

UA 101/21

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**LEBANON
THREE SYRIAN REFUGEES AT RISK OF DEPORTATION**

Three Syrian refugees from Daraa governorate in southern Syria, Ahmad Al Waked, Tarek Al A'lo, and Fares Al Zo'bi, are at risk of forced deportation to Syria after General Security detained them at Beirut International Airport on 13, 14, and 16 September 2021 respectively. Since then, the three detainees have been held in incommunicado detention.

A human rights lawyer has been seeking to follow up on their cases, but his requests to General Security to meet the three men, as well as to obtain from them signed power of attorney documents, have been refused or ignored to date. According to the lawyer, General Security officers informed him that Ahmad Al Waked and Tarek Al A'lo were being detained at the Information Unit at the General Directorate of the General Security in Beirut, while Fares Al Zo'bi was transferred to the Lebanese Army Military Police. The Lebanese Army, however, told the lawyer on 21 September that he was not in their custody. As such Fares Al Zo'bi has been subjected to enforced disappearance and is at heightened risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Please ask the Major General to:

- Ensure these three men are not deported to Syria as no part of the country is currently safe for returns, and that they be released or charged with a crime recognized under international law.
- Immediately reveal the whereabouts of Fares Al Zo'bi, and ensure that the three men have immediate access to legal representation and to their families as dictated by Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Write to:

Major General Abbas Ibrahim
General Directorate of General Security
Adlieh - Beirut
Lebanon

Contact form: <https://www.general-security.gov.lb/en/contact>

Salutation: Dear Major General

Please copy:

His Excellency Fadi Ziadeh

Ambassador for Lebanon

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Phone: 613 236 5825

Fax: 613 232 1609

Email: info@lebanonembassy.ca

Additional Information

Ahmad Al Waked, Tarek Al A'lo, and Fares Al Zo'bi are three Syrian who fled Daraa governorate in southern Syria fearing for their safety. Violent clashes between Syrian government forces and armed groups intensified in recent months in Daraa.

The three men entered Lebanon in view of seeking asylum in a third country. Lebanon is home to over one million Syrian refugees, who now make up more than a quarter of the population. In a December 2020 letter to Amnesty International, the General Security Office confirmed that the authorities had deported 6,002 Syrians between May 2019 and the end of 2020, including 863 in 2020, following the Higher Defense Council's decision to deport refugees who entered Lebanon "illegally" after the date of 24 April 2019. Deportations were partially halted in 2020 due to the pandemic. Along with the 2019 decision, Lebanon has banned UNHCR, the UN refugee body, to register any new cases of refugees from Syria since 2015.

On 5 September 2021, General Security directorate issued a decision to deport six Syrian refugees accused of entering the country irregularly, despite the grave risks awaiting them in Syria. Amnesty International called in a [statement](#) for halting their deportation. In a welcome statement on 8 September, Major General Abbas Ibrahim, head of Lebanon's General Security Office, confirmed they would not be deporting the six Syrian men. However, the six Syrian refugees remain to date in detention. This case is a sore illustration of the consequences of the Higher Defense Council's decision to deport refugees who enter Lebanon "illegally" after the date of 24 April 2019.

Given that the right to seek asylum is a fundamental right and as Syria remains unsafe for returns, the Higher Defense Council's decision must be promptly retracted and refugees coming from Syria should be afforded full protection in Lebanon. Amnesty International [documented](#) how Syrian authorities specifically target people who fled the country upon their return to Syria, subjecting them to torture, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance.