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AMNESTY
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**THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S
HUMAN RIGHTS**

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remained very low. However, in September Latvia agreed to relocate 531 asylum-seekers from other European countries. Concerns remained about the excessive use of detention for asylum-seekers and the non-suspensive effect of appeals against negative decisions under the accelerated asylum procedure. The latter increased the risk of individuals being returned to countries where they could face serious human rights abuses.

LEBANON

Lebanese Republic

Head of state: vacant since May 2014, when Michel Suleiman's term ended

Head of government: Tammam Salam

Security forces used excessive force to disperse some demonstrations and to quell a protest by prisoners. Women continued to be discriminated against in law and in practice. Migrant workers faced exploitation and abuse. The authorities took no steps to investigate the fate of thousands of people who disappeared or went missing during the civil war of 1975 to 1990. Palestinian refugees long-resident in Lebanon continued to suffer discrimination. Lebanon hosted over 1.2 million refugees from Syria but closed its border and enforced new entry requirements from January, and barred the entry of Palestinians fleeing from Syria. Courts handed down at least 28 death sentences; there were no executions.

BACKGROUND

Political disagreements between the main political parties prevented the election of a successor to President Suleiman, who left office in May 2014. In June 2015, thousands of people took to the streets of the capital, Beirut, to protest against the government's failure to provide basic services amid an escalating waste-management crisis, accusing the authorities of corruption and a lack of accountability and transparency.

The armed conflict in Syria had huge

repercussions for Lebanon. Cross-border firing and the participation of Hizbullah fighters in the conflict in support of the Syrian government threatened Lebanon's security. Some 1.2 million Syrians had claimed refugee status in Lebanon by the end of the year. In January, Lebanon ended its open-border policy, preventing refugees without entry visas from entering the country.

In August, fighting between rival factions at Ain el-Helweh, Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp, caused three deaths. Security conditions in Tripoli remained fragile due to tensions related to the Syrian conflict. In Syria, the armed group Islamic State (IS) continued to hold Lebanese soldiers and members of security forces whom they abducted in 2014, while Jabhat al-Nusra freed the ones it held.

EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

There were several incidents of excessive use of force, particularly by the Internal Security Forces (ISF). In August, ISF officers and army soldiers used excessive force against people demonstrating in Beirut as part of the "You Stink" protests against the lack of rubbish clearance and other public services. Officers fired live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas canisters and water cannon, reportedly injuring over 300 people. The Minister for the Interior said eight members of the ISF would face disciplinary action over the incident.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

In June, five officers were charged with using violence against prisoners at Roumieh Prison after two videos were posted on social media showing ISF officers beating inmates.

Despite ratifying the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture in 2000, by the end of the year Lebanon had yet to establish a national monitoring body on torture, as the Optional Protocol requires.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Lebanon hosted around 300,000 Palestinian refugees and 1.2 million Syrian refugees. Palestinian refugees, many of whom entered

Lebanon decades ago, remained subject to discriminatory laws and regulations that deny them the right to inherit property or access free public education and prevent them from working in 20 professions. At least 3,000 Palestinians who did not hold official identity documents also faced restrictions in registering births, marriages and deaths.

In January the government overturned its open-border policy and began restricting entry for Syrian refugees. Lebanon also continued to bar the entry of Palestinians fleeing the Syrian conflict. In May, Lebanon instructed UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, to provisionally suspend all new registrations of Syrian refugees. Refugees from Syria who entered Lebanon before January faced problems in renewing residency permits. Those who could not afford to renew annual residency permits, which they required to remain in Lebanon legally, became irregular in status and liable to arrest, detention and deportation.

The international community failed to provide adequate support to help Lebanon cope with the Syrian refugee crisis. Humanitarian assistance remained underfunded and there were few resettlement places offered by third countries to the most vulnerable refugees.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women continued to face discrimination in law and in practice, particularly in relation to family matters including divorce, child custody and inheritance. Lebanese women married to foreign nationals remain barred from passing on their nationality to their children. The same restriction did not apply to Lebanese men married to foreign nationals. The authorities failed to criminalize marital rape or gender-based violence outside the home.

MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

Migrant workers were excluded from the protections provided under national labour laws, exposing them to exploitation and abuse by employers. Migrant domestic workers,

predominantly women, were especially vulnerable as they were employed under the *kafala* sponsorship system that ties the worker to their employer. In January, the Minister for Labour refused to recognize the trade union formed by migrant workers.

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

Special Tribunal for Lebanon

The Netherlands-based Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) continued to try five men in their absence for alleged complicity in the killing of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and others in a car bombing in Beirut in 2005. In September, the STL acquitted Lebanese journalist Karma Khayat and her employer Al Jadeed TV of obstructing justice but convicted her of contempt of court for ignoring a court order to remove information related to confidential witnesses, sentencing her to a fine of €10,000.

IMPUNITY

The fate of thousands of people who were abducted, forcibly disappeared or who went missing during and after the civil war of 1975-1990 remained undisclosed. The authorities failed to establish an independent national body to investigate the fate of those disappeared and missing.

DEATH PENALTY

Courts imposed at least 28 death sentences for murder and terrorism-related crimes, including some in cases where the defendants were tried in their absence. No executions have been carried out since 2004.

LESOTHO

Kingdom of Lesotho

Head of state : King Letsie III

Head of government: Pakalitha Mosisili (replaced Thomas Motsoahae Thabane in March)

Political instability persisted following an attempted coup in 2014. Tension within the