

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

LBN 001 / 1210 / OBS 141
Arbitrary detention / Release
Lebanon
December 2, 2010

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **Lebanon**.

Description of the situation:

The Observatory has been informed by the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation (PHRO), an NGO which works to promote, protect and defend the rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, of the incommunicado detention of Mr. **Hatem Moqdadi**, PHRO coordinator at Naher el-Bared Camp (NBC).

According to the information received, Mr. Hatem Moqdadi was released on December 1 at 11.15 pm.

Mr. Hatem Moqdadi had been placed in detention on November 27, 2010 at the Lebanese Military Intelligence (Northern Section), in Al Qubeh – Tripoli, Northern Lebanon. Officers in charge of interrogation had requested that Mr. Moqdadi contact his colleague, Mr. **Hani El-Aaraj** who holds the position of Administrative Assistant at PHRO's NBC Center in order to provide the Lebanese Military Intelligence with the keys of the Center. On the same day, Mr. El-Aaraj had reportedly received two phone calls, and Mr. **Ghassan Abdallah**, General Director of PHRO, had answered the third one, all from an unidentified individual at the Lebanese Military Intelligence, asking them to hand-over the keys to the Military Intelligence Unit. Since his arrest, Mr. Hatem Moqdadi had been held incommunicado. During his detention, he was reportedly not beaten but threatened with torture and subjected to pressure and intimidation.

On November 30, PHRO had announced the temporary closure of its offices at NBC, until Mr. Moqdadi is released and the safety and security of PHRO's team and Members is guaranteed by the Lebanese authorities.

The Observatory recalls that on September 29, 2010, PHRO organised a dialogue session about access policy and permits regime at NBC. Afterwards, on October 9, Mr. Abdallah was interrogated and subsequently threatened with torture. On November 9, PHRO published a report documenting the status of freedom of movement in and around the NBC. The report, entitled "Lebanese Restrictions on Freedom of Movement: Case of Naher el Bared Camp", sought to highlight issues of legality concerning the Lebanese Armed Forces' access and permit regime around the camp. On this occasion, PHRO further announced that a broader report about human security in NBC would be released in December 2010. Furthermore, PHRO recently announced the dates of the upcoming two dialogue sessions to be held on December 8 and 10, which will address the topic "Rebuilding: Achievements and Obstacles".

The Observatory welcomes the release of Mr. Hatem Moqdadi, but expresses its serious concern with his prolonged incommunicado detention without charges, and the threats of torture against him. It highlights that this harassment takes place in a context of an escalating campaign of harassment placed by Lebanese authorities against human rights defenders operating in the NBC.

Actions requested:

Please write to the Lebanese authorities authorities, urging them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Hatem Moqdadi as well as of all other PHRO staff and members;
- ii. Carry out an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation into the detention of Hatem Moqdadi, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
- iii. Put an end to any acts of harassment, including at the judicial level, against Mr. Hatem Moqdadi and more generally against all human rights defenders in Lebanon;
- iv. Conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially its Article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”, and Article 12.2, which provides that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, *de facto* or *de jure* adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;
- v. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Lebanon.

Addresses :

- Mr. Michel Suleiman, President of the Republic, Presidential Palace, Baabda, By fax: + 961 (0)5-922400
- Mr. Saad Hariri, Prime Minister, Grand Serail, Beirut, By fax: + 961 (0)1-983060
- Dr. Ibrahim Najjar, Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, Adlieh, Beirut, By fax: +961 (0)1-612564
- Mr. Ziad Baroud, Minister of Interior, Ministry of Interior, Sanayeh, Beirut, By fax: +961 (0)1-751622
- Ambassador, Ms. Najla Riachi Assaker, Permanent Mission of Lebanon, rue de Moillebeau 58, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland, e-mail: mission.lebanon@ties.itu.int, Fax : +41 22 791 85 80
- Embassy of Lebanon, rue G. Stocq, 2 1050 Brussels, Belgium, E-mail: ambassade.liban@brutele.be, Fax: +32 2.645.77.69

•
Please also write to the diplomatic mission or embassy of Lebanon in your respective country.

Paris-Geneva, December 2, 2010

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

E-mail: Appeals@fidh-omct.org



The Observatory
for the Protection
of Human Rights Defenders

Tel and fax FIDH + 33 (0) 1 43 55 25 18 / +33 1 43 55 18 80
Tel and fax OMCT + 41 (0) 22 809 49 39 / + 41 22 809 49 29