), from Amtan village in the suburbs of Al Suwayda governorate, born in 1925, a co-founder of the Ba'ath Party in Syria, and a former secretary general. He fled to Iraq in 1966, when he was the Vice president. On 24 May 2011, he was abducted by unknowns in front of his house in Alayya area in Lebanon and was handed to the Syrian regime forces. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Captain Yahya Haddad, from Homs governorate, defected from the fourth division, which is affiliated to the Syrian regime army. In 2014, he was abducted from his place of residence by unknowns who handed him to the Syrian regime forces. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

1st lieutenant Kamal Bakir, from Talkalakh town in the suburbs of Homs governorate, he is a military officer that defected from the Syrian regime forces in March 2015. He was abducted and forcibly-disappeared by unknown armed men from his place of residence in Al Bqaa' Al Gharbi area in Lebanon. Lebanese security forces arrested the abductors who confessed to handing him to the Syrian regime forces at Al Masna' crossing point. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Mohammad Ahmad Al No'mani, a Syrian political opposition figure, lives in Lebanon. In December 2014, he was abducted and forcibly-disappeared by unknown armed men from his place of residence in Al Bqaa' Al Gharbi area in Lebanon. Lebanese security forces arrested the abductors who confessed to handing him to the Syrian regime forces. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Ismail Reda Al Antawi, a military officer who defected from Syrian regime forces. He was abducted by unknowns in Lebanon on 29 December, 2016. The abductors transferred him to Syria and handed him to Syrian regime forces. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Jaser Al Mhameid, a military officer who defected from the Syrian regime forces. He was



abducted in Lebanon on January 26, 2015. The abductors transferred him to Syria and handed him to the Syrian regime forces. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

## IV. Recommendations

### The Lebanese government

Cease forcibly extraditing Syrian refugees to the Syrian regime, especially political and military opposition figures who will most likely end up getting killed directly or forcibly-disappeared.

Issue new resolutions and decrees that would ease the residency renewal fees for Syrian refugees and allow them to work, and start settling the matters of those who violated the residency requirements and weren't included in the past decrees. Also, in order for them to go back to their normal life, which will encourage them to send their children to schools, the Lebanese government must facilitate the procedures for a residency.

Find a mechanism that would insure the registration of Syrian newborns who are born to refuging families in Lebanon.

Allow the UNHCR to resume registering Syrian refugees, as registration has been suspended since May 2015.

Track the Mafia networks who are exploiting the Syrian refugee crisis, and hold them accountable.

### The Donor states

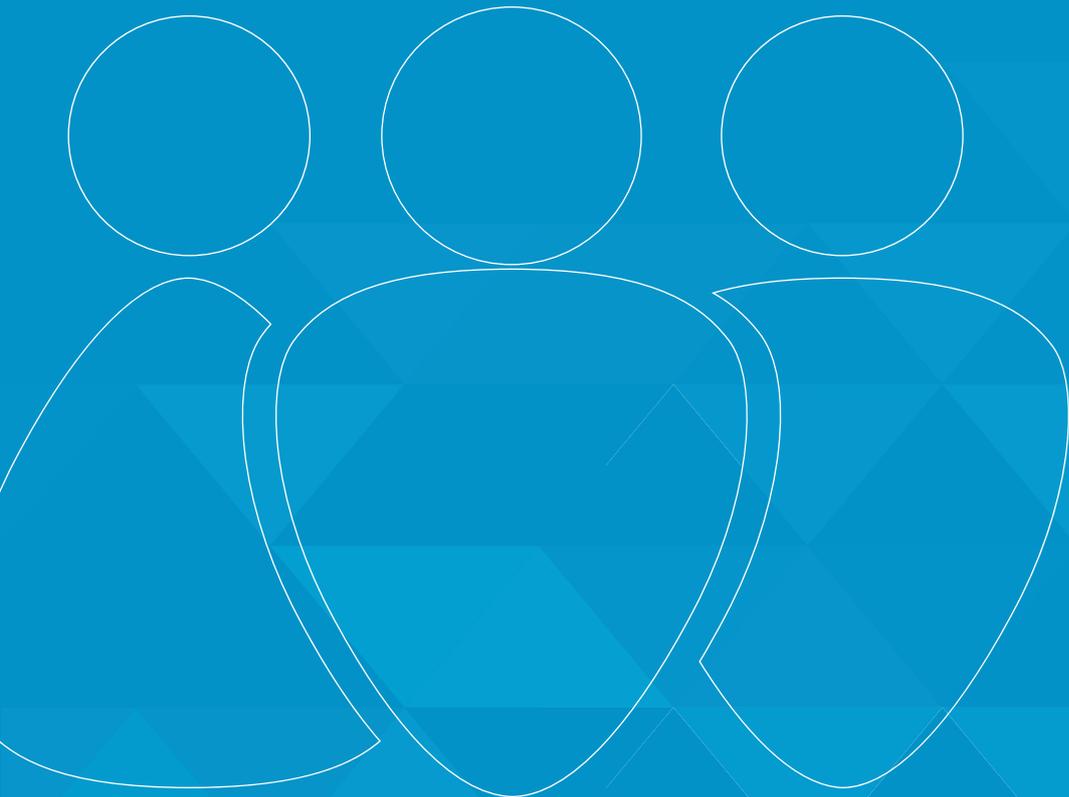
Fulfill all commitments to the Lebanese state in order to ease the economic, social, and infrastructural burden of taking in nearly 1.7 million individuals that fled to Lebanon.

Call on the Lebanese government to implement the aforementioned recommendations, and apply pressure in order to compel it to bring about these changes as soon as possible.

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