

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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court, whose judges include serving military officers, are neither independent nor impartial. Some defendants alleged that they had been tortured or otherwise ill-treated in pre-trial detention in order to force them to "confess", but the courts generally failed adequately to investigate such allegations or to reject contested "confessions".

- Fayez Karam, a senior official of the Free Patriotic Movement political party, was convicted on 3 September of providing information to Mossad (Israel's intelligence agency) for payment and sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour. He told the military court that convicted him that he had been tortured by officials of the Internal Security Forces (ISF) while detained following his arrest in August 2010 and forced to make a "confession" that he later retracted. He lodged an appeal.
- Sheikh Hassan Mchaymech, a Shi'a cleric, was detained on 11 October when he was handed over to the ISF by Syrian security officials. He had been detained and reportedly tortured in Syria because he was suspected of supplying information to Mossad. After his release he was handed over to the Lebanese authorities. He was held incommunicado by the Lebanese authorities, first at an ISF detention prison in Beirut, then in Roumieh Prison until early December when his family were allowed to visit him for the first time.

Torture and other ill-treatment

Cases of torture and other ill-treatment by the judicial police were reported.

The government had still not established an independent monitoring body to visit prisons and detention centres, breaching a requirement of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, which Lebanon ratified in 2008.

- In April, four inmates of Roumieh Prison in Beirut died in unclear circumstances when security forces quelled a protest by detainees against overcrowding and prolonged pre-trial detention. The Interior Minister appointed the head of the ISF to conduct an inquiry, but its outcome was not made public.

Human rights defenders

Several human rights activists were harassed for reporting alleged human rights violations by the security forces and political parties.

- Saadeddine Shatila, a human rights activist working for the NGO Alkarama, was accused of "publishing information harmful to the reputation of the Lebanese Military" after he submitted information to the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and others about cases of alleged torture. The Military Investigating Judge was still considering the case at the end of the year.
- Marie Daunay and Wadih Al-Asmar, staff members of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights, were questioned by the General Prosecutor on 22 March after the Amal political party, headed by Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri, filed a criminal complaint against the organization because it had reported allegations of torture by people affiliated to Amal. The case was pending at the end of the year.

Discrimination – Palestinian refugees

Some 300,000 Palestinian refugees, long-term residents of Lebanon, remained subject to discrimination and were prevented from accessing a range of rights available to Lebanese citizens. They were not permitted to work in certain professions or inherit property. An unknown number of Palestinian refugees continued to reside in Lebanon without an official ID card, leaving them with even fewer rights. They remained, for example, unable to register marriages, births and deaths.

Over 1,400 Palestinian refugees who fled fighting in Nahr al-Bared camp near Tripoli in the north of Lebanon in 2007 returned to the camp in 2011, but over 25,000 remained displaced.

Women's rights

Women continued to be discriminated against in law and practice, and to face gender-based violence, including from male relatives. However, in August the government repealed Article 562 of the Penal Code, which had allowed a person convicted of killing or injuring relatives to receive a reduction in sentence if the crime was held to have been committed to uphold family "honour". The same month, the Penal Code was amended to define the crime of trafficking of persons and to prescribe penalties for traffickers.

Lebanese women remained unable to pass their nationality on to their husbands and children, but in September the labour laws were reformed to remove employment restrictions for non-Lebanese spouses and children of Lebanese women. The impact of these reforms was not clear