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2/4/2020

A summary of the recommendations of civil society organizations to UNHCR in Lebanon

Greetings,

The signatory organizations below urgently request the action of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon to develop a practical plan to provide refugees with legal protection and improve their living conditions, based on the primary mission of the UN Refugee Agency to support and protect refugees. The signatory organizations suggest working on the following recommendations:

1. Protect refugees from forced deportation:

The issue of legal protection is considered one of the most important actions carried out by the UNHCR, either by providing protection directly, or by requesting the country hosting refugees (Lebanon) to provide it - if it is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention - demanding this country (Lebanon) not to return or forcibly deport any refugee. Therefore, the organizations below demand from UNHCR to impel the Lebanese government to improve its policies in dealing with Syrian refugees (especially the issue of legal residence permit, and the regulation of the legal status of those who have not legal papers whose percentage overall exceeds 82% of refugees) and request Lebanon to abide by the international agreements and covenants signed by it (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention against Torture, the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights ...).

The decision issued in 2015 that amends the conditions on the entrance and residency of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, which was revoked by the highest judicial authority, the State Shura Council and not yet implemented, has forced many Syrian citizens fleeing a real threat to their freedom and life in Syria, to enter Lebanon illegally. Furthermore, the decision of the Supreme Defense Council issued in April 2019 to deport all Syrian refugees who entered illegally after 4/24/2019, exposed thousands of Syrian refugees to the risk of persecution and forced deportation to Syria.

Thus, UNHCR should provide legal protection to everyone who expresses fear of returning to Syria (especially defectors from the Syrian regime's government, those who are required for mandatory military service, activists, journalists, and everyone who works in civil society, as well as whoever expresses his fear for any other reason).

2. Support and legal follow-up on refugee situation:

Further activating the role of the protection office and provide support and legal representation through UNHCR attorneys, or independent lawyers delegated by the commission to defend refugee cases, both individuals and groups, as well as follow up on their cases in the courts to ensure fair, impartial and transparent trials.

Most Syrian refugees in Lebanon suffer from living in a state of instability and lack of safety, due to the arbitrary measures taken by the various Lebanese State agencies, which compels the UNHCR to request the Lebanese state to provide refugees with the necessary protection according with international laws, the most important of which is the principle of non-refoulement contained in customary international law, as well as to request the Lebanese government to implement judicial standards in a neutral manner that guarantees the rights of refugees and any other party, if any.

3. Humanitarian conditions of refugees:

Refugees in the informal camps suffer from very dangerous and unsecure humanitarian conditions, living with a sense of insecurity related to arbitrary arrests and random raids on the camps. The UNHCR must have an effective role in working with the Lebanese authorities and/or pressure them to reduce arbitrary arrests/detentions, and the freedom to move safely.

We recommend re-studying and re-assessing needs to determine refugee families eligible to receive assistance, especially those living in camps and border areas, in a transparent manner within professional standards and mechanisms in order to update the needs regularly.

The signatory organizations below request an update on the developments and decisions that UNHCR in Lebanon will take from these recommendations, in order to determine its course of action in advocating for the refugee issues at local and international levels.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Sincerely,

Signatory Organizations:

1	Access Center For Human Rights	14	Sound And Picture
2	Cedar Centre For Legal Studies	15	Syria Relief
3	Children Of One World	16	Syrian Association For Citizens' Dignity
4	Freedom Jasmine	17	Syrian Civil Coalition
5	Horan Foundation	18	Syrian Eyes
6	Humena For Human Rights And Civic Engagement	19	Syrian Human Rights Committee
7	International Humanitarian Relief	20	Syrian Journalists Association
8	Irish Syria Solidarity Movement	21	Syrian Network For Human Rights
9	Jana Watan	22	Syrian Women's Network
10	La Justice Et Le Développement Durable	23	Syrians For Truth And Justice
11	Lamsat Ward	24	Violations Documentation Center In Syria
12	Lebanese Foundation For Democracy And Human Rights	25	Violet Organization
13	Refugees=Partners		

