



Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	294
Land:	Libanon
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	"Overview - covering events from January - December 2005"
Udgivet:	29. maj 2006
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	13. juni 2006

[Previous](#) - [Home](#)

Amnesty International

LEBANON

LEBANON REPUBLIC

Head of state: Emile Lahoud

Head of government: Fouad Siniora (replaced 'Najib Mikati in June, who replaced 'Umar Karami in April)

Death penalty: retentionist

International Criminal Court: not signed

UN Women's Convention: ratified with reservations

Optional Protocol to UN Women's Convention: not signed

Overview - Covering events from January - December 2005

[Assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri](#) : [UN investigation](#) : [Other politically motivated killings](#) : ['Disappearances'](#) : [Arrests and releases](#) : [Conditions in prisons and detention centres](#) : [Human rights defenders](#) : [Palestinian refugees](#) : [Discrimination and violence against women](#) : [AI country visits](#)

Former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and more than 30 other people were killed in bomb attacks against civilians. A UN inquiry suggested that senior Lebanese and Syrian officials were implicated in the attack on Rafiq al-Hariri. Several people were arrested for their alleged connections with a banned political party. Tens of prisoners, including some sentenced after unfair trials in previous years, were freed under an amnesty law in July. Palestinian refugees resident in Lebanon continued to face discrimination and to be denied access to adequate housing and certain categories of employment. The law continued to discriminate against women. Protection against violence in the home was inadequate; women migrants employed as domestic workers were particularly at risk of abuse. Mass graves were exhumed in November and December.

Assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri

Former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and 22 others were killed by a car bomb in Beirut on 14 February.

Rafiq al-Hariri's murder sparked popular protests and the government resigned after losing a confidence vote in parliament in February. Subsequent elections, held between 29 May and 19 June, were won by the Future Movement Block, led by Saad al-Hariri, son of the assassinated former Prime Minister.

Speculation that the Syrian authorities were involved in the assassination prompted new demands from within Lebanon and internationally for Syria to withdraw its military forces from Lebanon, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1559 of September 2004. In May the UN confirmed that Syria had withdrawn its forces from Lebanon.

UN investigation

The UN Security Council sent a fact-finding team, with the agreement of the Lebanese government, to investigate the killings. The team's findings led the UN Security Council to establish the UN International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIIC).

Four former heads of Lebanese intelligence and security services – General 'Ali al-Hajj (Internal Security Forces), General Raymond Azar (Military Intelligence), Brigadier General Jamil al-Sayyed (Sûreté Générale) and Mustafa Hamdan (Presidential Guard) – were arrested on 30 August and remained in detention at the end of the year. An interim report by UNIIIC published in October implicated senior officials of both the Lebanese and Syrian security services in the assassination and a fifth former Lebanese security official, Ghassan Tufeili, was arrested in November after he was named in the report. On 15 December, a second UNIIIC report requested that Syria detain several suspects. It also stated that Syria had hindered the investigation and that further investigation was necessary. On 15 December the UN Security Council endorsed a six-month extension of the investigation, but did not vote on the Lebanese authorities' request to establish an international court to try suspects in the case.

Other politically motivated killings

Rafiq al-Hariri's assassination was followed by 13 other bombings of civilian targets in which 12 people were killed and at least 100 injured. Among those targeted were critics of Syria's military presence in Lebanon.

- Samir Qasir, an academic, journalist and well-known critic of human rights abuses by the Lebanese and Syrian governments, was killed by a car bomb on
- 2 June in Beirut.
- George Hawi, former leader of the Lebanese Communist Party, was killed by a car bomb in Beirut on 21 June.

- Gibran Tueni, a journalist and politician well known for his criticism of Syrian interference in Lebanon, was killed with two others in a car bomb explosion in Beirut on 12 December.

In November, six Lebanese men were reported to have been charged with mounting attacks at the behest of a Syrian intelligence officer who had been based in Beirut. They had not been brought to trial by the end of 2005.

Earlier, tens of Syrian nationals working in Lebanon were reported to have been killed and others injured in attacks by Lebanese, apparently in reaction to Rafiq al-Hariri's assassination; it was not clear whether there was an investigation or any prosecutions.

'Disappearances'

A new joint Syrian-Lebanese committee was established in May to investigate the fate of more than 600 Lebanese who "disappeared" during and after the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war, apparently while in the custody of Syrian forces. The findings of two previous Lebanese investigations were never fully disclosed and no perpetrators were ever prosecuted. Concerns about the new committee's independence and powers suggested that it would be no more effective.

A mass grave inside the Lebanese Ministry of Defence compound at al-Yarze, reportedly containing 20 bodies, was discovered in November. Another mass grave, reportedly containing 28 bodies, was exhumed in December at 'Anjar, in the Beqa' Valley, near the former Syrian military intelligence headquarters in Lebanon. During and after the Lebanese civil war, mass human rights abuses were committed with impunity. Abuses including killings of civilians; abductions and "disappearances" of Lebanese, Palestinian, and foreign nationals; and arbitrary detentions were carried out by various armed militias and Syrian and Israeli government forces. In 1992 the Lebanese government stated that a total of 17,415 people "disappeared" during the 1975-1990 civil war, but no criminal investigations or prosecutions had been initiated by the end of 2005.

Arrests and releases

Samir Gea'gea and Jirjis al-Khouri, respectively the leader and a member of the Lebanese Forces, were freed under an amnesty law approved by parliament in July. Both were serving life sentences, imposed after unfair trials, for their alleged involvement in politically motivated killings. They had been held in solitary confinement since 1994 at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre in Beirut.

The amnesty law also resulted in the release of at least 25 men detained for several years following violent clashes with Lebanese army troops in 2000 in the northern Dhinniyeh area. They had been charged with involvement in "terrorism" and other security offences. At the time of their release they were on trial before the Justice Council in proceedings that did not meet international standards. Some said they had been tortured and coerced into making false confessions.

Ten detainees from Majdel 'Anjar arrested in September 2004 were also released in the amnesty. Several of the men, who had not been charged or tried, were reported to have been tortured.

The authorities arrested 15 people in September for their alleged involvement with Hizb al-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party). All were released. Three — Sherif al-Halaq, Muhammad al-Tayesh and Bassam al-Munla — were convicted of membership of a banned organization and were awaiting sentencing at the end of the year.

Conditions in prisons and detention centres

The authorities continued to refuse the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) unfettered access to all prisons despite a presidential decree in 2002 authorizing such access for the ICRC. There was particular concern about lack of ICRC access to centres operated by the Ministry of Defence where detainees have been tortured and ill-treated.

Human rights defenders

Many human rights groups operated freely but some human rights defenders were harassed or faced threats to their lives.

- Muhamad Mugarby, a lawyer and human rights defender, was detained for 10 hours in February. He was later charged with "slander of the military establishment" for criticizing Lebanon's military court system in a speech to the Mashrek Committee of the European Parliament in November 2003. He was due to appear before the Military Court in Beirut in January 2006.

Palestinian refugees

According to the UN, some 400,000 Palestinian refugees were resident in Lebanon. They remained subject to wide-ranging restrictions on access to housing, work and rights at work despite the Minister of Labour's

decision in June to allow Palestinian refugees to work in some sectors that had previously been barred to them by law. However, Palestinian refugees continued to be excluded from the medical, legal and other professions regulated by professional syndicates.

Discrimination and violence against women

Women continued to be discriminated against and inadequately protected from violence in the family. Discriminatory practices were permitted under personal status laws, nationality laws and laws contained in the Penal Code relating to violence in the family.

In July, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Lebanon withdraw its reservations to Articles 9 and 16 of the UN Women's Convention concerning nationality and marriage rights and address inequalities which allow children to obtain Lebanese nationality only through their father and permit only men to divorce their spouse.

Women migrants employed as domestic workers faced multiple discrimination on grounds of their nationality, gender and economic and legal status. Their contracts effectively restricted exercise of their rights to freedom of movement and association by forbidding them from changing employers. They also faced exploitation and abuse by employers, including excessive hours of work and non-payment of wages. Hundreds were reported to have suffered physical and sexual abuse at the hands of employers.

The UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons drew attention to the plight of migrant domestic workers during a visit to Lebanon in September, stating that they were denied basic human rights and were inadequately protected by law. The Minister of Labour said new legislation to improve conditions for migrant workers would be proposed by October 2005. However, no progress appeared to have been made on this by the end of the year.

AI country visits

AI delegates visited Lebanon several times during 2005.

Lebanon
Archive information

Lebanon: A human rights agenda for the parliamentary elections
(AI Index: MDE 18/005/2005).

[Previous](#) - [Home](#)

Amnesty International

© AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL