

TORTURE IS UNLAWFUL:

STRATEGIZING ANTI-TORTURE ACTIONS IN LEBANON



27 ADVOCACY TOOLS
AND MATERIALS

3 ESTABLISHMENT
BODIES

3 DRAFT LAWS
1 draft law
adopted out of
the 3 draft laws

31 EVENTS

1350 PARTICIPANTS

5 CELEBRATIONS
On the occasion
of 26 June

4 POSTERS

6 VIDEOS

4 TV INTERVIEWS

FDFA funded project
2016 - 2023

RESTART CENTER'S JOURNEY WITH THE FDFA IN PREVENTING TORTURE IN LEBANON

Introduction

The partnership journey between Restart Center and the FDFA in Lebanon started in 2016 and was overflowing with achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. Together, we were able to lobby and advocate for the rights of survivors of torture and people deprived of their liberty through working on legal reform, capacity building programs, networking, constructive dialogue, and use of international mechanisms.

Lebanese context

For the past years, Lebanon has been affected by an unprecedented and destructive multi-level crisis. The country's population, including the massive number of refugees it houses, faces challenges in fulfilling basic needs such as housing, food, electricity or water; as well proper employment and income, education, healthcare and other basic services. The security situation has worsened; and the trust in the authorities, in public services and in institutions has eroded, particularly after the 2020 Beirut explosion.

This has affected the government's capacity to tackle human rights matters, and notably the fundamental rights of people deprived of their liberty and of victims of torture; halting the progress made on these issues since the State ratified the Convention against Torture in 2000 and its Optional Protocol in 2008 – the first country in the Middle East to do so.

Objectives of the FDFA projects

The overall **aim of the projects** was to contribute in advancing the prohibition of torture and to enhance the protection of persons deprived of their liberty in Lebanon in line with international and national legal norms.

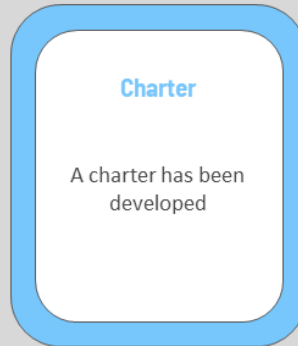
As for the specific ones, we aimed to:

- Advocate for legislative reform that protects and prevents torture in Lebanon.
- Further strengthen civil society coordination on actions related to the prevention of torture.
- Monitor the implementation of international mechanisms and the support state efforts to apply international human rights standards.
- Sensitize members of the State on modes of prevention of torture.
- Raise public awareness on torture and ill-treatment, prevention, and accountability among concerned State agencies and the general public.

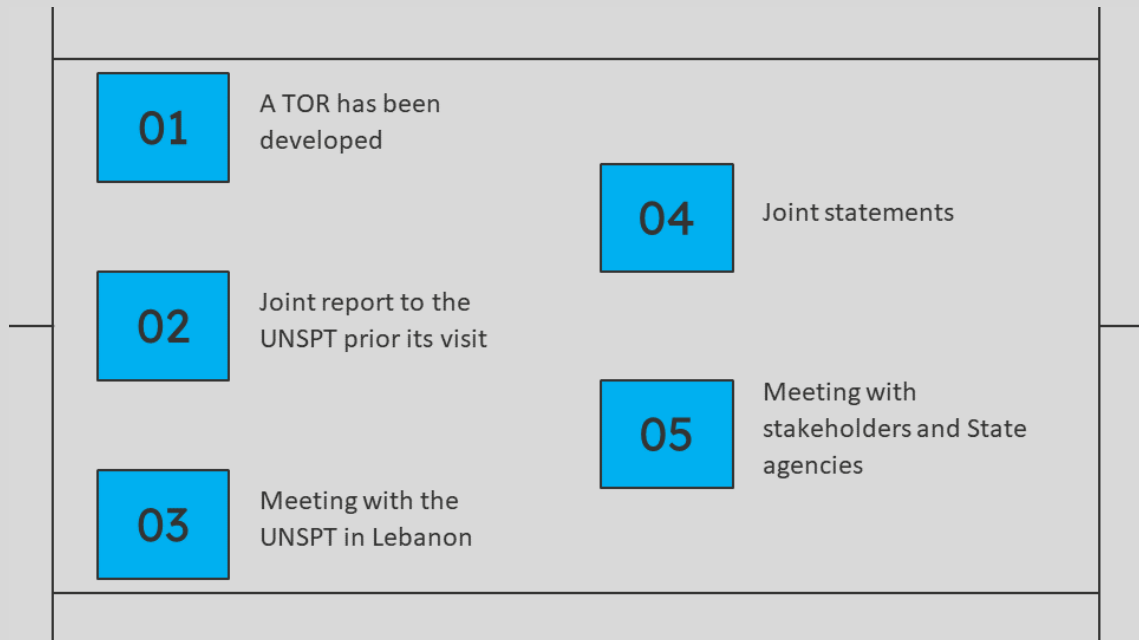
Main achievements

I. Initiating strong entities to prevent and document torture:

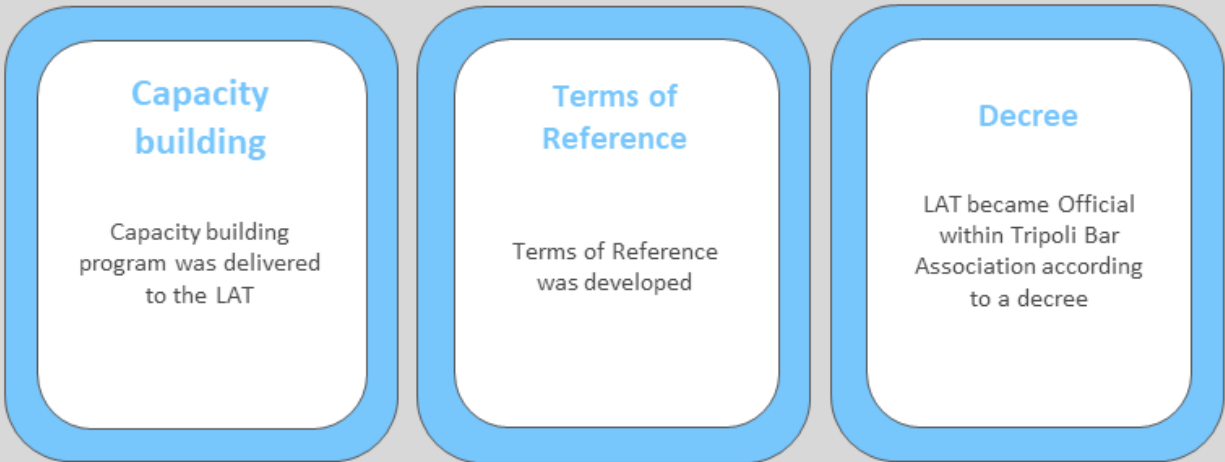
1. **National Observatory** independent body composed of civil society representatives, health and mental health workers, legal experts working in places of detention, with a mandate built to monitor, document, report and denounce torture practices and ill-treatment, including psychological and physical abuses:



2. **Working Group on Torture Prevention** whose mission is to advocate for the eradication of torture and ill-treatment in Lebanon by conducting comprehensive torture prevention efforts at all levels, especially through unified capacity building, awareness-raising and advocacy activities.



3. **Lawyers Against Torture** group is a body established within Tripoli Bar Association whose mandate is to document torture and ill-treatment, monitor places of detention and file law cases before judiciary.



II. Towards Legislative reform:



III. Influence and Capacity Strengthening

TAILORED CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

- Istanbul protocol: Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Monitoring places of detention
- International laws / conventions and mechanisms including CAT / OPCAT / UPR / Treaty bodies reviews
- Mandela Rules: Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners
- Bangkok rules, Tokyo rules
- Mendez principles: The Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering
- National Legal framework: law 65 for criminalization of torture in Lebanon, law 62 for the establishment of NHRI/NPM, Article 47 ensuring the fundamental legal safeguards.



CODE OF CONDUCT TO THE STATE SECURITY

Restart Center **developed** the Code of conduct with the collaboration of the State Security Directorate, **distributed** it and **trained** the State Security members on its implementation.

CONFORMITY WITH INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS

1. Lebanon review before the Committee Against Torture in 2017
 - Mock review: Examination process of the initial report prior to the review
 - Restart Center alternative report
2. UPR process 2021:
 - Briefing note for the Human Rights Council,
 - Lobbying with embassies,
 - Attending pre-sessions,
 - Dialogue with State and non-State actors,
 - Producing a video.
3. Exchange of best practices between the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up and different human rights monitoring mechanisms in the United Nations system.
4. Advocate with the Government to set an action plan for implementing the UPR recommendations through providing the concerned parties with the methodology and to benefit from the Database system offered by the OHCHR.
5. Establishment of NHRI/NPM in Lebanon:
 - Round table prior the designation of the members
 - Conference: The National Human Rights Institution and National Preventive Mechanism: Route for the protection of Human rights and prevention of Torture in Lebanon

SPREADING KNOWLEDGE

Advocacy tools and materials

- Covid 19 response:
 - *Corona virus and rights of vulnerable people: Safeguards*
 - *Actions to reduce risks in prisons and detention places*
- Lebanon Protests response that began in October 2019



Restart Center with the collaboration of Tripoli Bar Association, established a Complaint Office and offered the possibility to document torture and ill-treatment during protests.

What is necessary to move closer to a country with a preventive system?

Restart Center built its advocacy work through education, awareness and sharing knowledge with the devotion to influence decision makers and stakeholders to protect persons deprived of their liberty and victims of torture and ill-treatment. Thus far, with joint efforts, Lebanon has moved from taboo to openness about torture and ill-treatment and life behind closed doors. Then again, practice has shown lack on different levels including impunity, redress, detention conditions and legal framework. Therefore, endeavors are a necessity to preserve improvements so as to shift the current culture of torture and ill-treatment and offer alternatives, ensure legislative reform, push towards the implementation of the existing laws, and monitoring places of detention.

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