

Lebanon

Lebanon has a constitutional parliamentary system of governance in which the Lebanese Parliament is the only institution elected directly by the people. The assembly elects the president, who appoints the prime minister following consultations with parliamentarians. The distribution of certain government posts is subject to a religious, sectarian quota system: the president must be a Maronite Christian, the speaker of the assembly a Shiite Muslim, and the prime minister a Sunni Muslim. Under the Taif Accords of 1989, which put an end to the civil war (1975-1990), the parliament is divided equally between Muslims and Christians, with proportional representation based both on confessions within each religion and on geographic areas.

Despite the appearance of party pluralism, all political parties are sectarian based, even though their political and sectarian interests require them to engage in cross-confessional alliances. Although the Taif Accords stipulated full state sovereignty over all of Lebanese territory and the dissolution and disarmament of all militias, the state has been unable to achieve this. For one, Syria maintained a military presence in the country from 1976 to 2005, during which time Syria supported certain groups for political reasons and pitted the various sects against each other. In addition, the Shiite group Hezbollah, supported by Iran and Syria, has used the Arab-Israeli conflict as grounds to forestall any attempt to disarm it, claiming to be resisting Israeli

threats and fighting to liberate Lebanese territory. Ultimately, Hezbollah has become a state within a state, able to deter and intimidate its domestic opponents and even state institutions by force of arms, which gravely undermines the institutions of the state as established by law and indeed the rule of law itself.

During the limited times in which Lebanon has experienced relative political stability, freedom of expression and other public liberties have been allowed to flourish, especially as compared to many Arab countries. These freedoms tend to be greatly eroded, however, in times of major political crises, which rapidly assume sectarian dimensions. These crises are exacerbated by the fact that domestic politics have been and continue to be held hostage to the conflicts and calculations of regional and international players.

Over the past seven years, specifically since the 2005 assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, the head of the Sunni Future movement, human rights in Lebanon have faced setbacks due to the political and confessional polarization that has divided the country into two opposing camps on multiple issues. Most significant among these issues is seeking justice for the Hariri assassination and the string of bombings and assassinations that largely targeted figures affiliated with the Sunni movement and its allies, as well as international resolutions that ended the Syrian military and intelligence presence in Lebanon and required Hezbollah to turn in its weapons to the Lebanese army. The political crisis around these issues threatened renewed civil war in 2008 after Hezbollah deployed across Beirut and turned its so-called weapons of resistance against their domestic political opponents and other Lebanese. Hezbollah has also challenged orders issued by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, the international court established by the United Nations to investigate the Hariri assassination, by refusing to turn over Hezbollah members indicted by the tribunal. Indeed, Hezbollah threatened to reignite civil war if groups opposed to it continued to support the international tribunal or to demand an end to the state's parallel power structures and the disarmament of Hezbollah. This crisis paralyzed the state's institutions, as established by the constitution, for a long period.

Given the balance of power between the two main political camps, those responsible for grave abuses committed since the Hariri assassination enjoy ongoing impunity. Although Syria no longer maintains a military presence in the country, Damascus continues to exert significant political influence through Lebanese parties closely aligned with the Syrian government and to prevent accountability for violations that occurred during the Syrian presence in Lebanon as well as the disclosure of the fates of thousands of people who disappeared during this period.

Throughout the year 2012, human rights were further eroded as the political and sectarian divisions in Lebanon between parties close to the Syrian regime and those opposed to it sharpened due to the deterioration of the popular uprising in Syria into an internal armed conflict. 2012 saw the worst sectarian clashes since Hezbollah occupied Beirut in 2008, leaving dozens dead and hundreds injured. Dozens of Syrian nationals were abducted as revenge for the abduction and disappearance of Lebanese in Syria, while pro-Assad parties in Lebanon were accused of attacking the homes of Syrians residing in Lebanon who support the Syrian opposition. Journalists, media figures, and media outlets were also attacked due to their positions on these events or to their coverage of the clashes.

In this context, the Lebanese army assumed more control over political life and the public sphere, which resulted in additional human rights violations by the military. Among these violations were severe and at times violent security measures taken against the camps of Palestinian and other refugees as well as the increased use of military courts to try civilians, including several human rights defenders. Attempts to end impunity saw no progress in 2012, particularly with regards to holding those responsible for the Hariri assassination and the subsequent assassinations and bombings to account. Complaints of poor prison conditions continue to be recorded, and journalists, bloggers, and artists remain targeted by security harassment and prosecution, which reflects a growing intolerance for freedom of expression, independent media, and creative freedom.

The Impact of the Syrian Uprising on Peace in Lebanon

In May, security personnel in civilian clothes arrested Lebanese Islamist activist Shadi al-Mawlawi, a vocal supporter of the Syrian opposition, in Tripoli, sparking sectarian clashes which lasted for several days in several Tripoli neighborhoods and left 24 people dead and over 90 injured.¹ On May 13, al-Mawlawi appeared before a military court in Beirut, where he and five others were charged with belonging to a terrorist group.² The military court

¹ The Gulf and Middle East Association for Civil Society, "Lubnan: al-munazzama tudin a'mal al-'unf fi Tarabulus wa Bayrut," May 23, 2012, <<http://www.tgmacs.com/pp/read/15807>>; Paul Salem, "Lebanon Edges Closer to Syrian Crisis," May 17, 2012, <<http://carnegie-mec.org/2012/05/17/lebanon-edges-closer-to-syrian-crisis/ayhr>>.

² Alkarama, "Lebanon: Unfair Trial of Supporter of Syrian Opposition, Shadi Al Mawlawi," May 22, 2012, <http://en.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=921:lebanon-unfair-trial-of-supporter-of-syrian-opposition-shadi-al-mawlawi-&catid=26:communiqu&Itemid=131>.

released al-Mawlawi on bail on May 22 and banned him from travel until the completion of the investigation.³

On May 20, a Sunni cleric known for his support of the Syrian opposition was killed along with a man who was traveling with him when Lebanese soldiers shot them at a checkpoint in the Akkar region in northern Lebanon.⁴ The incident stoked sectarian tensions between Sunnis, the Lebanese army, and other political factions. Beirut saw armed clashes between the Future movement, loyal to former Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri and opposed to the Syrian regime, and the pro-Syrian “Arab Movement” led by Shaker Berjawi, which left three people dead and 18 injured.⁵ On June 3, unknown persons torched and destroyed shops owned by Alawites in the al-Tabana, Baal al-Darawish, and Azmi Street areas of Tripoli.⁶

According to unconfirmed news reports, clashes were renewed on July 27 between Sunni and Alawite groups in Tripoli when two Alawites heading to the Alawite-majority area of Jabal Mohsen only minutes before the end of the fast were attacked by unknown persons between Jabal Mohsen and al-Qubba, a Sunni-majority area; the assailants beat and stabbed the Alawites, after which the two were taken to a hospital. Clashes immediately erupted between residents of the two areas and spread to al-Tabana, another Sunni-majority area, ultimately injuring 15, among them three soldiers.⁷ On August 20, the same areas saw further clashes, this time involving the use of mortars, snipers, and both light and heavy automatic weapons; 5 were killed and 50 injured. Army units stepped in and opened fire at the sources of

³ Al-Hayat, “al-Qada’ al-Lubnani yukhli bi-kafala Shadi al-Mawlawi,” May 23, 2012, <<http://alhayat.com/Details/404357>>.

⁴ Amnesty International, “Lebanon: Independent Investigation into Checkpoint Killings Needed,” May 21, 2012, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/lebanon-independent-investigation-checkpoint-killings-needed-2012-05-21>>.

⁵ Alkarama, “Lebanon: The Authorities Should Guarantee Independence for the Investigation on the Case of Two Sunni Clerics Killed by the Army,” Aug. 8, 2010, <http://en.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=987:lebanon-the-authorities-should-guarantee-independence-for-the-investigation-on-the-case-of-two-sunni-clerics-killed-by-the-army&catid=26:communiqu&Itemid=131>; Paul Salem, “Syrian Crisis Spills into Lebanon,” May 21, 2012, <<http://carnegie-mec.org/2012/05/21/syrian-crisis-spills-into-lebanon/av5d>>; BBC Arabic, “Lubnan: Quwwat al-amn tusaytir ‘ala-l-wad’ fi Bayrut ba’d ishtibakat addat li-maqtal ithnayn,” May 21, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2012/05/120521_beirut_lebanon_clashes.shtml>.

⁶ Azzaman, “Lubnan: ihraq manazil wa mahallat fi Tarabulus,” June 4, 2012, <<http://www.azzaman.com/?p=7567>>; Ennahar Online, “Ihraq wa tahtim mahallat tijariya yamlikuha ‘alawiyun fi Tarabulus bi-Lubnan,” June 4, 2012, <http://www.ennaharonline.com/ar/arabic_news/115106.html>.

⁷ Al-Jazeera, “Jarha bi-ishtibakat ta’ifiya bi-Tarabulus Lubnan,” July 28, 2012, <<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/04303342-ff91-4c40-8bcf-c25532bc8b8c>>.

gunfire to suppress it.⁸ Clashes erupted once more on August 23, and four more people were killed, including a Sunni cleric. Seven Alawite-owned shops were torched in Sunni-majority neighborhoods, and 41 people were injured, including soldiers.⁹

Syrian nationals in Lebanon were kidnapped in retribution for similar abductions of Lebanese in Syria. Members of Lebanon's Miqdad family claimed responsibility for the abductions of dozens of Syrians and a Turkish national, claiming that these acts came in response to the kidnapping of one of their family members, Hassan al-Miqdad, in Syria on August 13 by a group claiming to be allied to the Free Syrian Army (FSA). In a televised statement on August 16, a representative of the previously unknown group "Mukhtar al-Thaqafi" - thought to have been formed in response to the abduction to 11 Lebanese Shiites in Syria on May 22 - said that the group had carried out retaliatory kidnappings and would target Syrians who supported the opposition or the FSA. The Lebanese authorities took no action to apprehend the kidnappers.¹⁰ At least seven Syrians and Lebanese were also subjected to kidnappings near the Syrian border in northern Lebanon after Lebanese Alawites abducted a Sunni Lebanese supporter of the Syrian uprising, sparking a series of retaliatory kidnappings between the two sides on June 9-10.¹¹

On October 19, a bombing took place in Sassine Square in the densely populated Achrafieh quarter of east Beirut targeting Brigadier General Wisam al-Hassan, head of the information division in the Internal Security Forces, killing three people, among them al-Hassan and his driver, injuring dozens more,¹² and leaving hundreds homeless. Armed clashes broke out in

⁸ al-Hayat, "Qatla wa jarha bi-ishtibakat fi Tarabulus," Aug. 22, 2012, <<http://alhayat.com/Details/428249>>; Lebanese Center for Research and Consulting, "6 qatla wa 70 jarihan fi Tarabulus," Aug. 22, 2012, <<http://www.center-lrc.com/index.php?s=2&ss=news&cat=2&id=6388>>.

⁹ Lebanese Center for Research and Consulting, "Tarabulus fi qabdat al-qans wa-l-'unf al-madhhabi," Aug. 25, 2012, <<http://www.center-lrc.com/index.php?s=2&ss=news&cat=2&id=6399>>; Swiss Info, "Thalathat qatla fi tajaddud ishtibakat ta'ifiya fi madinat Tarabulus," Aug. 24, 2012, <<http://www.swissinfo.ch/ara/detail/content.html?cid=33383590>>.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Investigate, Prosecute Kidnappers," Aug. 20, 2012, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/20/lebanon-investigate-prosecute-kidnappers>>.

¹¹ Ibid; BBC Arabic, "Mawjat ikhtifat ta'ifiya fi Lubnan 'ala khalfiyat al-awda' fi Suriya," June 11, 2012, <www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2012/06/120611_lebanon_syria_abduction.shtml>.

¹² Monitor, "Tafjir al-Ashrafiya wa istihdaf al-amniyin wa-l-madaniyin 'amal irhabi mudan wa jarima didd al-insaniya," Oct. 23, 2012, <<http://www.pal-monitor.org/Portal/news.php?action=view&id=535>>; Paul Salem, "Lebanon's Fragile Peace

Beirut and Tripoli following the incident that left at least five dead and dozens injured.¹³ Aside from his important role in Lebanese intelligence, al-Hassan had also been close to the March 14 coalition, which opposes the Assad regime and Hezbollah, and to the Hariri family, which leads the Future movement. Only a few months before al-Hassan's assassination, the division he headed had played an important role in exposing an attempt to smuggle explosives from Syria to Lebanon. These events lead to the arrest of former Information Minister Michel Samaha, who is close to the Syrian regime. Samaha was charged with complicity in a smuggling attempt. Al-Hassan's division also played a prominent role in the investigations into the Hariri assassination.¹⁴

Violations of Freedom of Opinion and Expression

Restrictions on freedom of expression in Lebanon increased in 2012, as journalists, bloggers, and artists were targeted by ongoing security harassment and prosecution. Some were physically assaulted by unknown assailants amid the increasing political and sectarian polarization in Lebanon over the Syrian conflict.

On April 9, a Lebanese photographer with the al-Jadid television channel, Ali Shaaban, was shot in the chest and killed when the Syrian border patrol opened fire on the car of the television crew with which he was working close to the Syrian border in northern Lebanon. The official Syrian media claimed that the Syrian forces had first come under fire from armed terrorist groups.¹⁵ On May 15, Suheib Ayoub, a journalist with al-Mukhtar online and a photographer with *al-Nahar*, was attacked by demonstrators in Tripoli while photographing the events. The demonstrators held him for several hours, confiscated his two cameras, and forced him to erase the photos he had taken.¹⁶

Will Hold despite Blow," Oct. 23, 2012, <<http://carnegie-mec.org/2012/10/23/lebanon-s-fragile-peace-will-hold-despite-blow/e4nl>>.

¹³ Arab Organization for Human Rights, "Lubnan: al-munazzama tutalib mukhtalif al-atraf bi-zabt al-nafs," Oct. 24, 2012, <<http://www.aohr.net/?p=2960>>.

¹⁴ Paul Salem, "Lebanon's Fragile Peace Will Hold despite Blow."

¹⁵ Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), "In Lebanon, Cameraman Killed by Syrian Gunfire," Apr. 10, 2012, <<http://cpj.org/2012/04/in-lebanon-cameraman-killed-by-syrian-gunfire.php>>.

¹⁶ SKeyes, "Skayz istankar al-ta'arrud li-l-sahafi Suhayb Ayub fi Tarabulus marratayn," May 17, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/SKeyes-Statements/Lebanon/1531>>.

On May 17, a film crew with *Russia Today* was attacked at an army checkpoint by unknown persons while covering protests in northern Lebanon following the death of Sheikh Ahmed Abd al-Wahed, known for his support of the Syrian revolution, and his colleague Mohammed Murib. Cameraman Omar Khadaj sustained bruising on his face and head as a result of the assault.¹⁷ On May 20, journalists and camera crews with several news outlets were assaulted and threatened by unknown persons as they covered renewed clashes in northern Lebanon between Sunnis and Alawites. The al-Jadid television crew was also attacked on the al-Abda road.¹⁸

On June 2, Afifi Diab, *al-Akhabar*'s correspondent in the Beqaa, was beaten by unknown persons in Shatoura because of an article he wrote entitled, "Ziad al-Homsi: You Are a Traitor." Diab said that he had previously received threats due to his coverage of the al-Homsi case. Al-Homsi was released a week before the assault, after the military appellate court reduced his sentence; he had been imprisoned on charges of dealing with Israel.¹⁹

On June 10, Ghada Francis, a correspondent with *al-Jadid*, was beaten while covering internal elections of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party in Duhour al-Shuweir.²⁰ On June 18, a photographer with *al-Manar*, Khidr Markiz, was assaulted by unknown persons while covering protests by families of Lebanese nationals kidnapped in Syria which were taking place on the road to the Beirut airport.²¹

On June 25, *al-Jadid* channel itself was attacked by five masked men who opened fire in front of the building and threw Molotovs at it, starting a fire in the entrance.²² The previous day, the channel had hosted Sunni Sheikh Ahmed al-Assir, who pledged to defend Sunni interests and fiercely criticized Hezbollah, its secretary-general, and Speaker of the Assembly

¹⁷ Russia Today Arabic, "Fariq Rusiya al-yawm yata'arrad li-l-i'tida' min qibl musallahin majhulin," May 17, 2012, <<http://goo.gl/SMDnQl>>.

¹⁸ Maharat Foundation, "Maharat tastankir al-i'tida' 'ala-l-sahafiyin ithna' qiyamihim bi-taghtiyat al-ihtijajat fi-l-shamal," May 22, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=1060&lang=ar>>.

¹⁹ Maharat Foundation, "Maharat tastankir al-i'tida' 'ala-l-sahafi 'Afif Diyab 'ala khalifiyat 'amalihi al-i'lami," June 4, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=1092&lang=ar>>.

²⁰ Maharat Foundation, "Maharat tastankir al-i'tida' 'ala-l-sahafiya Ghada Fransis ithna' qiyamiha bi-'amaliha al-mihni," June 11, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=1103&lang=ar>>.

²¹ Skeyes, "Musawwir qanat al-manar Khidr Markiz yata'arrad li-l-darb 'ala tariq al-matar," June 19, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/SKeyes-Statements/Lebanon/1721>>.

²² Skeyes, "Skayz yastankir i'tida' musallahin mulaththamin 'ala mabna qanat al-jadid," June 25, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/SKeyes-Statements/Lebanon/174>>.

Nabih Berri.²³ Citizens managed to apprehend one of the assailants, yet local residents subsequently held a sit-in in solidarity with him. While covering the sit-in, a cameraman with Lebanon Television, Mohammed Rahma, was physically and verbally assaulted and his camera confiscated.²⁴

On June 25, military intelligence arrested Jordanian film director Sandra Madi in the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp in Tripoli while she was interviewing a Palestinian youth.²⁵ She was released four hours later, after the investigator threatened to arrest her again if she continued her work in Lebanon.²⁶ Madi is the director of “Nahr al-Barid: Detention Camp,” in which she documented the humanitarian and economic conditions of the camp both before and after its partial destruction in 2007. After the first screening of the film, she stated that she had smuggled her camera equipment into the camp and used hidden cameras to get her footage.

On July 26, police assaulted Mahmoud al-Zayyat, a correspondent with *al-Diyar*, Voice of the People radio, and AFP, and Jamal al-Gharbi, a journalist with *al-Bana* and a correspondent for al-Mayadin channel, while they were filming clashes between citizens and supporters of Sheikh Ahmed al-Asir in front of the Bilal Bin Ribah Mosque in Tyre.²⁷ On July 29, Diya Abu Taam, a correspondent with al-Manar, was beaten and cursed by military intelligence personnel in the Zouq Masbah region of Mt. Lebanon while filming in a coastal area adjacent to a military facility.²⁸ On August 28, an MTV film crew was attacked by unknown persons while filming sectarian clashes in Tripoli.²⁹

On August 30, independent journalist Rami Aysha was detained with two others in southern Beirut by Hezbollah militiamen and held without charge

²³ Maharat Foundation, “Maharat tastankir al-i’tida’ ‘ala qanat al-jadid wa tad’u ila himayat al-mu’assasat al-i’lamiya,” June 26, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=1123&lang=ar>>.

²⁴ Skeyes, “Taqrir Skayz hawl al-intihakat ‘ala-l-saha al-i’lamiya wa-l-thaqafiya fi Lubnan wa Suriya wa Filistin wa-l-Urdun li-shahr Haziran,” July 11, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/a/Files/1820>>.

²⁵ Skeyes, “Mukhabarat al-jaysh ta’aqil al-mukhrija al-Urduniya Sandra Madi fi mukhayyam Nahr al-Barid,” June 25, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/News/Lebanon/1745>>.

²⁶ SKeyes, “al-Mukhrija Sandra Madi tarwi li-Skayz tafasil i’tiqaliha,” June 28, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/News/Lebanon/1759>>.

²⁷ Monitor, “Rasid tastankir al-i’tida’ ‘ala-sahafiyayn Mahmoud al-Zayyat wa Jamal al-Gharbi,” July 30, 2012, <<http://www.pal-monitor.net/news.php?action=view&id=845>>.

²⁸ Maharat Foundation, “Maharat tastankir al-i’tida’ ‘ala-l-sahafi Diya’ Abu Ta’am ‘ala khalifiyat ‘amalihi al-i’lami,” July 29, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=1132&lang=ar>>.

²⁹ Maharat Foundation, “Maharat tastankir al-i’tida’ ‘ala fariq al-am ti fi ithna’ qiyamihim bi-wajibihim al-sahafi,” Aug. 27, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=1269&lang=ar>>.

at the al-Qubba Prison until September 26, when he was released on bail.³⁰ Upon his arrest, Aysha had been brutally beaten before being taken to the military police center in Beirut, where he was beaten again. Aysha had been covering the situation in Syria since the beginning of the uprising and the emergence of the FSA and had published several investigative pieces on weapons smuggling between Lebanon and Syria.³¹

In relation to religious pressures to curb creative freedoms, on May 21, a screening of the film “Maxi Skirt,” by director Joe Bueid, was suspended due to pressure from the Catholic Media Center; the film was not screened until several scenes had been altered or cut.³² A scene from the comedic film “To Baalbek” was also censored by general security following a request from the Internal Security Forces, which considered the scene insulting, as it portrayed a bearded policeman soliciting a bribe from a citizen in exchange for passage through a security checkpoint on the way to the Baalbek fortress.³³ On November 14, the Beirut Appeals Court dropped obscenity charges which had been brought against comedian Edmond Haddad and actress Rawiya al-Shab due to a scene in a play they presented in December 2009.³⁴ Previously, the first-instance court had convicted them and sentenced them both to one month in prison.³⁵

Some political activists and rights advocates also faced legal action due to their expression of opinions or their disclosure of information on prison conditions. On February 8, activist Ali Aqil Khalil was referred to military trial on charges of supplying the media with fabricated information, after he released photos and reports on torture and poor conditions in the Roumieh Prison during a press conference on June 26, 2011, the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The military court sentenced him to two months in prison and a fine of 600,000 Lebanese lira.³⁶ On April 22,

³⁰ Skeyes, “Ikhla’ sabil al-sahafi Rami ‘Isha bi-kafalat milyun lira,” Sep. 26, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/News/Lebanon/2171>>.

³¹ CPJ, “Lebanon Must Free a Journalist Detained without Charge,” Sep. 15, 2012, <<http://cpj.org/2012/09/lebanon-must-free-a-journalist-detained-without-ch.php>>.

³² Maharat Foundation, “Maharat wa marsad al-raqaba yatakhawwafan min takris sultat rijal al-din ‘ala hurriyat al-fikr wa-l-ta’bir,” May 23, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=1076&lang=ar>>.

³³ Skeyes, “al-Amn al-‘amm yahdhif mashhadan min film To Baalbek bi-talab min quwa al-amn al-dakhili,” May 23, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/News/Lebanon/1575>>.

³⁴ Skeyes, “Tabri’ a al-mumaththilayn Idmun Haddad wa Rawiya al-Shabb fi qadiyat al-ikhla’ bi-l-adab al-‘amma,” Nov. 16, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/News/Lebanon/2411>>.

³⁵ Skeyes, “Skayz yastankir al-intihakak al-mutakarrira li-hurriyat al-ra’i wa-l-ta’bir,” Apr. 24, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/SKeyes-Statements/Lebanon/1409>>.

³⁶ Khima Rehabilitation Center (KRC), “T’isam amam al-mahkama al-‘askariya,” Feb. 8, 2012, <<http://www.khiamcenter.org/ar/p.php?lang=ar&aid=301>>; KRC, “Kalimat safa fi

Mahmoud al-Adawi, a member of the Committee to Care for Prisoners and Their Families, appeared before a military court on charges of facilitating an attempted escape from the Roumieh Prison, which he had visited. Al-Adawi was denied an attorney during questioning, and his family was not permitted to visit him before his transfer to the al-Qubba Prison in Tripoli.³⁷ Similarly, it was feared that Saadeddine Shatila, the representative of Alkarama in Lebanon, would be referred to military trial after a military court questioned him on charges of publishing information that defames the army. The charges against Shatila were dropped in February 2012.³⁸

On April 14, an assassination attempt was made against political activist Mustafa Juha, the coordinator for the Lebanese Sovereignty Movement, when unknown assailants opened fire on his car on the al-Damour highway, 20 km south of the capital; five bullets hit his car. Juha believes that the assassination attempt was politically motivated, as it came only a short time after the 20th anniversary of the assassination of his father, who was known for his anti-Syrian and anti-Iranian writings. At the time of the assassination attempt, Juha was in the midst of reprinting two of his father's books in memory of his death, the perpetrators of which were never identified despite investigations into the incident.³⁹ Following the assassination attempt, Juha requested asylum in Sweden.⁴⁰

On April 20, the military police arrested activists Khodor Salameh and Ali Fakhri after they drew a 'Permanent Revolution' graffiti in Bechara Al-Khoury Square in Beirut. The two activists were released late the following evening after a sit-in was held in solidarity with them. Those holding the sit-in were beaten and cursed by security forces, who also injured two photographers and broke their cameras.⁴¹

majlis huquq al-insan al-dawriya 19,"

<<http://www.khiamcenter.org/ar/p.php?lang=ar&aid=310>>.

³⁷ Alkarama, "Lebanon: Arbitrarily Detained Mahmoud Al Adawi at High Risk of Torture," Apr. 25, 2012,

<http://en.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=909:lebanon-arbitrarily-detained-mahmoud-al-adawi-at-high-risk-of-torture-&catid=26:communiqu&Itemid=131>.

³⁸ Alkarama, "Case against Alkarama Representative Dropped," Feb. 29, 2012,

<http://en.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=865:lebanon-case-against-alkarama-representative-dropped-&catid=26:communiqu&Itemid=131>.

³⁹ Maharat Foundation, "Mu'assasat maharat tastankir hadithat al-ta'arrud li-l-nashit al-siyasi Juha," Apr. 17, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=962&lang=ar>>.

⁴⁰ Skeyes, "al-Sahafi Mustafa Juha yatlub al-luju' ila al-Swid ba'd muhawalat ightiyalihi," May 15, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/News/Lebanon/1512>>.

⁴¹ Maharat Foundation, "Maharat tastankir tawqif al-nashitayn Khidr Salama wa 'Ali Fakhri," Apr. 21, 2012, <<http://maharatfoundation.org/?p=973&lang=ar>>.

On June 15, the website of the Palestinian Human Rights Foundation (Monitor) was hacked, bringing down some of its pages.⁴² Abdulaziz Tarakji, the chair of the association's board of directors, was also threatened and slandered via phone and email and subjected to an attempted abduction and assault near a security office in Tyre. The Monitor accused employees with the Palestinian embassy in Beirut of being responsible for these attacks.⁴³

Status of Prisoners and Detainees

Reports documented dismal prison conditions in Lebanon, including the spread of disease due to poor ventilation, and complaints continued to surface of insufficient health services, including access to doctors and medicine. For instance, the Roumieh Prison has only one doctor in the prison, which holds 4,000 inmates,⁴⁴ and since 2007 more than 50 of its prisoners have died due to inadequate healthcare. Prisons are also overcrowded due to slow trials and arbitrary provisional detention, with 65 percent of prisoners being held without trial.⁴⁵

On June 19, 14 Islamists were released after spending five years in prison without trial; they were among some 140 Islamists detained following fighting in the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp between the Lebanese army and the Fath al-Islam organization in 2008.⁴⁶

Previously, two prisoners had died and 45 injured on April 6, 2011 when Internal Security Forces and the army stormed Roumieh Prison after four

⁴² Skeyes, "Qarsanat al-mawqa' al-ilaktruni li-l-jam'iya al-Filistiniya li-huquq al-insan," June 18, 2012, <<http://www.skeyesmedia.org/ar/News/Lebanon/1715>>.

⁴³ Al-Fajer TV, "al-Markaz al-'Arabi al-Urubi yu'arrib 'an qalaqih wa yutalib al-hukuma al-Lubnaniya bi-tawfir al-himaya li-nushata' huquq al-insan," Mar. 17, 2012, <<http://www.alfajertv.com/news/36538.html>>; Monitor, "Rasid tudin al-tahdid bi-l-qatl li-ra'isiha fi Lubnan," July 11, 2012, <<http://www.pal-monitor.net/news.php?action=view&id=823>>; Monitor, "Rasid tudin al-i'tida' wa muhawalat khatf ra'is majlis idaratiha fi Lubnan," July 20, 2012, <<http://www.pal-monitor.net/news.php?action=view&id=829>>.

⁴⁴ KRC, "Taqrir warshat al-'amal hawl al-sujun al-Lubnaniya," Mar. 23, 2012, <<http://www.khiamcenter.org/ar/p.php?lang=ar&aid=314>>.

⁴⁵ KRC, "Kitab maftuh ila ashab al-ma'ali," Feb. 8, 2012, <<http://www.khiamcenter.org/ar/p.php?lang=ar&aid=300>>.

⁴⁶ Assafir, "al-Ifraj 'an 14 min al-mawqufin al-Islamiyin al-yawm," June 19, 2012, <<http://www.assafir.com/Article.aspx?EditionId=2179&ChannelId=52191&ArticleId=1750>>; Arab News, "Lajnat muhami al-difa' 'an al-mawqufin al-Islamiyin yu'linun itlaq sarah 14 shabb yawm al-thulatha'," July 9, 2012, <<http://www.arabnews.com.au/permalink/11064.html>>.

days of riots by prisoners demanding improved conditions and shorter pretrial detention periods.⁴⁷

Status of Refugees and Migrant Workers in Lebanon

The condition of Palestinian refugees did not improve in 2012. Strict security at the entrances to the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp remained in place and continued to be a source of tension, at times leading to violent clashes with army forces that resulted in a number of casualties. Increased repression was also reported against non-Palestinian refugees and migrants, including attacks on Egyptian and Syrian workers and Sudanese refugees.

For more than five years, the army has imposed severe restrictions on the movements of residents of Palestinian refugee camps and visitors to them, following clashes between Fath al-Islam and the Lebanese army on May 20, 2007. Residents of the camp must show a blue identity card and permit to enter the camp. Further, they are not permitted to undertake reconstruction to buildings in the camp themselves, which has severely hindered their efforts to rebuild.⁴⁸ The strict security measures have worsened the living conditions of camp residents and led them to increasingly resort to violence. On June 15, the army and camp residents clashed after the army attempted to detain a Palestinian riding a motorbike without legal papers. Ahmed al-Qassem, age 18, was killed, several people were injured, and a number of young camp residents were arrested.⁴⁹ Three days later, the army again opened fire during unrest following al-Qassem's funeral procession, which led to the death of another Palestinian, Fouad Mohi al-Din al-Loubani.⁵⁰

On April 29, clashes erupted between dozens of Egyptian workers and police, who used force to disperse the workers, who had been demonstrating in front of the Egyptian embassy in protest of a Lebanese law requiring migrant workers to have a local sponsor to obtain residency and a work

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Prison Deaths, Injuries Need Independent Investigation," Apr. 8, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/08/lebanon-prison-deaths-injuries-need-independent-investigation>>.

⁴⁸ Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness), "Qira'a qanuniya: baqa' al-hala al-'askariya fi mukhayyam Nahr al-Barid ijra' ghayr dusturi," June 28, 2012, <<http://www.pahrw.org/ar/default.asp?menuId=9&contentId=464>>.

⁴⁹ Witness, "Ilgha' al-hala al-'askariya al-mafruda 'ala mukhayyam Nahr al-Barid wa ansanat al-ijra'at al-amniya kafil bi-naz' fatil al-azma," June 18, 2012, <<http://www.pahrw.org/ar/default.asp?menuId=9&contentId=460>>.

⁵⁰ Amnesty International, "Lebanon: Independent Investigation Urged into Killings at Palestinian Camp," June 21, 2012, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/lebanon-independent-investigation-urged-killings-palestinian-camp-2012-06-21>>.

permit. Twenty people were injured in the clashes and 19 Egyptian workers were arrested. After intimating that seven of them would be referred to a military court on charges of attempting to kill military personnel,⁵¹ the authorities released them on May 2.⁵²

On June 11, 21 Sudanese refugees staged a hunger strike in front of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Beirut demanding a swifter resettlement process due to the hardships they face in Lebanon, including expulsion from various cities, arbitrary detention, and illegal repatriation. In addition, they face difficulty finding adequately paid work and their children cannot attend school, since they lack legal residency permits. Lebanon has not ratified the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and thus treats refugees as illegal immigrants.⁵³

On October 7, the army attacked 72 migrant workers from Syria, Egypt, and Sudan, storming their living quarters in Beirut and beating them brutally,⁵⁴ after receiving a complaint from neighbors accusing them of harassing girls and bothering local residents.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Al-Jazeera, "Jarha fi ihtijaj Misriyin bi-Lubnan," Apr. 29, 2012, <<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/15950787-60fc-4a3c-aab6-958a1c046926>>; video of protests at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zt0NxYag2xE>>.

⁵² Al-Wafd, "al-Ifraj 'an sab' at Misriyin muhalin li-l-qada' al-'askari fi Lubnan," May 2, 2012, <<http://www.alwafd.org/%27D1J%276%29/204764>>; ONTV video, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0TYSsINMUc>>.

⁵³ Anti-Racism Movement, petition to the UNHCR, June 18, 2012, <<http://www.antiracismmovement.com/2012/06/unhcr.htm>>; Middle East Online, "al-Tamyiz al-'unsuri yunakkil bi-l-laji' in al-Sudaniyin fi Lubnan," June 19, 2012, <<http://www.middle-east-online.com/?id=133499>>.

⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Investigate and Punish Army Attacks on Migrants," Oct. 10, 2012, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/10/10/lebanon-investigate-and-punish-army-attacks-migrants>>.

⁵⁵ Alkarama, "Lebanon: Human Rights Organizations Demand the Lebanese Authorities to Put an End to Security Agencies' Violations against Foreigners," Oct. 18, 2012, <http://en.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1013:lebanon-human-rights-organizations-demand-the-lebanese-authorities-to-put-an-end-to-security-agencies-violations-against-foreigners-&catid=26:communiqu&Itemid=131>.

