



Human Rights Council

16th session

Item 6

From 28 February to 25 March 2011

Intervention of Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture

Consideration UPR reports (Lebanon)

**Secretary General
Mohammad Safa**



Dear Mr. President,

Lebanon announced at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva on November 10, 2010 during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), its support to 41 recommendations.

The recommendations below were approved by the Lebanese government but they have not been implemented or taken into serious consideration to today's date. Some of the recommendations are:

- 1- Ratification of the conventions on the rights of persons with disabilities.
- 2- Establishing a national commission and a national plan for human rights.
- 3- Torture and mistreatment convictions.
- 4- Establishing a national mechanism for the prevention of torture and mistreatment.
- 5- Adopt the law that calls to stop and protect women from domestic violence.
- 6- Take appropriate measures to submit overdue reports.

Furthermore, Lebanon declared that it will study 28 recommendations and present its reflections about them no later than the current 16th session of the Human Right Council.

Some of those recommendations are:

- Ratification of the international convention that protects the victims of enforced disappearances.
- Establishing an independent national commission to investigate about the fate of the enforced disappearances.
- Torture convictions.
- Implementation of honor killings as a crime within the Lebanese law.
- Amend the Lebanese law so it corresponds with the child conventions.
- Set up an open invitation to the responsible of the classified procedures related to the Human Right Council.



It appears that Lebanon has not taken serious steps to execute the recommendations listed above even though Lebanon agreed to some of them. Once again it is assumed the reasoning will be similar in nature to the session on November 11th, 2010 (that the current unstable political situation and the resigned government are behind the setback). In our opinion, such rhetoric is neither acceptable nor convincing. What enhances and empowers our beliefs is that Lebanon refused 37 recommendations such as the ratification of the optional protocol of the international covenant regarding the economic, social, educational and civil rights.

Lebanon also refused the policies and optional protocols that agree on the removal of discrimination against women, the cancellation of death sentences, the elimination of the reservation on code 22 of the convention against torture, and the amendment of the personal status law.

Dear Mr. President,

The sectarian system that the Lebanese government justifies and relies on in its report is what instigated the different wars since 1860. It is a sectarian political system that divides the citizens according to their religions and sects, and that is a fatal violation of the International Covenant that is related to the Civil and Political Rights and to the 2nd article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states:

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs. Whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.”

Today, Lebanon lies behind the walls of a prison called the sectarian system. This system forces Lebanon's citizens to remain divided and imprisoned in sectarian states managed by sectarian people and that is against all principles of human rights. Some of the problematic features keeping this prison alive are:

- Employment is based on the sectarian status.



- The election law is sectarian.
- The personal status law is sectarian (and enforces discrimination against Lebanese women).
- The educational systems are sectarian.

The sectarian discrimination is the main reason behind the ongoing threats of civil wars in Lebanon. While we all consider that torture and enforced disappearance are crimes, sectarianism is a bigger horrifying crime against the Lebanese people, as it has devastating consequences on the society as a whole, and that what triggered us to cry out:

“Sectarianism is torture and discrimination!”

Sectarianism conflicts with human rights. Therefore, the struggle to enforce human rights in Lebanon is possible through the elimination of the sectarian political system and the liberation of Lebanese people from this sectarian prison.

Dear Mr. President,

To conclude, we urge Lebanon to present the overdue reports and set a schedule to execute the recommendations that was agreed at the United Nations Human Rights Council (OHCHR) in Geneva on November 10, 2010, during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). We ask for an elimination of torture and mistreatment in Lebanese prisons, a preventive mechanism in prisons, criminalization of domestic violence, adopt a law and present it to the parliament, adopt a unified civil law of personal status, remove all forms of discrimination against women and the abolition of sectarianism, so that all Lebanese citizens become equal in terms of dignity and rights, cancel the death sentence, approve the political and civil rights of Palestinian refugees, put an end to arbitrary detention, resolve the issue of enforced disappearances and ratify the international convention for the protection of enforced disappearance.

Thank you Mr. President.