

Raids and persecution threaten Syrian refugees' lives in Lebanon

Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR) regularly reviews the latest development in Syrian refugees' human rights conditions in Lebanon. ACHR's weekly news aims to inform public opinion on the situation of human rights in the country and make the information accessible to Civil Society organizations, donor entities, and decision-makers. These bulletins are followed by monthly reports, regularly published on ACHR's website.

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Refugee-hosting states have a first obligation to protect refugees. They are bound by the internal human rights law to take the necessary measures to provide refugees with their needs so they can lead decent life. However, **the Lebanese government is still ongoing with its pressuring policies against Syrian refugees on its land, despite the accumulated recommendations from the Human Rights Council** after Lebanon's UPR, as well as recommendations from international organizations and donor entities to stop all sorts of pressures on refugees. The governmental measures in Lebanon towards refugees have no serious intentions of addressing the issues refugees suffer from.

The first step in guaranteeing Syrian refugees' protection in Lebanon is ensuring their entry to the country and respecting fundamental human rights, including their right not to be deported to a place threatening their lives and safety. However, **refugees still face multiple dangers, including arbitrary security raids on refugee camps, internet routers, and device confiscation.** According to what ACHR monitored, on the 21st of January, a Lebanese Army intelligence unit raided camp number 155 in Dalhamiye – Beqaa and confiscated all internet routers and devices.

In a [previous report](#), ACHR monitored many factors that hinder refugees' access to information and internet services in Lebanese refugee camps, which can clarify any decision they wish to take, most notably regarding the voluntary return, as the Lebanese Army intelligence forbade the installation of internet networks in camps, either after raids they conducted or through peaceful communication.

Also, in the past week, **the Lebanese authorities forbade the entry of humanitarian aid to refugee camps in the Beqaa**, as the Security authorities have reverted to requiring security permits and approval from the Lebanese Army and State Security for humanitarian assistance to enter refugee camps, within systematic measures to pressure organizations and associations working in refugee relief in the country, through intensified threats and persecution via the Lebanese government, which sometimes leads to arbitrary arrest and torture.

Earlier, in a research paper published by ACHR, **the center documented the pressures that the Lebanese authority exerts on civil society organizations working with Syrian refugees in Lebanon**, as the [research paper](#) shows the primary role played by NGOs in responding to the refugee crisis in Lebanon which began to worsen in 2012, as well as the changes that the civil society witnessed as a result of this crisis.

In a context related to pressures exerted on Syrian refugees in Lebanon, **the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reduced the number of Syrian refugee families benefiting from aid** for reasons linked to the "significant scarcity in funding its budget set for this year and the lack of resources."

UNHCR spokeswoman in Lebanon "Dalal Harb" told Al-Arabay Al-Jadeed that "as a result of the annual session conducted by the UNHCR and the United Nations World Food Program, the families who receive cash assistance will be determined each year, and because of the scarcity in funding and the resources that do not meet all needs, we had to identify the groups most in need, and therefore the number of beneficiary families was reduced to 35,000, bringing the total number of beneficiary Syrian families to about 234,000."

Regarding the education file, **the strike of teaching staff continued for the third week in a row, without any services provided to students, Lebanese or Syrian.** This strike protests the government's inability to cover public school employees' salaries. UNICEF special representative in Lebanon, Ettie Higgins, reported on steps to enhance transparency in the disbursement of funds to the country's education sector, saying: "In the next few months, we have 24 million dollars that will be disbursed directly to schools [...] supervised by a third-party entity, a company contracted by UNICEF and the international community. We will supervise the expenditure of these funds at the school level according to the agreed criteria with the Ministry of Education."