

Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture has organized a side event titled “Open dialogue on the national report of Lebanon submitted to the 23rd UPR session” at Palais des Nations Room XXII Geneva, Switzerland.

This side event aimed to shed light and update participants, in particular delegations and CSOs that will be take the floor at the review, on the disconnect between the reality on the ground and the narrative report submitted by the Lebanese government and initiate an interactive dialogue with the view of further influencing the government to ensure a more systemic implementation and monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Of note, following this interactive dialogue we urged the participants to incorporate our recommendations and comments in their interventions at the 2nd UPR of Lebanon.

While I moderated the panel representing ICSFT, the panel comprised five speakers. Below is the small description of the speaker’s and their presentation.

1. Mr Mohammed Safa, the Secretary General of KRC, his speech focused on the disconnect between the national report of Lebanon and the reality on the ground, in particular regarding the prevalence of systemic torture, sectarianism, lack of judicial and prison reform, an deteriorating human rights and socio-economic situation.
2. Ms.Lydia Canaan- Singer song writer, Poet, Humanitarian & Activist, her presentation will focus on torture from the humanitarian perspective and the topic of her presentation was humane evolution.
3. Mr.Gassan Abdallah- Genetal Director of Palestinian organization for huma rights, he will discuss the status the Palestinian refugees.
4. Mr. George Ghali-Monitoring & advocacy program officer at Alef, his presentation focused on the the civil and political aspect of the Lebanese national report including the lack of speedy and public trial, prison overcrowding.
5. Mr Abdulsalam from development interaction network and the presentation focused on the status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Although we commend Lebanon’s continued engagement in the UPR process; however, Lebanon has failed to make progress on the implementation of the 69 recommendations that were accepted during the first review. The recommendations have not been translated into legislative, policy, institutional and programmatic advances. Lebanon has not taken significant steps to meet its previous commitments.

For instance to:

- amend the definition of torture in accordance with the Convention against Torture;
- investigate and prosecute those responsible for torture; compensate torture victims; and
- establish a national mechanism for the prevention of torture, to which Lebanon has committed itself by ratifying the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture in 2008.

Following an interactive dialogue with the participants the below recommendations were presented to the delegations and representatives of different international NGOs with the view of influencing their intervention and engagement at the UPR of Lebanon today.

We lobbied the participants to urge the Lebanese government to:

- Establish a national mechanism to prevent torture as per the countries commitment up on ratifying the optional protocol on CAT in 2008. This point was later raised by the permanent

mission of UK at the actual UPR session.

- Make Judicial and prison reform, as such, Amend article 401 of the Penal Code to criminalize all forms of torture and ill-treatment
- Establish a viable and non-cosmetic national multi-stakeholder follow up mechanism to forge measurable improvement and raise accountability and implementation.
- We also called for the technical and capacity building assistance for the Lebanese government, if needed.

Participants include, Permanent mission of Finland, Permanent mission of Ireland, permanent mission of Australia, Permanent mission of Denmark, Permanent mission of Norway, Delegation of European Union, Permanent mission of Germany, Permanent mission of United Kingdom, Permanent delegation of Lebanon, OHCHR, CIVICUS, UPR Info, Alkarama, and Al-hakim foundation.