



Immigration Detention in Lebanon

Global Detention Project

June 2014

The Global Detention Project (GDP) is a research initiative that tracks the use of detention in response to global migration. Based at the Graduate Institute's Global Migration Centre in Geneva, Switzerland, the GDP's aims include: (1) providing researchers, advocates, and journalists with a measurable and regularly updated baseline for analysing the growth and evolution of detention practices and policies; (2) encouraging scholarship in this field of immigration studies; and (3) facilitating accountability and transparency in the treatment of detainees.

"Immigration Detention in Lebanon"
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Introduction

Lebanon confronts a complex regional situation that includes multiple conflicts along its borders—most notably the civil war in Syria—as well as sectarian violence, particularly Hezbollah-related, on its territory that stems in part from these conflicts. One result is that migrants and refugees are viewed with a high degree of suspicion and are under intense surveillance.

Lebanon is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, and it does not consider itself to be a country of asylum. Nevertheless, it hosts more than 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers, including over one million registered Syrian refugees, some 60,000 Palestinian refugees forced into exile from Syria since 2011, an estimated 280,000 Palestinians in long-term refugee camps, and approximately 10,000 Iraqis. Three years into Syria's conflict, Lebanon—which has a population of about 4.5 million—has the highest per-capita concentration of refugees recorded anywhere in the world in recent history. In contrast to their treatment in Turkey, Syrian refugees in Lebanon are not hosted in new formal refugee camps, instead living amongst the population, often in makeshift shelters or in increasingly cramped Palestinian refugee camps (UNHCR 2013; EC 2013; UNRWA 2014; UNRWA 2014b; HRW 2014; DRC 2013).

Lebanon is also a destination or transit country for immigrants and asylum seekers from across the globe, including Sudan, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Bangladesh, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Tanzania (Van Vliet and Hourani 2012; CLDH 2010; UNHCR 2010). Some 250,000 women migrant workers—primarily from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Ethiopia—are employed as domestic workers under a contractual arrangement that links residency to employers (HRW 2013; ILO 2013).

Public outcry over the plight of domestic workers in the country surged after the suicide of Alem Dechasa-Desisa, an Ethiopian domestic worker, at the Deir al-Saleeb psychiatric hospital in February 2012. Video taken by an anonymous bystander six days before Alem's death showed a labour recruiter physically abusing her outside the Ethiopian consulate in Beirut. The police who arrived at the scene took Alem into custody and placed her in a detention centre.

Before the Syrian uprising began in March 2011 there were an estimated 300,000 Syrian seasonal workers in Lebanon. These workers are often targets of anti-Syrian sentiment, which is in part a legacy of Syria's 29-year occupation of Lebanon, which came to an end in 2005 (IRIN 2012).

Lebanon is also a major country of emigration: 40 percent of the population, nearly one million people, left the country during the 1975-1989 Civil War and another half a million left between 1992 and 2007 (Tabar 2009). Emigration has regained impetus since 2011. A large number of Lebanese irregular migrants and asylum seekers have been held in Australia's Christmas Island detention camp and offshore detention facilities in Nauru and Papua New Guinea since 2013 (Mikhail 2014).

When they are apprehended, irregular migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees are generally charged with violations of Lebanese criminal law on account of their irregular status. Former detainees, including refugees and undocumented migrants, report ill treatment by security forces during arrest and incarceration (HRW 2013). After completing prison sentences, migrants are typically transferred to Lebanon's sole dedicated immigration detention centre, which is located in a former parking garage underneath a highway that crosses Beirut. The facility is often overcrowded and conditions are extreme, with no natural light or ventilation. There is no established maximum limit on the duration of administrative detention and legislative reform has been lagging.

Since the conflict in Syria started, some Lebanese courts have moved ahead with prosecutions of Syrian refugees for violating residency regulations. Lebanese lawyers and scholars have called upon the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General to order security forces not to arrest Syrian refugees without prior writ from the Lebanese justice system. They have also demanded the release of Syrian refugees detained for not renewing their residency and called for exempting them from renewal fees (LIFE 2012).

The vulnerability of refugees and migrants has become increasingly acute due to political instability in Lebanon stemming in part from the Syrian conflict. Writes one Beirut-based human rights advocate: "What can we expect from state institutions when no government has truly been in charge since the prime minister resigned in early 2013 and when key political parties are heavily involved in Syria? The government is buckling under the responsibility of meeting the needs of over a million Syrian refugees with insufficient international support amid a growing economic crisis. Security forces themselves are seen to be so sectarian they are incapable of being impartial first responders and peacekeepers" (Fakih 2014).

Detention Policy

Article 8 of the [Lebanese Constitution](#) provides that "No one may be arrested, imprisoned, or kept in custody except according to the provisions of the Law. No offense may be established or penalty imposed except by Law." Any deprivation of liberty without legal justification or without the sanction of an appropriate legal authority can be considered arbitrary. Under Article 367 of the Penal Code any official who arrests or imprisons any person in cases other than those provided for by law can be sentenced to forced labour for life. Under Article 368 officials who have held an individual without a warrant or court decision or have detained a person beyond the statutory time limit can be sentenced to three years in prison (HRC 1996). Nevertheless, observers contend that Lebanon frequently arbitrarily confines foreign nationals in administrative detention (HRW 2014; LIFE 2012; FRA 2008; CLDH 2010).

The *Law Regulating the Entry and Stay of Foreigners in Lebanon and their Exit from the Country* (1962) contains provisions for the treatment of irregular immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers ([Law of Entry and Exit](#)). While Article 26 of the law grants non-citizens the right to request political asylum if their life or freedom are in danger for political reasons, Article 32 provides criminal charges and penalties, including imprisonment, for people convicted of entering Lebanon without authorization, even if seeking asylum (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

There does not appear to be any standard practice or policy with respect to the detention and criminal prosecution of non-citizens who cross Lebanese borders in an irregular manner. In one case in 2007, Human Rights Watch reported that when a group of 13 individuals was detected crossing into Lebanon irregularly, six of them were charged with illegal entry while two were detained and later released (HRW 2007).

According to a 2010 report from a Lebanese human rights group, of the 5,154 people who spent time in Lebanese prisons during April-September 2009, some 415 had been arrested for illegal entry or stay in the country (CLDH 2010). Nearly 15 percent of these inmates had already completed criminal sentences but remained in prison; 81 percent had been convicted of illegal entry or stay in the country (CLDH 2010).

A Lebanese civil society organisation has come across several cases where multiple arrests and trials were carried out for the same offense, notably for "illegal entry," in blatant violation of Article 182 of the Penal Code, which states that a person shall not be tried more than once for the same offense. These people had not exited and re-entered the country. The organisation argues that it is unclear whether the prosecution considers "illegal entry" as an on-going crime (FRA et al. 2010).

Grounds for detention, criminalization, and length of detention. While Lebanon employs a form of administrative detention for non-citizens in an irregular status, Lebanese law does not appear to provide a specific framework for this practice. The only unambiguous ground provided in law that can lead to the administrative detention of a non-citizen is threat to national security or public safety.

According to Article 18 of the *Law of Entry and Exit*, the director general of General Security is authorised to detain a foreigner with approval of the public prosecutor until his/her deportation. A removal order can be issued to a non-citizen on the grounds that his/her continued presence is a threat to general safety and security (Article 17). There is no established maximum limit on the duration of administrative detention; there have been cases where migrants have been detained for years (CLDH 2010).

The law also provides specific criminal penalties for immigration-status related violations. Foreign nationals who are charged with criminal violations stemming from their status can face three distinct stages of incarceration: pre-trial detention (66 percent of all detainees in the country are in pre-trial detention, including nationals and foreigners) (CLDH 2010); criminal incarceration upon conviction (Hadesian 2011); and administrative detention while awaiting removal from the country after the completion of criminal sentences (HRW 2007; Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

According to the [Criminal Procedure Code](#), detention prior to a hearing before a magistrate should not exceed 48 hours, which is renewable once (Article 47). However, rights groups claim that police do not always respect these limits and that migrants are detained for unauthorized entry or presence in the country for an average initial period of 16 days (CLDH 2010).

Non-citizens who are convicted of entering Lebanon without proper authorization or using false identities can be sentenced to up to three years in prison, fined, and served an expulsion order (Article 32 *Law of Entry and Exit*). Non-citizens who overstay their visas or attempt to exit the territory at unauthorized exit points can be taken into custody and then charged with crimes leading to criminal incarceration and fined (Article 36) (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

According to Article 89 of the [Lebanese Criminal Code](#), “A foreigner against whom a deportation order has been issued must leave Lebanese territory by his own means within 15 days. Any breach of a judicial or administrative deportation measure shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of between one and six months.” Article 34 of the *Law of Entry and Exit* also provides for up to six months imprisonment for breaches of Article 17 (expulsion on grounds of threat to public security) while Article 35 provides for up to six months imprisonment for illegal re-entry following expulsion.

Rights advocates have criticized Lebanon for pursuing criminal charges against asylum seekers, noting that this practice violates Article 14 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). In practice, as noted by one observer, Iraqi refugees convicted of illegal entry are sentenced to the minimum prison sentence of one month, in addition to a fine and deportation (HRW 2007). Fines appear to be arbitrarily set by judges, but can be as high as 300,000LL (or roughly 200USD) (HRW 2007). Iraqi refugees have often opted to serve extra prison time instead of paying the fines (HRW 2007).

A proposal to amend the 1962 Law on Entry and Exit has long been planned. Proposed changes include de-penalising illegal entry or presence of refugees recognised by UNHCR (FRA 2010b; UNHCR 2010b).

Custodial authorities. Security services that are part of the Interior Ministry are in charge of all detention-related facilities. The Internal Security Forces (ISF) run Lebanon's prisons, while the country's sole immigration detention centre is under the authority of the General Security Office (GSO). GSO decides matters related to entry, residency, and exit of foreigners (Article 6 of Decree No. 2873 of 16 December 1959 regulating the General Security Directorate). It is also responsible for deciding whether to arrest a foreigner slated for deportation on the basis of Article 17 of the Law of Entry and Exit (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013, FRA 2008).

In 2006, the Justice and Interior Ministries agreed to transfer control of the prison system to the Ministry of Justice (ICPS 2010). The transfer was initially planned for 2012. According to one source in Lebanon, as of mid-2014, some of the responsibilities had "already been transferred to the Ministry of Justice," but the full transfer will take much longer to complete and ultimately require the investment of "huge sums of money" (Hadesian 2014).

Prosecutors, examining magistrates, and criminal judges are obliged to visit persons under arrest or in detention on a monthly basis (Article 402 of the Code of Penal Procedures, CPP; Article 15 of Decree 14310 of 11/02/1949 Related to Prisons). They can be sanctioned if they do not release persons found to be held in illegal custody (Article 403 of CPP) (Hadesian 2011; FRA 2008). However, according to a 2008 report, there had not been any legal or disciplinary action against any authority for the crime of arbitrary detention or failure to end such detentions (FRA 2008).

The Public Prosecution instruction No. 4662/m2004 of 16/12/2004 orders the transfer of all foreign detainees to GSO after release on bail or completion of prison term, in order for the latter to take appropriate decision regarding their legal status in the country. From that point, foreign detainees are no longer considered the responsibility of the judiciary and ISF, but of GSO. According to a human rights group, "This transfer of authority is automatic regardless of whether the foreigner has legal or illegal status or if the judicial sentence includes deportation or not" (FRA 2008).

Many rights observers have expressed concern about the vulnerability of migrants and asylum seekers who are in the custody of the security services, particularly as many authorities continue to view refugee crises through a political lens. According to a group of Lebanese lawyers, "the violations Syrian refugees endure in Lebanon by some security forces stem from a political governmental cover and speech that failed to separate the political position of the Syrian crisis and its resulting humanitarian aspect" (LIFE 2012).

Arbitrary detention. Numerous observers and human rights advocates have accused Lebanese authorities of arbitrarily detaining migrants and refugees. For instance, there have been reports of foreigners not being released upon completion of their prison sentences in contravention of Lebanese law (FRA 2008). The activist group Frontiers Ruwad (FRA) has submitted several communications to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) regarding the alleged illegal detention of refugees detained

by General Security after the completion of their sentences. The WGAD reportedly considers these cases to fall under Category I of Arbitrary Detention without legal basis (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).¹

According to Article 58 of Decree 14310 (11/02/1949) related to Prisons Administration, the head of a prison is to release a person on the day his/her prison term ends. Article 37 states that any prison guard who agrees to keep in prison a person without legal ground or keeps him/her after the completion of the sentence can be prosecuted (FRA 2008).

In practice, upon their release from prison, non-citizens are systematically detained by General Security, regardless of the charges or the legality of their residence. This appears to be abetted by the existence of internal administrative directives that extend the responsibilities of prison officials provided in the Code of Penal Procedures. For instance, Internal Security Forces (ISF) Directive No. 278 of 16 August 1973 directs prison wardens to notify the General Security Department of the release of any non-citizen from prison. In the case of a non-citizen without legal residence papers, he or she must be taken directly to a General Security bureau. The Public Prosecutor has also issued various directives (including Directive No. 4662/2004 of 16 December 2004) ordering prison wardens to present non-citizens to General Security bureaus immediately upon their release.

These directives appear to provide for a form of administrative detention of non-citizens outside any specific legal framework. Faced with this situation, activist groups have questioned the legal purpose of transferring people from an ISF prison to the GS; what the specific rules are regarding release or the possibility of regularizing a person's status; whether an expulsion order is a legal requirement for the continued detention; and whether the approval of the Public Prosecutor's Office is legally required in order to keep the non-citizen detained while awaiting deportation (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

According to Circular No. 4662, if prison authorities are unable to transfer the foreigner to the General Security Office (GSO) detention centre, they must obtain approval of the prosecutor to keep the person in prison pending removal (FRA 2008). Roughly 13 percent of the prison population in Lebanon consists of foreigners who have completed their sentences and are waiting to be handed over to the General Security. To the extent that these people remain confined in prison without authorization of a public prosecutor, then their detention could be considered arbitrary (CLDH 2010b).

In its submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review in 2010, FRA called for a public investigation into the practices of prolonged arbitrary detention and refoulement (FRA 2010b). Responding to the criticism, Lebanon's Interior Minister argued that if migrants and asylum seekers were released, they would be stopped at checkpoints by the

¹ Category 1 includes cases where it is clearly impossible to invoke any legal basis justifying the deprivation of liberty, for instance when a person is kept in detention after the completion of his or her sentence (WGAD 2009).

General Security forces or army and re-detained. He claimed that they are held in order to facilitate deportation or UNHCR processing for resettlement in a third country (FRA 2010; Khayat 2010).

In addition to the confusing legal and policy situation surrounding the deprivation of liberty of non-citizens in Lebanon, advocates argue that the country's sole dedicated immigration detention facility operates without an adequate legal mandate. General Security's official position is that the facility is neither a prison nor a centre for the detention of foreigners; instead, it is defined as a police station where detainees are temporarily held pending their release, transfer to prison, or deportation. General Security has also claimed that the facility is subject to Article 38 of the Code of Penal Procedures (which allows the GS to act as a judicial police), and the Law Regulating Prisons and Places of Arrest and Institutes for Juvenile Rehabilitation, and to Article 18 of the Law Regulating Entry, Stay, and Exit from Lebanon, (which allows the General Security Director-General to arrest, with the approval of the Public Prosecutor's Office, any person whose detention has been administratively decided until the completion of deportation procedures) (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

Procedural guarantees. Lebanese law provides some procedural guarantees for persons in detention but in practice they appear to be largely inaccessible to detained non-citizens, including refugees and even imprisoned foreign nationals who have proper documentation.

Article 47 of the Code of Penal Procedures provides for the right to meet a lawyer, a friend, or an interpreter, and to request a medical examination. Although the GS is obligated to respect the provisions of Article 47 of informing detainees of their rights, this is often not done in practice. Judicial police reportedly often interrogate non-citizens who have little knowledge of Arabic or English without the use of interpreters; interpreters are usually requested from the diplomatic representations of the detainees' country of origin, which is problematic for refugees and asylum-seekers. Also, according to migrant rights advocates, diplomatic representations often neglect to send interpreters to assist detainees and interpreters are rarely professionally trained (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

Refugees tried for illegal entry and illegal presence face enormous challenges receiving free legal aid, which is provided for in a 2006 MOU between GSO and Beirut Bar Association (General Security service note no. 41/1 ذ ع/اص/م, 19 July 2006). While the agreement provides for free aid it also stipulates that lawyers must obtain special permission from General Security in order to visit their clients detained on General Security premises. It also limits their access to certain parts of the General Security commissariat. More recently, the General Security issued a new directive further restricting lawyer's access to its main detention facility (Letter No. 27/ع ذ ا/ص/م issued on 5/4/2012) (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

Migrant domestic workers mostly face the legal system without either adequate legal representation or translation (HRW 2010c). UNHCR-recognized refugees have access to legal counsel through a lawyer appointed by UNHCR. The lawyer signs a yearly

contract with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) under a MECC/UNHCR Partnership Agreement and some NGOs working inside prisons and for prisoners provide legal aid to refugees and migrants (Hadeshian 2011).

Lack of access to legal Counsel also complicates efforts to appeal detention decisions. Lawyers have reported that it is difficult to get appeal requests officially registered by the immigration authority. There are no provisions to appeal detention decisions issued by the GS. One available recourse is to request mercy on the basis of a general principle of administrative law, which allows challenging any decision taken by the administration before the same administration. This recourse is reportedly rarely successful (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013; Hadeshian 2011; GS Memorandum of Service No 43/1 of 19/7/2006).

According to one report, “Illegal entry and arbitrary detention are unfortunately off the radar screen for the Bar Society, which prefers instead to deal with criminal charges or civil suits over a certain amount of damages” (FRA 2006). Similar to all administrative decisions, the GS decision can be challenged before the administrative judge within a period of two months from the date of its notification to the detainee (Article 2 of Decision 2979 of 9/2/1925 organization of the Conseil d’Etat). There are apparently no known cases where a non-citizen was able to challenge the legality of his/her detention before an administrative judge (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

GSO detention decisions for refugees and asylum seekers can be challenged before the Minister of Interior. In addition, the Lebanese Conseil d’Etat has acknowledged that it has the competence to interfere with GSO discretionary power to issue a deportation order. This competence is limited to ensuring that the decision is not legally flawed (Conseil d’Etat, Decisions No.235 of 17/5//1971, case No. 189/69 Felicite Rifa vs State. Cited in Zakhour, op.cit). In practice, there is little scrutiny or review of the legality of detention by the judicial authorities (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013, Hadeshian 2011; FRA 2006).

Article 579 of the Code of Civil Procedures grants the Judge of Summary Affairs (Juge des Référés) competence to put an end to the administration’s infringement on personal rights. Since 2009, judges have issued pioneering verdicts in some cases, holding authorities accountable for infringing detainees’ personal liberty without legal cause and ordering the immediate release of the detainees. However, the GS has often refrained from executing these judicial decisions and continued to hold the detainees in clear violation of the law and the judicial orders. In some of the rulings the judges also ruled that detainees are owed compensation and assessed daily fines on the administration for delay in executing court orders (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

According to the Code of Penal Procedures, judges must inform detainees of the charges brought against them on the first time the detainee is brought before them. However, there is no clear legal provision imposing a similar obligation on the ISF or the GSO (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013). Immigration detainees are generally not informed of the reasons for their detention and most detainees face police and court proceedings without certified translators (HRW 2010c; FRA 2008).

There are no specific provisions related to access to consular assistance. Knowledge of consular assistance is mainly provided to detainees through friends and fellow citizens. Some embassies, such as the Philippines and Ethiopia, have very organized networks for protecting their citizens (Hadesian 2011). The GSO often communicates with the diplomatic representations of the non-citizen's country of origin in order to verify identity, request travel documents, or facilitate deportation (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013).

Detention monitoring. In 2002, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Lebanese authorities and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) allowing the ICRC to visit all Lebanese prisons except the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Detention Centre (CLDH 2010). In February 2007, a new protocol was signed allowing ICRC to work in all Lebanese prisons, including MoD facilities (CLDH 2010).

A unique MOU was signed between Caritas Lebanon (CL) and the Lebanese General Security (GS) allowing CL to provide social, medical, and legal assistance to all non-citizen detainees in Lebanon (CLMC 2012; CL 2009). As a result of this agreement, Lebanon is one of a very small number of countries (France included) that provides space within its migrant detention facilities to non-governmental rights groups who are meant to be working on behalf of detainees. A new MOU was signed between Caritas Lebanon and General Security in February 2013. It includes training for airport security staff to improve their ability "to recognize vulnerable people" as well as an item on "better intervention with the detainees" (CLMC 2013). Caritas' work inside the General Security detention centre has been the focus of an at times bitter public dispute between different civil society groups in the country, some of whom have argued that Caritas work in the facility effectively aids and abets the government's detention of migrants.

According to an MOU between UNHCR and Lebanese authorities, the latter are to notify UNHCR of asylum seekers detained in their premises (USCRI 2008). UNHCR has limited margins of intervention: a detention officer and a social worker regularly visit detained refugees at the GSO detention centre and in the prisons. However, they are given little possibility of efficiently intervening, including immediately upon arrest in order to prevent detention (Hadesian 2011).

Non-custodial measures. There are no alternatives to immigration detention. General Security has reportedly been using domestic violence shelters and a "safe house" run by charity organizations as "alternative incommunicado detention places" for foreigners, which some activists have argued is contrary to the principle of these shelters (RFA 2010).

Asylum seekers and refugees. The Law of Entry and Exit of 1962 grants any foreigner the right to seek asylum in Lebanon if the person's life or liberty is threatened for political reasons (article 26). However, people in detention cannot claim asylum (Hadesian 2011). Political asylum is granted only by virtue of an ad hoc commission composed of the Minister of Interior, the Directors of the Ministry of Justice, Social Affairs and General Security. The decision of the commission is final and cannot form the basis for appeal, even for abuse of power. According to Article 29 of Law of Entry and Exit, the

commission can refuse or withdraw the right to asylum or restrict the individual to a specific place of residence (FRA 2006).

According to UNHCR, three years after Syria's conflict started, Lebanon became the country with the highest per-capita concentration of refugees recorded anywhere in the world in recent history. In addition to one million registered refugees, there are tens of thousands of other Syrian refugees who are not registered. Lebanese officials estimate the number of unregistered refugees to be as high as 400,000 (Surk 2014).

Since the Syrian uprising, Syrians who enter at official border crossings are granted a six-month residency permit with one-time possibility of renewal, after which extension requires a \$200 renewal fee. Lebanon is the only Syrian neighbour to maintain an open border policy but it began arbitrarily barring Palestinians from Syria from entering the country in August 2013 (HRW 2014). However, with refugees reaching one fourth of Lebanon's population the government announced plans to restrict entry of Syrians coming from "safe" parts of Syria, deny entry to Syrians coming from parts of Syria far away from the Lebanese border and refuse re-entry to Syrians who had fled to Lebanon and then returned to Syria (Norland 2014).

According to the Lebanese Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, most Syrian refugees do not enter through legitimate border crossings and are thus susceptible to arrests, trials, and violations (LIFE 2012). Lawyers at the institute have argued that some judges in Lebanese criminal courts issue verdicts against Syrian refugees for violating Lebanese residency regulations or other legal grounds and some Attorney General Offices have begun referring refugees to criminal courts (LIFE 2012).

Asylum seekers are reportedly frequently subject to the same treatment as irregular migrants (HRW 2010b). In its submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review mechanism, UNHCR reported that long-term detention of refugees, including children, was common in Lebanon (UNHCR 2010b).

UNHCR. On 9 September 2003, following several years of systematic detention and deportations, especially to Iraq and Sudan, the Regional Office of UNHCR and the General Directorate of the General Security signed a Memorandum of Understanding that allows asylum seekers to apply for refugee status with UNHCR. Lebanon is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and therefore only permits resettlement of UNHCR recognised refugees in third countries. The MOU stipulates that the term "asylum seeker" is to mean "a person seeking asylum in a country other than Lebanon." According to this MOU, the General Security must notify UNHCR of all refugees and asylum seekers being detained on its premises (MOU Article 12). In practice, Lebanese authorities frequently detain asylum seekers on grounds of unauthorized entry or stay, false identity/declaration, and/or unauthorized stay or work (HRW 2010b; UNHCR 2007).

Scholars have argued that bilateral MOUs between UNHCR and host governments in the MENA region function as alternative legal instruments for regulating the status of refugees and occupy an ambiguous place in international law as they formalize the responsibility shift arrangement between the state and a UN agency (Kagan 2011). In

Lebanon, the MOU provides for an initial 3-month visa for asylum-seekers (MOU Articles 5 and 9). It only applies to persons who entered Lebanon illegally less than two months before the date they applied for asylum with UNHCR. During field research carried out in 2010, the Lebanese Centre for Human Rights found that refugees who had applied for asylum more than two months after entry into Lebanon did not fall under the memorandum. In 2009, resettlement processing to third countries took an average of just over two years (CLDH, 2011). In 2011 UNHCR identified 3,308 refugees for resettlement from Lebanon but only 825 were finally able to leave the country for resettlement (UNHCR 2012).

UNHCR planned to sign a revised Memorandum of Understanding with the government in 2013 (UNHCR 2013) but no public information is available about it at the time of this publication. Nadim Houry, director of Human Rights Watch in Lebanon, has argued that the future MOU should extend protection to all UNHCR-recognized refugees, including those who enter Lebanon legally, and should provide at least for temporary asylum that is not tied specially to a UNHCR guarantee of third country resettlement (LCDH 2011). The Beirut Bar Association has also recommended that UNHCR-recognized refugees and asylum seekers should not be detained on ground of irregular entry or stay (OAB 2010).

In August 2012, the Internal Security Forces (ISF) arrested 14 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers taking part in a sit-in in front of an entrance to the UNHCR office in Beirut, to protest its handling of their cases. The refugees reported that ISF officials kicked, insulted, and threatened some of them during arrest, and that when the group arrived at the General Security detention facility in Adlieh, some of them were beaten, humiliated, and threatened with deportation (HRW 2013b).

Women and minors. Asylum seekers and refugee children are detained with their mothers. Upon the General Security's approval, the Caritas Lebanon Migrants Centre provides shelter to pregnant women or women accompanied by children who have completed their sentences. In its submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review mechanism, UNHCR stated that children are detained on grounds of illegal entry due to the heightened security measures in the country adopted following the 2008 security incidents in Lebanon. It also reported instances of children being detained alongside adult criminals in police stations and in penitentiary institutions (UNHCR 2010b).

Trafficked persons. In August 2011, parliament adopted the anti-trafficking Law 164, amending the Lebanese penal code to address the crime of trafficking in human beings. The law provides for a clear definition of trafficking and sets out penalties for traffickers. However, the prevention of trafficking and the situation of children are not addressed in the law (EC 2012). The U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report 2012 reported that the lack of systematic procedures to proactively identify trafficking victims led to the deportation of most domestic workers who fled their employers and that although out-of-status migrant workers were generally not prosecuted or fined, they were typically arrested, detained, and deported without being screened for indicators of trafficking (USDS 2012).

Caritas operates a shelter for women victims of trafficking that some activists in Lebanon claim operates as a de facto detention centre. Called the “Caritas Migrant Centre for Women Victims of Human Trafficking,” the facility—or “safe house”—has been operated by Caritas since 2005 on the basis of an MoU signed between the charity and General Security. According to the MoU, victims of trafficking may stay a maximum of two months at the safe house until a solution is found to their cases. For security reasons, the location of this facility is not publicly disclosed (Hadesian 2014).

Stateless persons. There are an estimated 200,000 stateless persons in Lebanon, although determining an exact figure is impossible, particularly as there has been no population census since 1932. Lebanon has not ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and stateless persons are subject to arrest and indefinite detention because they lack documentation (UNHCR 2014; Alabaster 2011; FRA 2011).

Domestic workers. Like other countries in the Middle East (see also the [Bahrain](#) country profile), Lebanon has been harshly criticized for the treatment of domestic workers (HRW 2013; IOM 2010). The Lebanese Labour Code, enacted in 1946, excludes domestic workers, both Lebanese and foreign, from its provisions under [Lebanese labour law](#) and the primary mechanism for outlining employers' and workers' rights and obligations are contractual arrangements (HRW 2010c). These contracts are based on the employer-specific sponsorship system—the *kafala*—which was developed in the 1950s to provide temporary labour and ties residency to employers. This system frequently leads to abusive situations in which workers are forced to work excessively long hours without rest, are sometimes physically and sexually abused, do not have accident compensation, are confined to their places of work, and are unable to join labour unions (HRW 2013; Young 2000; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2000).

The employer, who is responsible for securing the migrant worker's work permit and whose name is marked in the migrant worker's passport (Young 2000; Jureidini 2002), generally demands that workers hand over their passports upon arrival and confiscates them (CLDH 2010; Jureidini 2002). There is no legislation in Lebanon criminalizing passport retention. Activists and lawyers representing migrant domestic workers have tried to challenge the quasi systematic withholding of passports by employers, arguing that it amounts to “forced confinement” (*hajez huriyat*), which is a crime. In June 2000, an investigative judge even accused two Filipina workers of stealing “their identity papers” (HRW 2010c).

Migrant workers whose employers withhold their passports are liable to arrest and detention for illegal stay in the country should they try to change employer or flee the place of employment. In some cases, they have been detained for several months (CLDH 2010). In one case reported by the IRIN news service in April 2009, 80 Ethiopian women spent more than a year in the Tripoli Women's Prison, accused of not having a passport. A researcher from a Lebanese nongovernmental organization told IRIN, “The reason these women continue to sit in detention is because the employer doesn't want to pay for the girls' ticket home, General Security [Lebanese intelligence] doesn't have

the money, and often their embassies are unaware of their detention” (cited in IOM 2010).

In January 2012, Labour Minister Charbel Nahhas announced that he would study the possibility of abolishing the kafala system, but he resigned over unrelated matters a month later. The newly appointed labour minister, Salim Jreissati, has yet to put forward relevant legislation (HRW 2013).

Many observers have reported high death tolls among migrant domestic workers in Lebanon (HRW 2008; FR 2006; Mahdawi 2009). A HRW report claims that as of early 2009 more than one domestic worker was dying in Lebanon per week because of suicide or perilous efforts at escaping their work situations (HRW 2008).

Because of the grave working conditions faced by domestic labourers in Lebanon, many countries have reportedly taken steps to ban deployment of their citizens to the country, including the Philippines (2007, partially lifted in October 2012), Ethiopia (2008), Madagascar and Nepal (2010) and Kenya (2012) (Menchik, Ibrahim, Saber et al. 2013; Migrante International 2012; Jureidini 2010; al-akhbar 2009).

In early 2009, the Lebanese government promised to introduce reforms, including limiting the number of working hours for domestic labourers and improving contracts but there has been no progress as of May 2013 (HRW 2013; IOM 2010; al-akhbar 2009).

Despite the high number of migrant workers, Lebanon is not a party to the [International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families](#) (CPRMW).

Court rulings on detention. In 2001, a Beirut court overturned a deportation order issued against an Iraqi national who entered Lebanon without authorization. The court found that returning the Iraqi national to his country of origin would violate Lebanon’s obligations under Article 3 of the [Convention against Torture](#) (for more details see the case of Sajid Ilia in CLDH 2010).

The General Prosecutor has determined in several other cases that continued detention beyond completion of a criminal sentence is unnecessary to ensure the execution of deportation orders (See cases of *Nadim Abd Almalik*, *Anderani Tiaritchi*, and *Heilani Beidani* in CLDH 2010).

Lebanese courts have also found the continued detention of four Iraqis who had finished serving their sentences to be illegal under Lebanese law and under Lebanon's international obligations (judgement of *Juge des Référés* of Zahle in the case of *Yusra al-Amiri*, 11 December 2009; judgement of *Juge des Référés* of Mount Lebanon in the case of *Riad Ali Jawad Hashem*, 28 January 2010; judgement of *Juge des Référés* of Mount Lebanon in the case of *Wisam Samah Fazza` al-Yusef*, 28 January 2010; judgement of *Juge des Référés* of Mount Lebanon in the case of *Maytham Jawad al-Bay`i*, 28 January 2010; HRW 2010a). Despite these rulings, the General Security had released only one of the four Iraqis as of early 2010 (HRW 2010b).

Detention Infrastructure

Lebanon has one dedicated immigration detention centre, called the General Security Detention Centre. However, apprehended irregular migrants and asylum seekers are generally prosecuted and then incarcerated in one of the country's 22 prisons (FRA 2008; ICPS 2013). One report indicates that as of 2013, only eight prisons were being used for immigration-related reasons (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013). Once non-citizens have completed their sentences, they typically remain in detention until they are deported, either at the prison where they served their criminal sentence or at the General Security Detention Centre (HRW 2010b).

Immigration detention centre. Located in the centre of Beirut, in a former parking lot under a highway connecting Badaro to Baabda in Adlieh, Lebanon's only dedicated immigration detention centre, the **General Security Detention Centre**, is supposed to be used uniquely to hold "criminal aliens" after they have completed prison sentences and are awaiting expulsion from the country (Circular n. 4662/2004). Detainees also include non-nationals who lack documentation to remain in the country but cannot afford tickets home, persons without identification, domestic workers who have left their employers but require their approval (and the return of their passports) to go home, refugees who could not be resettled within one year of arrival in the country, and asylum seekers who claimed asylum more than two months after arrival in Lebanon (Hadesian 2013; Slemrod and Meguerditchian 2012). Detention periods range from two weeks to several months, depending on the level of collaboration between the General Security, sponsors (employers), the detainee's embassy, and/or the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (CLMC).

The detention centre opened in 2000 and was meant to be temporary. Despite an official capacity of 250 it has an average daily population of 400 to 600 persons in cramped cells. In November 2012 there were between 350 and 400 people detained, according to Col. Nabil Hanoun, head of the investigations office at the centre (Slemrod and Meguerditchian 2012). Overcrowding surged to a record 720 in November 2013, due to the Syrian crisis (Kullab, 2013; Hadesian 2013; Slemrod and Meguerditchian 2012).

There are three multi-person cells for holding women as well as one for families, including children (CLDH). One rights group has calculated that each detainee at the detention centre has roughly one square metre (CLDH 2010). There is no yard for outside recreation, water is available no more than two hours per day, detainees are handcuffed when they leave their cells, and there is little or no contact with the outside world (CLDH 2010).

The facility has an office that houses representative of Caritas, which is similar to the way French detention centres have offices for NGOs that represent and assist detainees. Called the Caritas Lebanon Migrants Centre (CLMC), the office has received repeated criticism from other civil society groups in Lebanon, who accuse Caritas of abetting illegal detention. Caritas, however, claims that it is the sole NGO ensuring social, medical, and legal assistance to trafficked persons, seven days a week and 24

hours per day, including for more than 3,500 detainees per year since 2000 (CLMC website undated).

In May 2013, a delegation of the Lebanese Centre for Human Rights met General Michel Sleiman, the president of Lebanon, to thank him for his personal stand against the deportation of Syrian refugees and raised various issues, including the need to relocate the General Security underground detention centre due to the inhuman detention conditions for the detainees and unacceptable working conditions (CLDH 2013). During 2008 and 2009, CLMC invited—with approval from General Security—seven embassies and the European Commission to visit the detention centre, which reportedly led to the release of funds for the construction of a new detention centre.

Construction of a new General Security detention facility began in 2013 on the site of a former train station in Sahet al-Abet, near the GS headquarters. However, work on the facility came to halt due to funding shortfalls. Plans include twin two-story buildings, one for female and the other for male detainees, facing a concrete enclosure, with a larger edifice behind the buildings for security personnel, social workers and dispensary staff (Kullab 2013).

GSA provided \$100,000 for the facility's infrastructure but has said that it needs \$600,000 to begin receiving detainees. It told journalists it is reaching out to interested donors, including "certain Swiss organisations as well as the EU, which vowed to help improve Lebanon's detention system in the past" (Kullab 2013).

Prison system. Prisons generally do not segregate administrative and criminal detainees; however, some observers have claimed that—aside from a few notable exceptions (see, for example, Roumieh prison, below)—Lebanon abides by international standards with respect to separating men and women, and minors and adults (Hadesian 2011; HO 2006; HRW 2007; IRIN 2007; CLDH 2010).

According to CLMC, the women's prison population is typically comprised of more than 50 percent migrant workers. Since 2000, CLMC has provided psycho-social, medical, and legal assistance (on specific cases of trafficking) to nearly 1,000 detained migrants each year. It has a permanent office in the Tripoli (North) women's prison and visits several times a week 19 other Lebanese prisons (16 men's and 3 women's) (CLMC 2012; Hadesian 2013).

The largest prison in Lebanon is the **Roumieh** prison, located in greater Beirut. It is the central prison for adult and minor males, and it is under the authority of the Internal Security Forces (ISF) of the Ministry of Interior, which administers all of Lebanon's prisons. A representative of an international organization who visited the facility in 2009 told the Global Detention Project that during his visit there were "a significant number of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants" confined at the facility, which he called "a very scary place run primarily by the 'big men' amongst the prisoners (there are very few guards). Children are also held there and the men have access to their living area. The really bad thing is that the many Iraqis amongst them are considered as prima facie

refugees by UNHCR, and that Lebanon is a UNHCR Executive Committee member” (Flynn 2009).

According to a joint report by Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM (2013), there were seven additional criminal facilities that were being used for immigration-related reasons: **Roumieh Juvenile Centre, Qobbeh Prison for Men, Qobbeh Prison for Women, Zahle Prison for Men, Zahle Prison for Women, Babbda Prison for Women, and Barbar Khazen Prison for Women.**

Conditions of detention. Observers have severely criticized conditions at the General Security Detention Centre. Journalists describe how detainees are held in a row of ten cells of about 20-30 square meters, separated along gender and nationality lines. Metal gates form two sides of the rectangular cells on each side of concrete pillars marking the former parking spaces. Toilets and showers have doors that fail to stem the stench of bathrooms inside living quarters. On their visit in November 2012, women were especially tightly packed. There were at least 50 women each in the quarters allocated for Bangladeshi and Ethiopian citizens. Water bottles, clothes, dirty blankets and pillows were crammed into empty spaces in the metal webbing. There were mattresses on the floors, but in the most crowded cells people had to share mattresses. In 2010, CLMC carried out renovation work to improve the conditions of detention and installed a new ventilation system and water tanks. However the lack of natural light and air remained a problem in 2012 (CLMC undated; Slemrod and Meguerditchian 2012).

According to its 2011 Progress report on implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in Lebanon, the European Commission (EC) noted that prisons and detention centres were poorly managed; the situation of detainees in prisons and detention centres continued to be of concern; prison conditions did not meet international standards; and there was only limited progress in improving the treatment of migrants and refugees. The EC observed that although torture is not widespread, it still occurred in Lebanon, mainly in detention centres, prison facilities, and in police custody. It also reported that the planned transfer of prison management from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Justice in implementation of Decree 17513 of 1964 was lagging (EC 2012).

Former detainees, including refugees and migrants, report ill treatment by security forces during arrest and while in detention facilities (HRW 2013). The Lebanese Centre for Human Rights provided a detailed account of prison conditions in a 2010 report titled [Prisons in Lebanon: Humanitarian and Legal Concerns](#). Based on interviews with inmates and visiting prisons, CLDH reported a high frequency of overcrowding, lack of bed space, heating and cooling issues, poor ventilation, insufficient nourishment, lack of access to hot water, inadequate medical services and treatment, antiquated sanitary facilities, among other problems (CLDH 2010). The prisons highlighted as being the worst in terms of conditions and infrastructure were Ras Baalbeck, Halba, Jezzine, Aley, and Jbeil (CLDH 2010).

There have reportedly been severe overcrowding problems in the prison system. Although the official capacity of the system is 3,653, one rights group reports that 5,324,

were confined in prisons at one time (CLDH 2010). Roumieh prison, which has a capacity of 1,050 (Hadeshian 2010), has reportedly held as many as 3,840 prisoners (HRNM 2010). Nearly 65 percent of these prisoners in Roumieh were foreign nationals who had finished their sentences and were pending transfer to the General Security (CLDH 2010).

A joint 2011 NGO research study on arbitrary detention and torture in Lebanon reported that foreign nationals undergoing prolonged administrative detention show both psychological and physical impacts of such detention. The psychological disorders reported included insomnia, loss of appetite, constant fear, anxiety, memory loss, depression, cognitive disruption and suicidal thoughts (CLDE et al. 2011).

International and national monitoring. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery visited Lebanon in 2012 and reported that "As a result of the Kafala system, a migrant domestic worker who leaves her employment without permission from both her employer and the Government, for whatever reason, is immediately classified as an irregular migrant and is subject to arrest, detention and deportation. " She added that: "There have been reports of migrant domestic workers being detained for years in the detention centre" and recommended that "The detention centre should be relocated immediately. The Government staff in the centre should also include women as currently all are men." (SRCFS 2012).

Lebanon ratified the Optional Protocol to the [Convention against Torture](#) (OPCAT) in 2008. In May-June 2010, the UN Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture (SPT) visited the country. The SPT is mandated to visit all states parties to the OPCAT and make recommendations to the authorities to establish effective safeguards against the risk of torture and ill-treatment. SPT's recommendations and observations are confidential unless states parties request they be made public.

According to a UN press release, the SPT visited the General Security Department's Detention centre (under the General Security/Ministry of Interior) in Adlieh, Beirut, as well as five civil prisons: Roumieh prison and Barbar el Khazen (for female prisoners) in Beirut, Tripoli prisons (one for female and one for male prisoners) in North Lebanon, Zahleh prison (for male prisoners) in Beqaa province, and Nabatiyeh prison in South Lebanon. During the visit the SPT delegation held meetings with relevant official authorities. SPT met with various interlocutors in relation with the creation of a National Prevention Mechanism in Lebanon and reviewed the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in Lebanon, and the safeguards for their protection against torture and ill-treatment. The delegation "conducted private interviews with detainees in various police establishments and inmates in civil and military prisons. The SPT also visited and conducted interviews in other places where persons are or may be deprived of their liberty" (OHCHR 2010). The report has not been made public yet.

After consultations at the domestic level, it was decided to establish a new National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), which would also perform the NPM mandate foreseen in OPCAT to carry out visits to all places of detention, including immigration detention. The Human Rights Committee of the Parliament began examining the draft legislation

establishing the NHRI in late January 2012 (APT 2013; HRW 2013). As of mid-2014, a draft law had been completed by a Parliamentary subcommittee, but the process was effectively on hold due to changes in the executive and the inability to hold a General Assembly to receive and approve the proposed draft (Hadesian 2014).

International assistance. Both the EU and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime have worked in cooperation with the Lebanese government to bring the management of the country's prison system in line with international standards. The organisations helped the government roll out a five-year program (2008-2012) to transfer all prisons from the authority of the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice (EC 2009). According to the EU progress report on Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Lebanon in 2011, the transfer was "lagging" (EC 2012).

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), based in Vienna, received 449,979,00 Euros from EuropeAid, the EU development aid agency, for a project entitled "Strengthening Reception and Detention Capacities in Lebanon (STREDECA)." The objective of the project was "to contribute to Lebanon's capacities to manage its mixed migration flows post interception and/or apprehension." The project ran from January to December 2010. Funds were donated to EuropeAid by France, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland. According to the project description it particularly focused on "the sorting of flows and the identification and treatment of asylum seekers, provisions for women, vulnerable groups and trafficked persons, as well as international protection for asylum seekers and refugees. It evaluated essential national infrastructure and enhanced national institutional capacities for the reception and detention of irregular migrants and asylum seekers in line with international human rights standards." The project was implemented within the framework of the MTM (migration de transit en Méditerranée) Dialogue's fourth phase, "A Dialogue in Action". ICMPD Partners in the project included Caritas Lebanon, UNHCR and DGSG (ICMPD undated; EuropeAid 2011).

An agreement was signed between Italy and Lebanon on 12 March 2010 that commits Italy to providing 400,000 Euros to improve conditions in Lebanese prisons, including the provision of electricity, water, sanitation, food, and training of detainees to prepare food (Hicham 2010). The press has also reported on the renovation and expansion of Nabatiya prison, an initiative being undertaken by the Italian Organization INTERSOS, with funding provided by the Italian Embassy in Lebanon (Hicham 2010).

According to another report, the French government has provided assistance to the Lebanese Ministry of Interior to train the internal security forces responsible for the management of prisons (Khayat 2010).

Detention costs. Civil society actors contend that immigration detention in Lebanon is not nearly as expensive as it should be since the government does not provide health, sanitary, medical, or other services. The only government provision is food, which reportedly does not meet basic standards. Families, NGOS, and humanitarian institutions serve as the basic providers for health, sanitary, subsistence, medical and legal assistance to detainees (Hadesian 2013).

Facts & Figures

According to various reports, as of 2010 Lebanon was using 22 penal institutions for the detention of non-citizens who have been prosecuted for reasons related to their immigration status (CLDH 2010). More recent reports state that the number of prisons used for these reasons has diminished to eight (Frontiers Ruwad and AJEM 2013). All of these facilities have presumably also been used to keep foreign nationals in confinement after they complete their sentences as per administrative rules detailing the handling of foreign prisoners. The country also has one dedicated immigration detention facility located in Beirut that is intended to be used as a form of administrative confinement.

Caritas estimates that incarcerated migrants—including those held in pre-trial detention—represent 15-20 percent of the total prison population. Most are charged with irregular entry or stay, escaping from their employer, falsification of documents, or theft. However, advocates allege that a large majority of complaints that employers file against their domestic workers accusing them of theft are false. The women's prison population reportedly has at times been comprised of more than 50 percent migrant workers (CLMC 2013).

According to UNHCR statistics, as of 28 February 2010, there were 140 detained asylum-seekers and refugees, most of whom were apprehended for illegal entry or stay. Of these, 33 were in prolonged detention, having been kept in detention beyond the term of their criminal sentences (UNHCR 2010b).

In November 2007, there were 1,378 foreigners detained beyond their sentences, approximately 820 in Roumieh prison as well as 441 in General Security custody ('Aliq 2007). Prison sentences for violating immigration laws are between one to three months. However, non-citizens have been held in administrative custody for several years (CLDH 2010).

In 2007, Lebanon forcibly returned more than 300 refugees and asylum seekers detained for unauthorized entry or stay, including more than 200 Iraqis (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2008). The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in cooperation with the Iraqi Embassy, has assisted the "voluntary return" of Iraqis (HRW 2007; USC 2008). In January 2007, UNHCR recognized Iraqi nationals as refugees on a prima facie basis (HRW 2007). However, in 2008 an independent observer documented the deportation of 16 Iraqis holding UNHCR refugee status, two of whom were asylum seekers whose refugee claims had not been decided upon yet (FRA 2008). In 2010, Frontiers Ruwad Association reported the deportation of more than 10 Iraqi refugees recognized by UNHCR. Some of them were awaiting resettlement interviews with the United States Department of Homeland Security, while others had retracted their "voluntary" signature on their deportation orders and resisted removal. The General Security Office, nonetheless, forced them onto the plane or deported them through the land border with Syria (FRA 2010b).

According to the Internal Security Forces, in 2011 around 13 percent of detainees in Lebanese prisons were foreigners who had finished serving their sentences. The group

included asylum seekers and refugees who cannot safely return to their countries” (HRW 2012b).

There are no official statistics on migration in Lebanon and there has been no official census since 1932 (TABAR 2009).

The second smallest country in the region, Lebanon hosts more than 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers, including nearly one million Syrians, some 60,000 Palestinian refugees forced into exile from Syria since 2011, an estimated 280,000 Palestinians in long-term refugee camps, and approximately 10,000 Iraqis. In contrast to their treatment in Turkey, Syrian refugees in Lebanon are not hosted in new formal refugee camps, instead living among the population, often in makeshift shelters or in increasingly cramped Palestinian refugee camps (UNHCR 2013; EC 2013; UNRWA 2014; UNRWA 2014b; HRW 2014; DRC 2013). In addition, there are tens of thousands of other Syrian refugees who are not registered. Lebanese officials estimate the number of unregistered refugees to be as high as 400,000 (Surk 2014).

Lebanon is also a destination or transit country for immigrants and asylum seekers from across the globe, including Sudan, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Bangladesh, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Tanzania (Van Vliet and Hourani 2012; CLDH 2010; UNHCR 2010). Some 250,000 women migrant workers are employed as domestic workers primarily from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Ethiopia, under a contractual arrangement that links residency to employers (HRW 2013, ILO 2013). Estimates say there could be as many as 200,000 stateless persons in Lebanon, although determining an exact figure is impossible particularly as there has been no population census since 1932.

Before the Syrian uprising began in March 2011 there were an estimated 300,000 Syrian seasonal workers in Lebanon who were often the object of anti-Syrian sentiment - a legacy of Syria’s 29-year occupation of Lebanon from the 1970s to 2005 (IRIN 2012).

The country has long been a source of large-scale emigration, especially during the 1975-1989 Civil War, during which nearly a million people left the country, accounting for 40 percent of the total population. An additional half a million left between 1992 and 2007. According to a 2000 estimate, there were 1,221,746 living abroad (Tabar 2009).

List of Detention Sites

Facility Name	Status (Year)	Location	GDP Facility Type	Detention Timeframe	Security	Authority	Management	Reported Population on a Single Day	Demographics & Segregation
Baabda Women's Prison	In-use (2013)	Baabda district, Mount Lebanon (Jabal Lubnan Governorate)	Prison	Long-Term	Secure	Ministry of the Interior	Central Prison's Management	55 prisoners (2010)	Adult Females. No legal segregation (2013)
Babar el Khazen Prison for Women	In-use (2013)	Verdun, Beirut	Prison	Long-Term	Secure	Ministry of the Interior	Prison Division of the Lebanese 'Gendarmerie' (also known as 'Darak')	60 prisoners (2010)	Adult Females. No legal segregation (2013)
General Security Detention Centre	In-use (2013)	Beirut Governorate	Migrant detention centre	Long-Term	Secure	Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities/ Directorate of the General Security	Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities/ General Security	350-450 migrant detainees (2010)	Adult males, females, and minors. Sex segregation (2010); no age segregation, no family units (2013)
Qobbah Prison for Men (Tripoli Men's Prison)	In-use (2013)	Tropoli (Tabulus) district (North Governorate) (al-Shamal)	Prison	Long-Term	Secure	Ministry of the Interior	Prison Division of the Lebanese 'Gendarmerie' (also known as 'Darak')	491 prisoners (2010)	Adult males. No legal segregation (2013)
Qobbah Prison for Women (Tripoli Women's Prison)	In-use (2013)	Tropoli (Tabulus) district (North Governorate) (al-Shamal)	Prison	Long-Term	Secure	Ministry of the Interior	Prison Division of the Lebanese 'Gendarmerie' (also known as 'Darak')	136 prisoners (2010)	Adult Females. No legal segregation (2013)
Roumieh Central Prison	In-use (2010)	Roumieh town, Mount Lebanon (Jabal Lubnan Governorate)	Prison	Long-Term	Secure	Ministry of the Interior	Prison Division of the Lebanese 'Gendarmerie' (also known as 'Darak')	3,500 prisoners (2010)	Adult males and minors. No legal segregation (2013)
Zahleh Men's Prison	In-use (2013)	Al-Madina al-Sina'ieh quarter in Zahleh district, Beqaa Governorate	Prison	Long-Term	Secure	Ministry of the Interior	Prison Division of the Lebanese 'Gendarmerie' (also known as 'Darak')	169 prisoners (2010)	Adult males. No legal segregation (2013)
Zahleh Women's Prison	In-use (2013)	Zahleh district, Beqaa Governorate, Al-Maalaka	Prison	Long-Term	Secure	Ministry of the Interior	Prison Division of the Lebanese 'Gendarmerie' (also known as 'Darak')	29 prisoners (2010)	Adult Females. No legal segregation (2013)

Map of Detention Sites



Country View

1. Baabda Women's Prison
2. Barbar el Khazen Prison for Women
3. General Security Detention Centre
4. Qobbeh Prison for Men (Tripoli Men's Prison)
5. Qobbeh Prison for Women (Tripoli Women's Prison)
6. Roumieh Central Prison
7. Zahleh Men's Prison
8. Zahleh Women's Prison

Country links

Government Agencies

Ministry of Justice

<http://www.justice.gov.lb/CP/ViewPage.aspx?id=1&language=1>

Ministry of Interior

<http://www.moim.gov.lb/> (Arabic)

General Security (Arabic, English, French)

<http://www.general-security.gov.lb/Default.aspx?lang=en-us>

Ministry of Labor

http://www.labor.gov.lb/_layouts/MOL_Application/default.aspx

International Organizations

International Labour Organization: Regional Office for the Arab States

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/arpro/beirut/>

International Organization for Migration (IOM) - Lebanon - Country Information

<http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/where-we-work/africa-and-the-middle-east/middle-east-and-north-africa/lebanon.html>

UNHCR - Lebanon - Country Information

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/page?page=49e486676>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - Lebanon

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/MENARRegion/Pages/LBIndex.aspx>

NGOs and Research Institutions

Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center

<http://english.caritasmigrant.org.lb/our-action/projects/migrants-inside-the-detention-center/>

Danish Refugee Council

<http://drc.dk/relief-work/where-we-work/middle-east/lebanon/>

Frontiers Ruwad Association

<http://www.frontiersruwad.org/index.htm>

Jadaliyya

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/9214/visualizing-human-rights-for-migrant-domestic-work>

Lebanese Center for Human Rights
<http://www.cldh-lebanon.org/>

Media

AlMustaqbal (Arabic)
<http://www.almustaqbal.com/>

Assafir (English)
<http://www.assafir.com/Channel/50/English/SubMenu>

L'Orient le Jour (French)
<http://www.lorientlejour.com/>

National News Agency (Arabic, English, French)
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