

THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)

STAKEHOLDERS REPORT With a focus on Youth

LEBANON

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Stakeholders report has a youth focus. Youth age in Lebanon is defined as falling between 15 and 29 years old. This is based on the youth age declared by the United Nations (15- 24 years old), and extended to 29 due to socioeconomic characteristics specific to Lebanon, such as age of marriage and social independence. Youth in Lebanon are estimated at around 37% of the total population.

Youth in Lebanon face two fold discrimination: in society and in the Lebanese laws. Society looks at youth as the generation of tomorrow, and not as citizens of today. Practically, youth are not expected to take initiative or influence society. As a result, they lack self-confidence and self esteem, and seldom express their thought comfortably and courageously. The laws are in many ways a reflection of the societal mentality. The Lebanese laws and policies are not youth-friendly as they do not allow youth's meaningful engagement in decision-making processes in the public sphere.

Additionally, the Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon amounts to around 300,000 inhabitants, and makes up around 10% of the Lebanese residing population. Palestinian youth, together with other non-Lebanese youth residing in Lebanon (such as migrant workers from Syria, Iraqis, and other refugees), are not protected by the Lebanese laws, and therefore are enduring violation of their human rights continuously.

Two key factors challenge the application of human rights for young citizens in Lebanon. The first is the absence of a national youth policy, which guarantees youth access to public services and mainstreams their needs and aspiration in public policy. The second is the confessional political system in Lebanon, which discriminates against citizens based on their religious belonging and that enhances the patron-client relationship between political/sect leaders and their constituency at the expense of strengthening the sense of belonging to the country and hinders young people's economic independence and initiative. The lack of a civil personal status code also limits young people's freedoms in choosing partners, setting up families, and being independent from their families.

This Stakeholders report describes the situation of human rights of young people in Lebanon. Its observations and recommendations, while in some cases specific to certain segments of young people, are based on the belief that youth human rights apply to all, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." (UDHR Article 2, CESCR (2), ICCPR (2), etc.). The report presents issues classified into various sectors where young people's rights are violated. The report also presents a specific recommendation under each issue, which if adopted, would re-integrate youth in existing power structures and contribute to the betterment of the human rights record concerning young people in Lebanon.

II. LIST OF CONTRIBUTING ASSOCIATIONS IN THE FRAME OF THE YOUTH ADVOCACY PROCESS (YAP)

YAP is a network of youth organizations working together to have a national youth policy in Lebanon, which provides youth with opportunities to participate in the public life as decision makers. YAP works at 3 levels in parallel: empowering youth to advocate for their rights; organizing lobbying meetings with decision makers to initiate policy change; and building partnerships with the media with the aim to promote youth demands and influence the public opinion. Below are listed the profiles of 19 organizations that contributed to this report in the frame of YAP. (www.yaplebanon.org).

(Alphabetical order)

1. **AIDOUN GROUP** is an independent civil body to defend the right of return of Palestinian refugees. Founding member of the “Palestinian Right of Return” coalition.
2. **AL- AHED YOUTH UNION**, established in 1997 aims at developing local communities through building the capacities of young people and providing them with incentives to spend their time constructively based on ethical and national principles through workshops, seminars, conferences, and through the dissemination of research and studies, and through organizing scientific and cultural exhibitions, and field trips, summer camps and outdoor activities for the purpose of recreation, entertainment, and to learn about the different areas of Lebanon.
3. **AMEL ASSOCIATION** aims at building a strong and mobilized Civil Society, and promoting social, economic, civil and cultural rights for the underprivileged in Lebanon. Through its 23 centers located in Beirut, south of Lebanon and the Bekaa, Amel association plans and implements programs and projects pertaining to social and health services, education, human rights, trainings, rural development, all this to achieve human rights and social justice.
4. **ASSOCIATION NAJDEH** is a non governmental organization working in the fields of social development and education. Its mission is to empower Palestinian refugee women and children in Lebanon through providing them with the necessary tools and knowledge to face marginalization and play active roles in decision making processes in issues that affect their lives and their communities. Association Najdeh runs 36 centers in 10 Palestinian refugee camps and gatherings across the country. In these centers, the association runs programs on: vocational training; mother & child; embroidery; social affairs and services; psychosocial support; micro- enterprise; popular education; violence against women, in addition to emergency projects in times of crisis.

- 5. THE COLLECTIVE FOR RESEARCH AND TRAINING ON DEVELOPMENT- ACTION (CRTD.A)**'s overall vision is to work towards gender equality and women's rights in the MENA region through creating and sustaining spaces for direct field level action and grassroots interventions with women, action-oriented feminist research, debate, analysis, exchange and collaboration on issues of gender and development in the MENA region. CRTD.A seeks to achieve this through designing and implementing cutting-edge training and capacity building programs, feminist research projects, building individual and organizational capacity, gender mainstreaming and advocacy as well as direct community level project interventions that respond to the challenges of achieving gender equality in both local and regional contexts.
- 6. THE FREE PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT** is a secular Lebanese party stemming from the popular phenomenon surrounding General Michel Aoun's tenure as Prime Minister from 1988 to 1990. The Free Patriotic Movement started as a self-organized and self-supported group of youth engaged in activism in every legal means to regain the sovereignty of Lebanon. In 2005, upon the return of General Aoun from exile, the Free Patriotic Movement was officially organized into a political party whose main objectives center around the reformation of the Lebanese political system on social grounds. The Free Patriotic Movement remains a youth centric party whose core is its vibrant student base. The Free Patriotic Movement is present on a national level, throughout the Lebanese regions and the Diaspora, and currently commands the second largest bloc in the legislative and executive branches of government.
- 7. HELEM**, an organization based in Lebanon, works against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Helem's work includes, but is not limited to civil, political, and basic rights (such as health and services). Helem aims to counter the lack of information (specifically in Arabic) on issues related to sexuality and gender; as we promote the idea of knowledge being the key for tolerance and acceptance. These initiatives are done through publication, lectures, workshops, and so on. On the advocacy level, one of Helem's long-term goals is the annulment of legal persecution of homosexuals in Lebanon, justified through the law 534 of the Lebanese penal code, stating that "unnatural sexual intercourse" is punishable by up to one year imprisonment. Therefore, Helem lobbies with other human rights organizations on the national, regional and international levels for decriminalization of homosexuality and ensuring private liberties and freedoms in Lebanon.
- 8. THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CENTER (HDC)**, a non-governmental organization dedicated to Human Rights, was established 1999 by a number of Lebanese and Palestinian lawyers. HDC's work is focused primarily in Palestinian communities through offices in Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli and with the support of local volunteers and activists.

- 9. INDYACT**, the league of independent activists, is an organization that works on environmental, social, and cultural rights in Lebanon and globally.
- 10. KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation** is a Lebanese non-profit, non-political, non-confessional civil society organization committed to the achievement of gender-equality and non-discrimination, and the advancement of the human rights of women and children. KAFA envisions a society where all its citizens live free of violence and exploitation and where they have equal access to opportunities and results and their human rights are respected, protected and enjoyed. We believe that women's and children's rights are integral to this achievement and to building a free and fair society. KAFA's mission is to work towards eradicating all forms of gender-based violence and exploitation of women and children through advocating for legal reform and change of policies and practices, influencing public opinion, and empowering women and children. Our focus areas are those of: 1) Family violence 2) Child sexual abuse 3) Exploitation and trafficking in women and 4) Socio-legal counseling and empowerment. KAFA combines in its work the various methods of lobbying, action-research, publication, training and awareness raising, and supporting the victims. Our work's guiding principles are those of the universality of human rights and the participation and inclusion of all target groups and marginalized people in our endeavors.
- 11. THE LEBANESE FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION (LFPA)** is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, recognized as a public utility organization. The LFPA's mission is to diffuse and advocate for Reproductive/ Sexual Health (RSH) and Family Planning as a basic human right; improve and strengthen the knowledge and attitudes of the Population regarding the RSH issue until all needs are met; support and encourage all efforts directed towards woman, youth, and population programs and strive to advance Gender equality as to involve both women and men in decision making process.
- 12. THE LEBANESE FORCES PARTY.** The "Lebanese Forces" was created as a result of excruciating circumstances in Lebanon in the late seventies when the Lebanese Christian community felt the need to defend itself against impending internal and external dangers and threats. After signing the Taef Accord in 1989, the "Lebanese Forces" transformed its military resistance into a political resistance. Hence, the "Lebanese Forces Party" was formed on September 10, 1990 based on three undisputed principles: safeguarding Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and distinct identity within its internationally recognized borders; founding the Lebanese Government on the basic principles of human rights; establishing a democratic system whereas freedom and Human Rights of every citizen are protected and guaranteed. The "Lebanese Forces Party" enjoys a strong presence and a wide area of influence on the educational level within student organizations in universities and schools and

- also within many labor unions representing doctors, lawyers and engineers to mention a few.
- 13. LEBANON SUPPORT** is an Emergency, Recovery and Development information center and portal (<http://www.lebanon-support.org>) launched during the Israeli war on Lebanon in July 2006. Lebanon Support was registered as a national non-governmental organization in November 2008. Lebanon Support's main operational framework is focused on information management, production and delivery, aiming at enhancing the knowledge base of civil society actors and development, recovery and emergency actors, to best respond to the emerging needs of the vulnerable communities in Lebanon. Lebanon Support believes that an informed development and recovery and emergency community, renders it more efficient and more effective, thus enabling it to reduce the existing vulnerabilities within the country.
 - 14. MASAR** aims at promoting citizens' participation towards a more inclusive, non sectarian, democratic society through empowerment by implementing capacity building activities, mobilization, trainings, awareness raising, lobbying for policy change, and enabling access to information. Masar works with children, women, local communities, NGOs, CBOs, schools, municipalities, with a special focus on youth on the values of local ownership of development initiatives, democratic decision making, transparency and networking. Practically, Masar works through direct implementation of developmental interventions, supporting replication of successful models of participation, and building partnerships with Media to ensure wide outreach to the public opinion.
 - 15. MEEM** is a collective of activists who are lesbian, bisexual, and queer women and transgender persons in Lebanon. Meem's work focuses on providing support groups and counseling services for a community of over 300 individuals, as well as capacity-building activities and workshops. Meem also publishes a weekly online magazine featuring reports, articles, and stories of queer perspectives in the Arab world.
 - 16. NABAA** works in Palestinian refugee camps and gatherings and in Lebanese communities. Nabaa aims at empowering Palestinian and Lebanese communities, with a focus on children and youth to engage positively in developing themselves and their communities on the basis of child rights and through advocacy and ongoing education.
 - 17. NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID (NPA)** is a voluntary humanitarian organization, which has deep roots in the labor movement struggle for political freedom, social and economic freedom, equal rights and cultural growth. It is a value-based organization, which stands up for the oppressed and poor. The premise of NPA's undertakings is based on five values: Unity, Solidarity, Human dignity, Peace and Freedom.

18. THE PROGRESSIVE YOUTH ORGANIZATION (PYO) is a youth organization affiliated to the Progressive Socialist Party in Lebanon. Its key objectives are to: initiate youth towards the teaching of the ideology; motivate youth towards a unified action in search for peace, equality and justice; provide a democratic environment for change to a more human, fair and unified society; help its members to act as catalysts in the development of societies through active participation within the communities and a structured coordination with other groups; assist its members in identifying opportunities and meet the challenges through an adequate allocation of capabilities. Practically, the PYO organizes and participates in workshops, seminars and summer camps nationally and internationally and is active in schools and universities across Lebanon.

19. VOLUNTEERS WITHOUT BORDERS is a non profit non governmental organization based on the principles of volunteerism, citizenship, culture, development and human rights. It aims at building an ideal civil society that is continuously engaged in humanitarian and patriotic issues for a better Lebanon. The organization encourages citizens to practically engage in activities of developmental, environmental and cultural types with the aim to raise awareness on values of citizenship and democracy and human rights.

III. ISSUES

1. Participation in public life

Voting and candidature age in the elections laws

According to the elections law, Lebanese young people are not allowed to vote in Parliamentary or municipal elections before the age of 21, nor run for candidature in those elections before the age of 25 years old. The age of majority on all legal matters being 18, the current law leads to inequality between adult citizens thus violating the Lebanese Constitution (Preamble, Article c.¹, “equality of rights and duties”). It is also in violation of international agreements on civil and political rights, including ICCPR (Articles 18², 19³, and especially Article 25⁴) and the Child’s Right Convention.

Recommendations: to lower the voting age in (1) Parliamentary and municipal elections to 18 and (2) the candidature age to 21 years old.

Age to form and join associations

Lebanese youth are not allowed to form and join associations before the age of 20 according to law 1909 at the Ministry of Interior and the age of 18 according to the law # 629/2004 at the Ministry of Youth & Sports. This is a violation of the Lebanese constitution (Preamble, Article c.⁵) and international agreements on civil and political rights, including the UDHR (Article 20⁶), ICCPR (Articles 21⁷, 22⁸, 18⁹, 19¹⁰, 25¹¹), and the CRC (Article 15¹²).

Recommendation: to lower the age to form and join associations to 15 years old.

The Right of youth to knowledge and to access information

Being connected to the internet has become enshrined in the fourth generation of human rights. However, the percentage of young people who access the internet is still relatively low, especially outside the capital Beirut. Today, the average cost of internet in Lebanon is around USD 33.33, equaling 10% of the minimum wage. According to the International Telecommunications Union (2008), internet penetration in Lebanon does not exceed 25% of the population. This situation hinders youth’s right to access information, including information about their health and personal safety, and their right to acquire and build knowledge about their needs and aspirations. It is an obstacle towards achieving rights enshrined in UDHR Article 19¹³, ICCPR Article 19¹⁴, and various rights to access information on health and livelihood (for example, CRC, especially Article 3¹⁵). Access to information is also hindered by the unchecked securitization of communications and personal data, especially in the context of the war on terror, such as violating the right to privacy of university students through the sharing of their files with security agencies without the prior consent of students or respect of the sanctity of higher education.

Recommendations: for the government (1) to reduce the cost of internet in Lebanon, expanding its coverage outside the capital Beirut and increase its speed; (2) to equip schools with research technologies; (3) for the municipalities to establish and equip public libraries, including internet access, especially in the peripheries in order to fulfill Article 28(3¹⁶) of the CRC.

The law 220/2000 concerning people with additional needs

The law 220/ 2000 guarantees the right of people with additional needs to access public services and integrate in mainstream society, including the labor market by specifying a quota of 3% in the employment institutions for people with additional needs. However, no implementation mechanisms have been issued for the law yet, although the law itself was approved by Parliament in the year 2000. The absence of these mechanisms keeps people with additional needs excluded and deprived from their human rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD, Article 27¹⁷).

Recommendations: the government should: (1) issue implementation mechanisms for law 220/2000; (2) institutionalize Brail for the blind in schools; and (3) ensure that the private sector is employing 3% of its employees as people with additional needs.

2. Protection

Youth with no identification documents (ID)

There are thousands of young people in Lebanon, including Lebanese and non-Lebanese who do not have identification documents. In violation of UDHR (Article 15¹⁸), CRC (Article 7¹⁹ and 8²⁰), ICCPR (24(c)²¹), the government has not put mechanisms in place yet to address this problem. This fact leaves those youth vulnerable, discriminated against and unprotected, and often unable to integrate in society at the social, political and economic level.

Recommendation: the Lebanese government, represented by the Ministry of Interior should issue identification documents for non-ID young people, based on the international agreements mentioned above and in accordance with international law.

Early marriage

Marriage procedures in Lebanon are bound by religious laws where each sect sets a legal age for males and females to marry. Some religious sects allow marriage as early as the age of 9 for girls and 14 for boys. From a protection point of view, this is harmful for the physiology, health, psychology of children and youth who marry at this age. Moreover, at this early age, children and youth do not have the capabilities to assume the responsibility of forming and maintaining a family.

Recommendation: the government should issue a law banning marriages below the age of 18 years old to be binding for all religious groups in Lebanon, in accordance with Article 16²² of the CEDAW.

The presence of cluster bombs in south Lebanon

In the last Israeli aggression over Lebanon in the summer of 2006, the UN estimated that Israel dropped 4 million cluster bombs on South Lebanon, of which around 1 million remained unexploded “contaminating fields, schools, rivers and homes.” This has had many negative repercussions on people’s lives and livelihoods, to name just a few: close to 300 civilians killed or maimed, restricted mobility, inability to cultivate the land, growing unemployment, migration of citizens, mainly youth to big cities for livelihoods.

Recommendations: The international community and the Lebanese government should (1) multiply efforts to clear the land in south Lebanon from cluster bombs; (2) increase international pressure on Israel to hand in remaining land-mines and cluster bombs maps to the United Nations, and (3) ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Domestic violence and oppression facing young people, especially females

People practicing domestic violence against their siblings and wives are not often punished by law. This leaves children, especially females vulnerable, unprotected, and unable to voice out their problem. This problem is exacerbated due to the lack of protection mechanisms, including the absence of a legal framework. A draft law was approved in early April by the Council of Ministers and is going to the Parliament.

Recommendations: To have the Parliament vote on the domestic violence law under discussion without delay and in accordance with the CRC (Article 19²³) and CEDAW, and create implementation mechanisms.

Protection of juvenile delinquents

The law #422 guarantees the protection of juvenile delinquents at all levels, including: how the police security forces should approach and deal with juvenile delinquents; the availability of adequate and well-equipped prisons... However, the law is not implemented properly and juvenile delinquents are subject to violence and humiliation, deteriorating health conditions and social well being, and are often stigmatized which impact their lives negatively.

Recommendations: (1) to ensure proper and full application of the law # 422; (2) to ensure that law # 422 is applied on non Lebanese juvenile delinquents; (3) to ensure the protection of juvenile delinquents who do not have IDs; in accordance with CRC, Article 19²⁴.

Protection for refugees

In direct violation of the provision of the Refugee Convention, Lebanon does not provide any protection mechanisms and legal frameworks for Refugees. Additionally, Palestinian refugees do not fall under this convention (1951) and are under the mandate of UNRWA (1949), a service agency that cannot provide a framework for rights. Practically refugees suffer from restricted mobility inside the country, live precarious social and economic conditions; they have no opportunities for education and no means to participate in public life; and are subject to arbitrary detention and exposure to violence and humiliation.

Recommendations: (1) to amend Lebanese laws regarding refugees to conform to international conventions that are ratified by the Lebanese government; (2) to apply the Casablanca protocol of the Arab League concerning Palestinian refugees; and (3) to reconsider UNRWA mandate to include mechanisms to protect human rights enshrined in international conventions.

3. Freedoms & Citizenship

Personal and individual freedoms

Personal and individual freedoms are not institutionalized in Lebanon and are often in conflict with laws protecting collective confessional identities. This is reflected in laws regulating national identity and personal status. If a young person is not married, s/he is required to submit “a family ID”, and not an individual ID in any personal legal procedure or transaction. In addition, the religious sect the individual is born in is mentioned on the ID, even if the individual does not identify him/herself as such.

Recommendation: (1) the government should acknowledge a law that legalizes using a personal ID in personal matters/ procedures, which does not declare the religion/ sect; (2) the government should also acknowledge a civil status law for individuals who do not fall, or do not wish to fall, under the officially recognized religious sects in Lebanon.

Obtaining Lebanese nationality for children from a Lebanese mother and a non-Lebanese father

Lebanese women married to non Lebanese men can not pass on their nationality to their children and husbands. Consequently, children are stripped of their rights as citizens in Lebanon. This fact is a blunt discrimination against Lebanese women compared to Lebanese men who have the full right to pass on their nationalities to their non-Lebanese wives. This has also negative impact on children at the social, psychological and economic levels.

Recommendations: The government should acknowledge the right of Lebanese women married to non-Lebanese men to grant the Lebanese nationality to their children and lift its reservations on Article 9 (2)²⁵ and Article 16 (1)(c)(d)(f) and (g)²⁶ of the CEDAW.

Sexual Orientation

Article 534 of the Lebanese Penal Code states that "sexual intercourse contrary to nature" is punishable for up to 1 year in prison. The article is used to criminalize homosexuality, an issue recognized as illegitimate especially with the WHO's decision of 17 May 1992 to remove homosexuality from the list of psychological disorders. The persistence of the article is in direct violation of Articles 1 (“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”) and 2 (“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”) of the UDHR and the Preamble of the Lebanese Constitution (Article (c))²⁷.

Recommendations: Based on the pioneering legal decision of the District Court of Batroun in North Lebanon, that saw that consensual homosexual relations do not contravene the laws of nature, the Lebanese government should remove Article 534 from the Lebanese Penal Code and any resulting institutionalized discrimination.

4. Education

Compulsory and free education up to the age of 15

Lebanese law makes education compulsory and free in public schools for children and youth up to the age of 15. However, this law is breached as children and youth drop out from school and enter the labor market at an early age due to economic reasons on one hand, and to the high cost of schooling (books, stationary, transportation...). Once children and youth join the labor market, they are subject to exploitation reflected in: long working hours, no registration in the national social security fund (NSSF), and risky work conditions. This is being done in the absence of strong monitoring of the law enforcement by the government, namely the ministry of labor and education, and absence of mechanisms to punish employers who employ children and youth under the age of 15.

Recommendation: the government should (1) ensure proper implementation of Decree #1692 of 9/4/2009 related to free and compulsory education in primary education (until age 15); (2) equip schools to accommodate students with additional needs, and in accordance with ILO regulations and the articles of the CRC, CEDAW, CESC (especially Article 13²⁸), and UDHR (Article 26²⁹).

The integration of sex education in school curricula

Lebanon's Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the UNFPA and civil society, worked for many years on mainstreaming sex education in school curricula. It has been a participatory process, yet difficult as the subject is considered a social taboo. Young people learn about sexuality and sex related issues from the Internet and from peers, where exchanged information is often inaccurate and unscientific. In 2009, the sex education curriculum was acknowledged by the minister of education under the title "Life skills applied to education in reproductive health from a gender perspective", and has been integrated in cycle one at schools. Extensive work still needs to be done in order to integrate sex education in remaining cycles.

Recommendation: in keeping with the momentum of introducing sex-education comprehensively in schools, the Ministry of Education and the Center for Educational Research and Development should integrate sex education in the second and third cycles at schools in order to fully achieve the right to education and the right to health.

Quality education at schools and universities

Public education provided in public schools and the national university has been facing several structural problems and consequently, several question marks have been raised around the quality of education they provide to students. The key problems facing public education are: the unavailability of educational visual aid equipment; curricula need to be developed further to become more student focused and encourage analysis and self learning; also, the physical infrastructure needs to be improved. This fact is creating a growing gap between public and private schools in terms of quality education. This is also causing students' drop out from schools.

Recommendations: the government should allocate a higher budget for public schools and the national university to improve infrastructure, curricula, and provide on job training for teachers in order to ensure the achievement of the right to education

enshrined in international conventions (UDHR Article 26³⁰, CESCR Article 13³¹, and the CRC (Article 28³²).

5. Economy

Youth employment

The official unemployment rate in Lebanon is 15%. It is almost double for youth, who face challenges in finding jobs upon graduation, lack government agencies providing job counseling, and have no access to unemployment benefits. The root causes of unemployment are many and could be summarized in the following: the absence of national plans aiming at developing the labor market and increasing youth participation in it; the lack of adequate understanding of the characteristics, problems and ambitions of youth by public institutions; the lack of harmony between educational curricula and the requirements of the labor market. All this leads to exacerbating poverty in the country, and to immigration of youth to abroad in attempt to seek a better life.

Recommendations: the government should: (1) put national plans aiming at developing the labor market and enhancing youth engagement in it; (2) activate civil service centers in the regions, where youth can apply for jobs in the public sector; (3) recruit young people in the various public sectors and stop nepotism and policies of underemployment and disguised unemployment; (4) ensure that youth benefit from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF); and (5) create a system for unemployment benefits in order to achieve the “right to work” for all as enshrined in UDHR, (Article 23³³) and CESCR (Article 6³⁴).

6. Health

The consumption of tobacco and alcohol by youth

People under the age of 18 are not entitled to buy cigarettes and alcohol in Lebanon. However, the law is rarely applied, and young people under 18 face no obstacles in buying these items. On another level, smoking is not forbidden in public areas and the advertising of tobacco and alcohol is not regulated, an encouraging factor for youth to become more addicted to smoking, which affects their health negatively.

Recommendations: the government should: issue a law to ban smoking in public places; be strict in applying regulations concerning the sale and advertising of alcohol, tobacco, and other hazardous products (such as fast food) to youth under 18, to achieve the fulfillment of the right to health, especially in CESCR (12³⁵) and CRC (17³⁶).

Psychological health

Green public spaces have become almost extinct in the capital Beirut and other cities across the country. Urban areas have become characterized for being overpopulated, and having very little open space overlooking natural scenes. This generates stress and affects the psychological health of people, including youth, negatively.

Recommendations: municipalities should construct and maintain green public spaces in urban (and rural) areas across the country, to ensure the full commitment to the achievement of the right to health (UDHR (25),³⁷ CESCR (12)³⁸, and CRC (Article 3(2)³⁹).

7. Palestinian youth

Palestinian youth aged 15-29 make up around half of the total Palestinian population residing in Lebanon. We are presenting their human rights situation in a separate paragraph, not because we intend to exclude them, but because their situation is much worse off than Lebanese counterparts. One key problem facing Palestinians in Lebanon, including youth, is the lack of clarity of the various duty bearers and their various responsibilities before the refugee population. Another key problem is the absence of human rights for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, since they fall outside the Refugee Convention and are under the mandate of a services agency (UNRWA). Palestinians in Lebanon, including youth, are unable to secure decent living conditions, and often are subject to discrimination and xenophobia in violation of CERD (2⁴⁰). They are not entitled to work in jobs that are organized into unions, in violation of UDHR (23⁴¹), CESCR (6(1)⁴² and 7⁴³). Even if they happen to be employed, they pay social security fees but are not entitled to benefits. They are also not entitled to own a house or other property (in violation of UDHR 17(1)⁴⁴), are not entitled to form associations (in violation of ICCPR Articles 21⁴⁵ and 22⁴⁶, CRC (15⁴⁷)), and face difficulties in accessing public services, such as public schools and hospitals (in violation of UDHR Articles 22⁴⁸, 25⁴⁹, and 26(1)⁵⁰; CESCR 12⁵¹ and 13⁵²; CRC 3 (2&3)⁵³, 24(2)⁵⁴, and 28(1&2)⁵⁵. Some are not registered at the Refugees Department at the Ministry of Interior and others do not have any identification documents (in violation of UDHR 15⁵⁶, ICCPR 24(3)⁵⁷). The multilayered siege (physical, security, political, and social) imposed on Palestinian refugee camps, where the majority of Palestinians reside in Lebanon is an obstacle to the achievement of UDHR (Articles 13(1)⁵⁸ and 25(1)⁵⁹), ICCPR (Article 12(1)⁶⁰).

Recommendations: the government should (1) acknowledge human rights for Palestinians in Lebanon, including youth; (2) issue IDs in collaboration with the Embassy of Palestine for non IDs who are mostly youth; (3) address Palestinian youth in the “National Youth Policy” document whenever it is acknowledged by the Lebanese government; (4) extend the right to work to Palestinian refugees including benefits and right to join and form unions; (5) allow them the right to own property, especially housing; (6) allow equal access to public services; (7) lift the blockade of refugee camps. (8) The UNRWA should ensure that its curricula enhance the sense of nationalism among Palestinian students.

UPR Stakeholders Report Focus on Youth (Lebanon)

- 1 Lebanese Constitution, Preamble, Article c.: Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on respect for public liberties, especially the freedom of opinion and belief, and respect for social justice and equality of rights and duties among all citizens without discrimination
- 2 ICCPR - Article 18: 1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. 2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice. 3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. 4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.
- 3 ICCPR - Article 19: 1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference. 2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice. 3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.
- 4 ICCPR - Article 25: Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors; (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.
- 5 Lebanese Constitution, Preamble, Article c.: Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on respect for public liberties, especially the freedom of opinion and belief, and respect for social justice and equality of rights and duties among all citizens without discrimination
- 6 UDHR – Article 20: (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- 7 ICCPR – Article 21: The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.
- 8 ICCPR - Article 22: 1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests. 2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those which are prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on members of the armed forces and of the police in their exercise of this right. 3. Nothing in this article shall authorize States Parties to the International Labour Organisation Convention of 1948 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize to take legislative measures which would prejudice, or to apply the law in such a manner as to prejudice, the guarantees provided for in that Convention.
- 9 ICCPR - Article 18: 1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. 2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice. 3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. 4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.
- 10 ICCPR - Article 19: 1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference. 2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice. 3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.
- 11 ICCPR - Article 25: Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors; (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.
- 12 CRC Article 15: 1. States Parties recognize the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.

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- 13 UDHR - Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- 14 ICCPR - Article 19, op. cit.
- 15 CRC - Article 3: 1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. 2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures. 3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.
- 16 CRC – Article 28: 3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.
- 17 CRPD - Article 27 - Work and employment: 1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation, to, inter alia: (a) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions; (b) Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances; (c) Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others; (d) Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training; (e) Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment; (f) Promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business; (g) Employ persons with disabilities in the public sector; (h) Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures; (i) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace; (j) Promote the acquisition by persons with disabilities of work experience in the open labour market; (k) Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities. 2. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not held in slavery or in servitude, and are protected, on an equal basis with others, from forced or compulsory labour.
- 18 UDHR – Article 15: (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.
- 19 CRC – Article 7: 1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents. 2. States Parties shall ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.
- 20 CRC - Article 8: 1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference. 2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity.
- 21 ICCPR – Article 24: 3. Every child has the right to acquire a nationality.
- 22 CEDAW – Article 16 (2): The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.
- 23 CRC – Article 19, 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.
- 24 CRC – Article 19, ibid.
- 25 CEDAW – Article 9 (2): States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.
- 26 CEDAW – Article 16: 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (c) The same rights and

responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution; (d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount; (f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount; (g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation

27 Lebanese Constitution – Preamble Article (c): Ibid.

28 CESCR - Article 13: 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. 2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right: (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all; (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education; (e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

29 UDHR – Article 26: (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

30 UDHR – Article 26: See note 29

31 CESCR – Article 13: 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. 2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right: (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all; (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education; (e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

32 CRC – Article 28: 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all; (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need; (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means; (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children; (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates. 2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

33 UDHR – Article 23: (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

34 CESCR – Article 6: 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right. 2. The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and

training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.

35 CESCR – Article 12: 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. 2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for: (a) The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child; (b) The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene; (c) The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases; (d) The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

36 CRC – Article 17: States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall: (a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29; (b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources; (c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books; (d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous; (e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

37 UDHR – Article 25: (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

38 CESCR – Article 12: See note 35

39 CRC – Article 3: 3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

40 CERD – Article 2: 1. States Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races, and, to this end: (a) Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation; (b) Each State Party undertakes not to sponsor, defend or support racial discrimination by any persons or organizations; (c) Each State Party shall take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists; (d) Each State Party shall prohibit and bring to an end, by all appropriate means, including legislation as required by circumstances, racial discrimination by any persons, group or organization; (e) Each State Party undertakes to encourage, where appropriate, integrationist multiracial organizations and movements and other means of eliminating barriers between races, and to discourage anything which tends to strengthen racial division. 2. States Parties shall, when the circumstances so warrant, take, in the social, economic, cultural and other fields, special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These measures shall in no case entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate rights for different racial groups after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved.

41 UDHR – Article 23: *Ibid.*

42 CESCR – Article 6(1): *Ibid.*

43 CESCR – Article 7: *The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular: (a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with: (i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work; (ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;*

44 UDHR – Article 17: (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

45 ICCPR – Article 21: *Ibid* note 7

46 ICCPR – Article 22: *Ibid.* note 8

47 CRC – Article 15: *Ibid.* note 12

48 UDHR – Article 22: Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

49 UDHR – Article 25: *Ibid.* note 37

50 UDHR – Article 26: See note 29

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- 51 CESCR – Article 12: See note 35
- 52 CESCR – Article 13: See note 28
- 53 CRC – Article 3: See note 15
- 54 CRC – Article 24: 2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures: (a) To diminish infant and child mortality; (b) To ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care; (c) To combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution; (d) To ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers; (e) To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents; (f) To develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services.
- 55 CRC - Article 28: See note 32
- 56 UDHR – Article 15: See note 18
- 57 ICCPR – Article 24: 3. Every child has the right to acquire a nationality.
- 58 UDHR – Article 13: (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- 59 UDHR – Article 25: See note 37
- 60 ICCPR – Article 12: 1. Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence. 2. Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own. 3. The above-mentioned rights shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Covenant. 4. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.