



## The Continued Restrictions on Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Amid the Covid-19 Crisis

### “Summary of the Situation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon”

15 April 2020 - Beirut

In light of the Lebanese government declaring a state of medical emergency and general mobilization to combat the spread of Covid-19 for the fifth consecutive week, and with the increase of discriminatory speeches made by some Lebanese municipalities against Syrian refugees and widespread security across the regions, Lebanese authorities are still placing discriminatory restrictions on Syrian Refugees and Access Center for Human Rights has been receiving complaints regarding discriminatory practices, notably restricting the freedom of movement of Syrian refugees exclusively, given the incapability of Lebanese authorities in effectively regulating some municipalities that are politically affiliated to parties opposing the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

#### Notable cases recorded during the fourth and fifth week:

“Access” Center recorded an assault incident on three Syrian refugees that took place within the municipality of Zahle where a group of Lebanese army members detained three refugees, forced them to ride in a military vehicle with them and took them to a joint checkpoint for the Lebanese army and security forces in Zahle Manara Square where the officer ordered them to “do as required” to the three refugees. Thus, the army members took them a few meters away and beat them, causing them serious wounds.

It is worth noting that the men hold valid residencies and permission from the municipality required for “Syrians exclusively” who wish to move across cities or leave the jurisdiction of the municipality. Moreover, the men respected the conditions of prevention required of all residents for public safety.

“Access” Center recorded discriminatory practices in a municipality in the Bekaa region, committed by municipalities and security forces against refugees residing in 10 camps in the Bekaa region, where all roads leading to these 10 camps were closed, leaving only one road open and placing a security checkpoint forbidding refugees from leaving the camp. On that account, the municipality is harshly and degradingly restricting the movement of refugees without even allowing them to





leave to purchase basic living necessities and is requiring them “exclusively” to obtain a permission from the municipalities, which are not easily accessible given the checkpoints that prevent them from moving.

In addition, ACHR registered in other areas 9 camps that are being exposed to regular raids by various security authorities for random inspections requirement about official papers, and conduct a census of the camp individuals and whether they have a shortage or an increase in the number of individuals. It even escalates to these authorities hitting the head of the family, although residents of the camp are fully compliant with the quarantine despite the challenges imposed by the municipalities.

Access Center for Human Rights had issued a statement requesting the Lebanese government to take some measures to limit discriminatory practices against refugees. Following these incidents, Access Center for Human Rights condemns these incidents and considers them blatant human rights violations and holds the Lebanese authorities fully responsible for any attack that might take place amid the Covid-19 crisis unless the Lebanese authorities issue a clear statement regarding security forces and municipalities refraining from any discriminatory practices against refugees.

We also condemn the abuse of power of some “members” of the army and their use of excessive and unlawful force as they harm the reputation of the military that is carrying out its duties. We also stress on the obligation of the Lebanese army and the Lebanese agencies to ensure the protection of all residents of Lebanon, including Syrian refugees. The Access Center for Human Rights calls for an immediate investigation and for the necessary measures to be taken against the members that abuse their power against Syrian refugees.

Furthermore, we denounce the discriminatory measures and ask the Lebanese authorities to allow Syrian refugees to carry out their daily and necessary acts, similarly to the Lebanese citizens, without any restrictive conditions. (Such as obtaining a permission from the municipality despite the absence of such a requirement for the Lebanese.) We assert the obligations of the Lebanese authorities in respecting the Lebanese constitution and international laws that protect mobility rights and that prohibit restrictions of this right on a discriminatory basis according to race or nationality, even during emergency situations.

*Note: All information related to the identity and whereabouts of the victims has been removed for their safety in order to prevent increased pressure on them after this summary*

