

Syrian Coalition Calls for Urgent Investigation into Torture and Killing of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

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The Syrian Coalition condemns in the strongest terms the horrific crimes in Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon. The camps were violently stormed and many young men were detained and tortured. Up to 19 refugees were killed during the storming and the ravaging carried out by the Hezbollah militias, units of the Lebanese army, and the Hezbollah-dominated security forces. Ten more refugees were also killed under torture after they were detained. Over 350 refugees, mostly from the refugee camps in the Aarsal area, were detained.

Credible reports indicated that the Lebanese military is trying to cover up these crimes by preventing the media from entering the area and hindering the work of local and international human rights organizations in order to prevent the documentation of the crimes that occurred during the storming of the camps. The Lebanese military is also preventing lawyers from communicating with detainees held in prisons inside military barracks. Moreover, the Lebanese army has given false accounts of the incidents to mislead public opinion and the media, and it forced the families of the victims to bury the bodies of their loved ones without completing the legal procedures. Human rights groups were also prevented from documenting the cases with the aim of concealing the real causes of the deaths.

The Syrian Coalition holds the Lebanese authorities responsible as it calls for the opening of an urgent investigation into the circumstances of the crimes against the Syrian refugees so that perpetrators are held to account. Lawyers should be allowed to carry out their duties, communicate with all the detainees, and verify the conditions of their detention. Bodies of the victims must be handed over to their families unconditionally and in accordance with standard legal proceedings.

The Coalition calls upon the United Nations, the UN Commission on Human Rights, and all relevant international organizations to take urgent action and assume their responsibilities to stop these violations and crimes and to hold those responsible accountable.

The Coalition rejects any attempts to justify violations and crimes against Syrian refugees under the pretext of “maintaining security” or eliminating terrorist threats in Lebanon and in the Syrian refugee camps in the Aarsal area. The Coalition underscores the need to ensure the safety and rights of Syrian refugees in line with international law and the Convention for the Protection of Refugees, especially with regards to the provision of legal protection and the right to litigation before the courts.

The Coalition emphasizes that the detention, intimidation, and killing of Syrian refugees under torture cannot be consistent with claims on the part of Lebanon of pursuing a “self-distancing” policy. Such claims are unfounded so long as the Hezbollah terrorist militias are allowed to continue with the killing of children and women in Syria and Lebanon and supporting the murderous Assad regime and its mass forced displacement of the Syrian people.