

Press Release

Forced Deportation: a Determined Uncontrolled Practice?

Beirut, 5 October 2011

Once again, the Lebanese General Security deported a recognized Iraqi refugee to Iraq, despite Lebanon's unequivocal obligation to respect and adhere to the principle of non-refoulement.

Jawad Al Jabbouri, a UNHCR recognized refugee was deported yesterday to Iraq under mysterious circumstances. Al Jabbouri was kept in arbitrary detention for more than three years as a measure to force him to agree to be deported. He resisted this physical and psychological pressure and continued throughout these years to refuse to "voluntarily" return to Iraq where he fears for his life.

His deportation was not officially declared to concerned parties, and none of his inmate was aware of his imminent deportation. This leads to believe that it cannot be "voluntary".

The deportation of Al Jabbouri is not only a violation of the principle of non-refoulement and of Article 3 of the Convention against Torture to which Lebanon is a signatory, but also to the principles and standards of the Rule of Law in a democratic society.

In the case of Al Jabbouri against the State, the court decided that his detention is arbitrary and ordered that he should be released immediately and unconditionally. He obtained two similar court decisions. Yet, the Security authorities responsible for his arbitrary detention adamantly refused to execute the court orders, thus undermining the judiciary and the rule of law system.

The deportation of Al Jabbouri is not the first one. This incidence confirms the continuity of the lack of accountability for the arbitrary detention and deportation of refugees and asylum seekers and the complete undermining of judiciary. Frontiers Association's condemnation of such practice and its call for refugee and asylum seekers' protection framework is not the first one either but to no avail. International refugee and human rights standards appear to be dead letters in Lebanon.

Today Frontiers Association is urging the Judiciary to defend its role and responsibilities that the public opinion need to regain trust, by initiating a full investigation into the deportation of Jawad Jabbouri and into the pattern of arbitrary detention and forced deportation, and to make the findings public. Frontiers Association also call the Parliament to perform its supervisory functions and to protect the Constitution and Lebanon's international obligations against any violation and arbitrariness by the Administration, and to make the necessary legal reforms to provide a protection space that guarantees the minimum rights and security for refugees and asylum seekers who are temporary in Lebanon.