

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	356
Land:	Libanon
Kilde:	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Titel:	Availability of state protection for people who receive death threats; steps required to file a complaint.
Udgivet:	22. januar 2010
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	24. februar 2010

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Title	Lebanon: Availability of state protection for people who receive death threats; steps required to file a complaint
Publisher	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Country	Lebanon
Publication Date	22 January 2010
Citation / Document Symbol	LBN103381.E
Cite as	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, <i>Lebanon: Availability of state protection for people who receive death threats; steps required to file a complaint</i> , 22 January 2010, LBN103381.E, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b7cee82c.html [accessed 22 February 2010]

Immigration and
Refugee Board of CanadaCommission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Lebanon: Availability of state protection for people who receive death threats; steps required to file a complaint

Information about the availability of state protection for people who receive death threats in Lebanon and the steps required to file a complaint was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources indicate that making death threats is a crime in Lebanon (Canada 22 Jan. 2010; CLDH 20 Jan. 2010; HRW 15 Jan. 2010; *The Daily Star* 17 Jan. 2007). In 20 January 2010 correspondence with the Research Directorate, the President of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (*Centre Libanais des droits humains*, CLDH), a human rights organization which fights the practices of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances in Lebanon, stated that under Articles 573 to 578 of the Lebanese Criminal Code, death threats constitute criminal offences that are punished by imprisonment; prison sentences vary in duration according to the severity of the threat. In 22 January 2010 correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Canadian Embassy in Beirut indicated that according to Articles 574 and 575 of the Criminal Code, punishment of a threat to commit a felony is one to three years imprisonment if made through a letter or a third party and three months to two years imprisonment if made verbally. In January 2007, the Beirut newspaper *The Daily Star* reported on a case in which the investigating magistrate requested that a woman be imprisoned for three years for threatening to kill her father; evidence allegedly included a written letter containing death threats (17 Jan. 2007).

According to the President of CLDH, a person who has received death threats can lodge a complaint against the perpetrator at a police station within 24 hours of receiving the threats; it is also possible to lodge a complaint against an unidentified person if the threats were anonymous (20 Jan. 2010). The police provide a statement to the prosecutors, who decide whether or not to transfer the case to an investigating magistrate (CLDH 20 Jan. 2010). The President of CLDH noted that if more than 24 hours passes after the threats are received, the victim must file the complaint directly with the prosecutor's office (*ibid.*). The Official at the Canadian Embassy similarly stated that a person can file a complaint with the police immediately upon receipt of the threats, or, alternatively, with the Attorney General (Canada 22 Jan. 2010). According to the Official, the Attorney General may order the detention of the alleged perpetrators and transfer them to face charges before an investigative judge or to stand trial in a criminal court (*ibid.*).

Without providing details, the Official stated that the police may take "preventive actions" depending on the seriousness of the threats (*ibid.*). In correspondence with the Research Directorate on 15 January 2010, the senior researcher and director of the Beirut office of Human Rights Watch (HRW) corroborated that the Lebanese police have been able to provide some protection to victims of death threats on an ad hoc basis, particularly for cases in which the person who received the threats is famous (HRW 15 Jan. 2010). He reported that known journalists have been able to receive limited police escort (*ibid.*). However, he also stated that he was not sure if the police would provide protection when the person receiving the threats is not famous (*ibid.*). Without providing details, the President of CLDH stated that the Lebanese police generally do not provide "effective protection means" to people who receive death

threats (CLDH 20 Jan. 2010). This information could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Canada. 22 January 2010. Embassy of Canada in Beirut. Correspondence with a counsellor in the visa section.

Centre Libanais des droits humains (CLDH). 20 January 2010. Correspondence with the President.

The Daily Star [Beirut]. 17 January 2007. "Local Man Accuses Daughter of Trying to Kill Him." (Factiva)

Human Rights Watch (HRW). 15 January 2010. Correspondence with the senior researcher and director of the Beirut office.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to reach representatives at the Alkarama for Human Rights and officials at the Lebanese Internal Security Forces, Lebanese Ministry of Justice, and the Lebanese Ministry of Internal Affairs were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response. An official at the Embassy of Lebanon in Ottawa was unable to provide information.

Internet sites, including: Al Bawaba, Amnesty International (AI), European Country of Origin Network (ecoi.net), Hieros Gamos, International Crisis Group, JuriGlobe, Jurist, Law Library of Congress, Lebanese Laws, Legislationline, Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), *The Mideast Monitor*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Refworld, Tripoli Bar Association.

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