



Editional

Memory as an instrument for peace, reconciliation and common living.

Conflicts, abuses, repression and human rights violations always leave a bitter taste when proper mourning to achieve personal or communal healing is cutoff by indifference, and politics of amnesia.

International law clearly recognizes the right of victims and survivors to know about the circumstances of serious violations of their human rights and about who was responsible for their suffering.

Whilst international legal debates continue to develop the concept of a society's right to the truth, the Lebanese State has championed in the politics of amnesia, disregarding more than fifteen years of civil war. It sought to transform from the one hand the war-affected urban architecture, erasing the crimes of the warlords, and hiding the impact of the war, while on the other hand, it denies its citizens the right to remember, to mourn, as to better forget.

Truth seeking initiatives can play a powerful role in documenting and acknowledging human rights violation, it provides healthy grounds for society to reconcile with its history, as to be able to build a better future. Moreover memory initiatives also contribute to build a public understanding of past conflicts, abuses and wars, their reasons and causes, as to be able to avoid these tragic events in the future.

This issue of Tatimma highlights initiatives seeking to advance the right to truth as well as memory initiatives in Lebanon.

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Lebanon Support, August 2011

in focus

War and memory: the dilemma of past and present

Based on an interview with Wadad Halwani, one of most prominent figures of the committee of the families of the disappeared, August 2011



RAMZI HAIDAR/AFP/Getty Images

It has been more than 20 years since the end of the Lebanese civil war, and yet the country is still far from achieving reconciliation. During the past two decades the Lebanese State has been heavily trying to force a war amnesia with the reconstruction plans, the denial of responsibility of the war, fortified by a general amnesty law, no existent monuments or museum of the civil war.

However the memory of war is still alive, among thousands of families across the country who either lost their loved ones, and their homes were destroyed, displaced. However that memory is officially unrecognized as statesmen and political leaders regularly treat the civil war as a collection of “absurd” or “irrational” events, leaving sectarian interpretations running wild in the public sphere.

Current Lebanese leaders, being the same militia leaders of the civil war, have constantly tried to transform the memory of the war into a tool for bringing about new sectarian divisions and cults of dead leaders, undermining

popular and social memory of the common suffering, which in practice could be one of the elements that brings unity between Lebanese from different communities and sects in demanding justice, as peace can only be built through reconciliation and accountability.

Among those who have been very active in demanding justice and reconciliation is the “committee of the parents of the disappeared”, who had been active since the early 1980’s in pursuing justice and the truth over the fate of more than 17,000 disappeared and missing during the Lebanese civil war.

Consecutive Lebanese governments after the war have not given any proper attention to the question of the disappeared, “the regime is relying on time so that the issue becomes forgotten” said Wadad Halawani.

In 2000, an official committee was formed to investigate the fate of all those disappeared. By July 2000, the committee concluded in its report that all detainees have

died, which was faced with a lot of criticism from the side of the parents and the relatives of the disappeared. Moreover about a year later, 54 detainees in Syrian prisons were released and the report lost all credibility.

The issue was re-addressed by the last government when it was listed on the governmental statement, but it stayed ink on paper, especially that the parliament does not hold the government accountable for its promises.

“There is wide distrust between people and their rulers [...] and it seems, based on how the State has dealt with the issue (of the disappeared), that our rulers want to avoid dealing with it, and the real undeclared official position is that there is no political will to deal with the matter and to resolve it” maintained Halawani.

“The cause we are defending is not unique. There are a lot of countries who have suffered from civil wars, but the major difference is that in Lebanon the same leaders who led the war are the ones who are building peace, it is not acceptable that warlords be responsible for building peace, and if they have redeemed from their crimes, then let them sit aside” she added.

The Tae’ef agreement, which was signed by the different fighting political factions, ended military operations and re-organized political powers among the different parties but never dealt with rebuilding the communities who suffered in all aspects of life. Lebanon in the post-war era seemed to be hiding war under the slogans of peace.

“Knowing the truth, means admitting to the crimes that were committed. It is not enough to “apologize”. Our leaders do not want a real country, hiding the past will lead that the past will again blow in our faces” commented Halawani.

For the past few years there were a lot of talks about mass graves, the ruling elite tried to use this matter to say there are no missing people and all died in the war, a law suite has been filed to investigate into two mass graves in Mar Mitir-Ashrafieh and Horsh Beirut. The committee is following on the juridical process, and after these mass graveyards are identified, they have to be explored and the victims identified.



Rocket Hole - a 2002 photograph from Lebanon by Boston-based photographer Rania Matar

“The responsibility of these murders relies on all of the political elite, although they will try to play on sectarian differences, but at the end all parties are responsible for the continuation of the murders and killings in the civil war, and they are responsible for hiding the truth from the people” assured Halawani.

And she argued: “The right to know is a universal right, admitted in international conventions. We have a right to know about all those who are disappeared and missing, kidnapped, we have a right to know to guarantee and to protect our society and country from similar crimes in the future, we have a right to know so that the war does not hit our society again.”

And finally she added: “A healthy memory, accountability and justice are the only way forward for a real peace in Lebanon”.

perspective

Dealing with the legacy of the past in Lebanon

Lynn Maalouf, International Center for Transitional Justice, Head of Program, Lebanon, June 2011



<http://blogs.shu.edu>

What is transitional justice?

In the aftermath of massive human rights abuses, victims have well established rights to see the perpetrators punished, to know the truth, and to receive reparations.

Because systemic human rights violations affect not just the direct victims, but society as a whole, in addition to satisfying these obligations, States have duties to guarantee that the violations will not recur. A history of unaddressed massive abuses is likely to be socially divisive, to generate mistrust between groups and in the institutions of the State, and to hamper or slow down the achievement of security and development goals.

Transitional justice refers to the set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses. These measures include criminal prosecutions, truth-seeking bodies, reparations programs, and various kinds of institutional reforms. Transitional justice is an approach to achieving justice in times of transition from conflict and/or state repression. By trying to achieve accountability and redressing victims, transitional justice provides recognition of the rights of victims promotes civic trust and strengthens the democratic rule of law.

ICTJ in Lebanon

With a succession of interrelated wars spanning over 15 years, followed by two parallel occupations, a string of high-profile assassinations, a number of devastating conflicts with Israel as well

as internal clashes, Lebanon carries a legacy of human rights and humanitarian law violations that to date, have not been addressed in a serious or transparent manner.

In 1990, Lebanon opted for the path of amnesia, a forget-to-forgive approach. An amnesty law and several institutional and judicial measures fostered this atmosphere. They in effect silenced the voices of victims, who were left without any possibility for accountability and without even acknowledgment of their needs. Twenty years later, families of the disappeared are still calling for the truth about what happened to their relatives. The majority of forcibly displaced people have not returned to their homes. Released political prisoners are struggling to gain some form of recognition and reparation. Citizens at large live in constant fear of renewed violence and the new generations have very little understanding of what caused the successive waves of conflicts in their country as a result of this silence.

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) is an international non-profit organization specializing in the field of transitional justice. Since 2005, ICTJ has worked in Lebanon to conduct trainings and workshops on various aspects of transitional justice, addressed to the judiciary, the media, and civil society groups. It partnered with UMAM D&Ron a year-long project entitled "Lebanon's war-loaded memory. What is to be done?" contributing to monthly workshops on issues such as memorials, reparations, criminal justice, truth-seeking processes,



etc. It published a handbook on the technical and legal aspects of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, a resource book intended for a general audience and the media more specifically.

Moreover, ICTJ commissioned a study on strategic litigation around the right to know. The report was submitted to the family associations of disappeared persons; based on its recommendations, they filed two lawsuits requesting to mark the location of two collective graves. The judge issued preliminary rulings which could represent initial steps towards the acknowledgement of the right to know and the exhumation of collective graves.

In 2010, ICTJ sought to build a coalition of policymakers, family associations, and NGOs to work collectively on developing a legal framework to tackle issues such as protection of sites of mass graves; rights of families of disappeared persons; as well as the creation, structure, mandate and powers of an independent state body, that would manage a full-fledged search operation for the missing. In June 2010, the Center, in partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, invited 15 Lebanese individuals, including judges, Members of Parliament, ministry representatives, NGOs and family representatives to Bosnia-Herzegovina for a four-day trip, that was hosted by the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP). The visit was an opportunity for the delegation to have a first-hand idea of how a search and identification process takes place, which institutions are needed, the processes by which they came into being, and the actors involved.

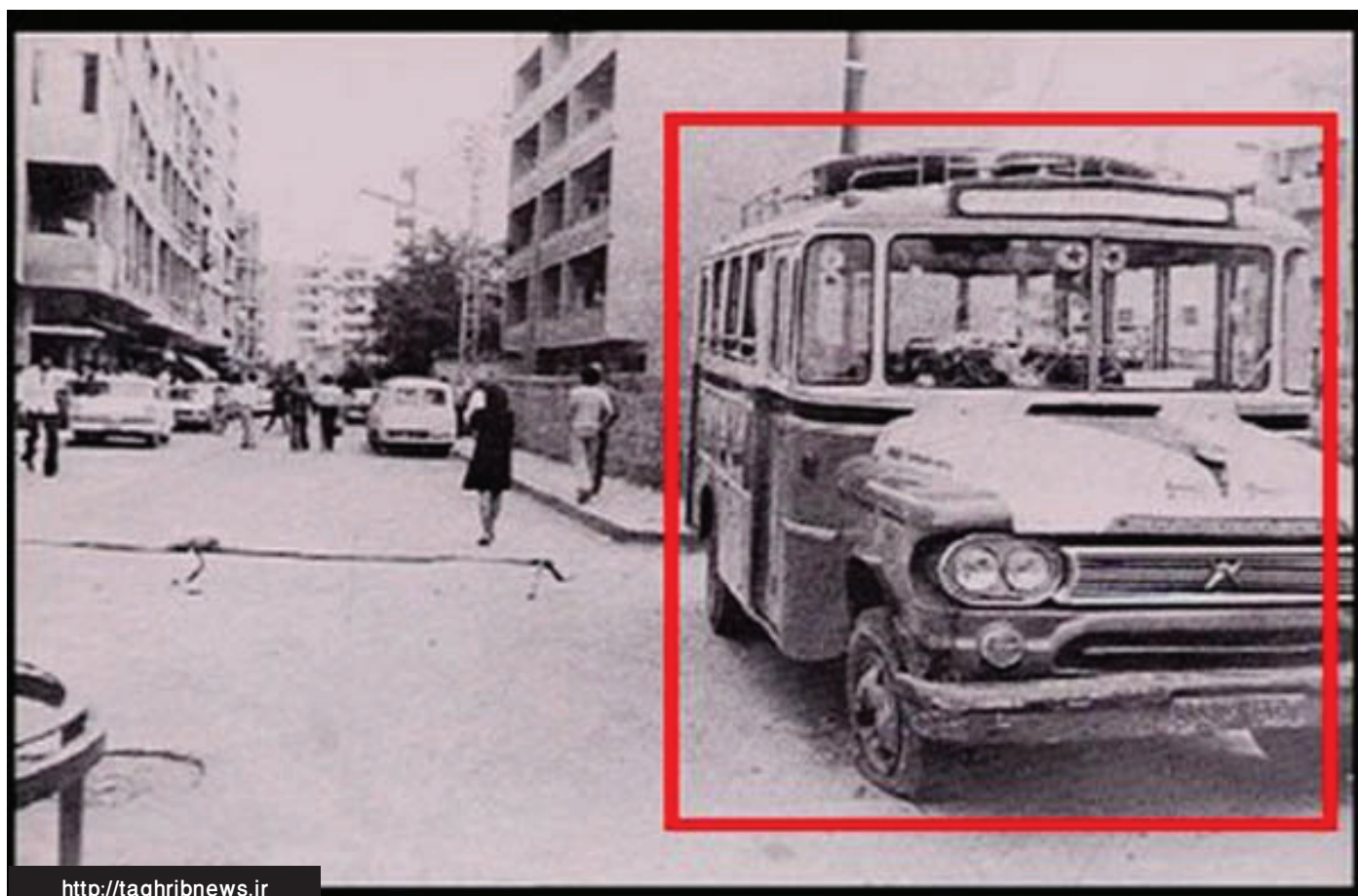
A legal drafting committee was subsequently formed to develop a draft bill that integrates and responds to the demands of the family associations in a manner that is consistent with Lebanese legislation; several rounds of consultations have taken place, to include feedback from institutions that have expertise on this issue (UNOHCHR, ICRC, AI, ICTJ), and then a round of consultation with Lebanese and Palestinian organizations. Future work will focus on developing an advocacy and lobbying strategy

to ensure that it generates some public discussion on concrete manners to address the demands and internationally-recognized rights of families of disappeared.

ICTJ's Lebanon program also seeks to address the issue of post-war amnesia. Two decades of silence, facilitated by a lack of accountability and any form of genuine truth-seeking, have left those who were born after 1990 facing a gaping hole in their contemporary history, which no textbook or any other platform to help develop a better understanding of what happened, and how this violence still impacts their elders and their society more generally today. Narratives of war-time actors and political parties not only continue to divide the society but also stifle those that are common to most citizens who survived these years, narratives of every-day survival over a 15-year period.

ICTJ, together with Université Saint Joseph and UMAM D&R, initiated a pilot project with high school students, aimed at encouraging some discussion between those two or three generations about the war, in a manner that focuses on the impact of violence on the daily lives of regular people, framed by an oral history methodology. Students from public and private high schools were trained in oral history and they have been gathering narratives and individual accounts about various aspects of daily life during the 15-year war. These narratives will constitute an unprecedented archive put to public disposal at USJ and UMAM D&R.

Explaining why they wanted to get involved in this project, many identified their lack of knowledge, of understanding, and the consequences of this ignorance. "We did not live through the war. We want to understand how it's affecting us today" one said, while another continued: "we live in this constant fear of war re-erupting... I want to understand what happened; otherwise this fear will always be there".



i on civil society initiatives

UMAM: Documenting the past to build the future

UMAM D&R and THE HANGAR, June 2011



An exhibition by Houssam Bokeili

Opening: Friday, April 8, 2011 at 6 PM

Daily from 04 - 09 pm, until May 1

The Hangar, UMAM D&R

Haret Hreik, Ghobeiry blvd, next to Al-Mahdi Mosque

THE HANGAR



Tel: 01 55 36 04 | www.umam-dr.org

مشروع فني بتوقيع حسام البقيلي

الافتتاح: السادسة من مساء الجمعة ٨ نيسان ٢٠١١
يوماً بين الرابعة عصراً والتاسعة مساءً لغاية الأول من أيار
الهنغار - أمم للتوثيق والأبحاث
حارة حريك، بولفار الغبيري، قرب مسجد الإمام المهدي

ABOUT UMAM D&R

UMAM Documentation and Research (UMAM D&R) was founded in Beirut, Lebanon as a non-profit civil company in 2004 and received official recognition as a non-governmental organization (NGO) by the Lebanese Ministry of Interior and Municipalities in 2005.

UMAM D&R believes that dealing with Lebanon's violent past requires the collection, preservation, and public promotion of a diverse range of historical evidence and artifacts. In contrast, most Lebanese political elites continue to ignore the gravity of Lebanon's history of conflict as well as the multi-farious, competing memories of war that have contributed to renewed bouts of civil violence: Lebanon conspicuously lacks a national archive and public library. Moreover, to the extent that the country's history is acknowledged, fragmented memories are adduced to achieve short-term political gains rather than longer-term national stability. Civil society organizations such as UMAM D&R have emerged to fill this gap, tackling Lebanon's past through a creative promotion of a diverse set of activities, including archival projects, cultural initiatives, and technical workshops. Through our steadfastness, some Lebanese politicians have begun to heed calls to seriously confront the country's troubled past and present, hoping for a brighter

national future.

THE HANGAR, an UMAM D&R project, is an independent platform that facilitates debate and exchange through artistic and cultural practices. It seeks to stimulate reflection on past individual and collective memories by promoting art practices related to the use of archives. Part of the ongoing debate on the use of documents in contemporary art, THE HANGAR's new residency program for local, regional and international artists, as well as scholars and curators, seeks answers to the following questions:

- How can research affect the creative process and vice versa?
- What role does artistic contribution play in collective reflection on the past?
- How can visual art invent new frames for archival displays?

Residents use UMAM's diverse archives—comprising books and periodicals as well as audiovisual material, photography, and historical artifacts pertaining to Lebanon's recent history—to produce their work, which THE HANGAR puts on public display. We continue to host regular events, such as exhibitions, screenings, workshops, performances and roundtables, through cooperation with social and educational bodies.

UMAM's latest initiatives

In our most recent initiative, THE HANGAR exhibited Houssam Bokeili's "A bus and its replicas..." a project exemplary of the ways in which UMAM D&R is committed to melding rigorous historical research on the Lebanese civil wars and its memories with creative, artistic interpretations of its archives. The exhibit juxtaposed the original, 13 April 1975 Ain al-Remmaneh bus—which Lebanese collectively memorialize as the foundational monument of the civil war and which UMAM D&R obtained through painstaking research—with silk screened images displaying Bokeili's memories of his own childhood school-bus winding through the streets of Beirut. He used THE HANGAR's exhibit space to push viewers to navigate their own personal memories of the war in relation to collective commemorations of Lebanon's social and political history.

In addition, our project Memory at Work is an online database focused on Lebanon's civil wars and the memories they stir. Drawing on sources within and outside UMAM D&R, it offers access to thousands of documents about the violence that shook Lebanon from 1975 to 1990. The database also houses material treating the pre-war social, political, and economic dynamics that "primed the pump" for the cyclical violence that "officially" commenced in Lebanon on April 13, 1975. Moreover, Memory at Work files address the nation's uneasy postwar transition, which remains a persistent obstacle to progress. They tackle the varied and often contradictory narratives issued by the wars' pivotal players, competing political elites who have undemocratically monopolized Lebanon's postwar memories. As such, Memory at Work strives to be an all-inclusive electronic platform that helps bring into conversation divisive discourses about the war.

The various sections of Memory at Work draw from two sets of primary sources. First, the site collects and organizes verifiable public material, such as newspapers, books, radio broadcasts, television programs, and political speeches, material intended to influence public opinion. Second, it includes personal testimonies and documents obtained by UMAM D&R and its affiliated partners.

In its launch version, Memory at Work provides free access to data on wartime and postwar Lebanon, categorized as "facts," "activities and positions," "documents," or "supporting texts." UMAM D&R has focused its initial upload on issues that Lebanese view as pressing but heretofore undocumented and under-discussed in the country. For instance, the site provides information on those who disappeared during the civil wars as well as the locations of known mass grave sites. It also documents how and to what extent these humanitarian concerns have been received in Lebanon's postwar public. In addition to these more sensitive topics, Memory at Work's debut version organizes a vast array of ordinary newspaper reports published during the conflicts, including coverage of battles fought along Beirut's infamous "Green Line," the incessant car-bombing of the 1980's, unresolved political assassinations, and the key documents of Lebanon's Amnesty Law, seen as the cause of the country's post-war "politics of amnesia."

Conceived and initiated by UMAM D&R, Memory at Work is ultimately owned by the Lebanese public and all who are interested in the nation's issues. Accordingly, the site seeks to provide an interactive and collaborative space in which Lebanese citizens and non-citizens alike can share and reflect upon their memories at will, unhinged from the biases and vested interests

of their political leaders and sectarian communities. We invite users from Lebanon and the world around not only to peruse the site's content, but also to contribute their ideas and data.

Dealing with one's memory

UMAM D&R has worked persistently to recall the violence of Lebanon's civil wars in the face of a pernicious culture of "hostility to history" currently suffocating Lebanese social and political life. We have strived to empower a growing chorus of Lebanese citizens calling for the attainment of justice in a situation of seemingly uncompromising political deadlock. Vast interest in our ongoing activities clearly demonstrates that a national predilection for closing past files has failed, and that Lebanon must persevere in the painful yet essential task of historical truth-telling.

UMAM D&R firmly believes that former perpetrators must play a role in any initiative undertaken to deal with Lebanon's war-loaded memory. First, these actors possess information that is crucial to attaining justice and closure for victims and their families. For instance, testimonies collected by UMAM reveal that many former militiamen know whom they kidnapped, killed, and disappeared, often to mass graves, knowledge that victims and victims' families deserve to have. Second, to prevent further violence in the country, we must speak with former perpetrators to reconstruct and understand how structures of individual and collective violence work.

Networking with different partners

A culture of "official" archiving, whereby existing political parties and politicians provide documents to libraries and NGO's for preservation, does not exist in Lebanon. As a result, UMAM D&R has used its large network of former militiamen, victims, political parties, politicians, army generals, families, etc. to obtain its material. For instance, we have benefited from partnerships with "vanishing" parties, those who are no longer part of the Lebanese political playing field but nevertheless wish to have their histories preserved. Moreover, our archive and documentation of Lebanon's "missing" benefited from close collaboration with "The Committee of the Parents of the Kidnapped and Missing Persons in Lebanon," "Support of Lebanese in Detention and Exile" (SOLIDE), the Association of Families and Lebanese Prisoners Detained in Syria, and Former Lebanese Political Detainees in Syria.

Books from the Battlefield
Featuring the War's Literature

Opening: Tuesday, 20 April 2010, 6pm
Daily from 20 April – 9 May 2010, from 4pm – 9pm
@ The Hangar – UMAM D&R

The collage includes various book covers in Arabic and French, such as 'LE PEUPLE CHRETIEN DU LIBAN' and 'من اجل اصلاح النظم السياسي'. It also features logos for the Norwegian Embassy and Beirut World Book Capital.

featured publications

Laurent Fletcher, Hugo Van der Merwe (eds), *Transitional Justice Beyond the Normative: Towards a Literary Theory of Political Transitions*, 2011, IJTJ, Oxford.



An article published by Oxford's International journal of Transitional Justice, July 2011. The article argues that narratives of transitional justice have been placed on a somewhat unexamined pedestal in the social sciences and the humanities.

Within such narratives,

transitional justice, as both a phenomenon and a conceptual tool, is regarded as inevitable and commonplace for anyone wishing to address the issue of past human rights violations.

The article suggests that while the concept of transition, strictly speaking, is merely descriptive of processes of change and thereby assumedly a neutral signifier, it has been positively oversignified by various fields of study. The article also examines literary narratives that have political transitions as their foci, proposing that a literary theory approach to transitional narratives should not be dictated only by the privileged themes, forms and narrative structures of the normative narratives of transitional justice (such as truth commission reports), but be open to fictional narratives as having something valuable to contribute within the context of political transitions.

<http://ijtj.oxfordjournals.org/content/5177/2/.abstract>

Franck Mermier et Christophe Varin (eds), *Mémoires de guerres au Liban (1975 - 1990)*, 2010, Actes-Sud / Sindbad - Ifpo

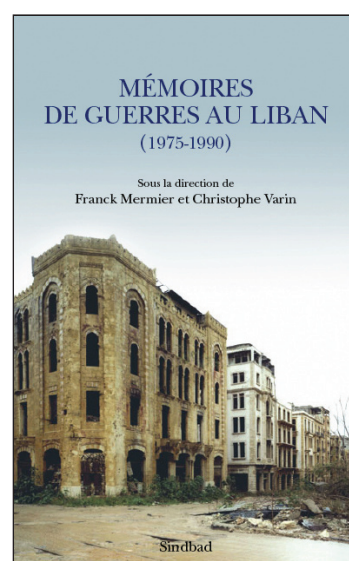
After the end of the civil war (1975-1990), the Amnesty Law of 1991 imposed a form of amnesia which official purpose was to protect the main communitarian leaders from any persecution.

The fate of hundreds of thousands of victims and missing persons was largely marginalized relying mainly on the balm of forgetfulness and the «reconstruction».

However, the trauma arising from that devastating conflict, have found its way into the collective memory, maintaining the ruptures created by war.

In addition, religious and territorial segregation and fragmentation of memory had increased by the recurring political violence that took place after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005.

This book is a collection of studies that provide new information about memorial practices in Lebanon today. the book tackles a variety of subjects, which are usually hidden, ignored, or considered taboos; it provides the ability to understand the history of wars in Lebanon, from 1975 to 1990 and contributes to work of «memory» that many Lebanese are calling for.



<http://www.ifporient.org/node/741>

ilm khabar | the civil society newswire

▶ August 5th, 2011

The Danish Refugee Council launched a report titled: «Incomplete Entitlement: An Overview of the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees Residing Legally in Lebanon but are Not Registered with the UNRWA (NRs).» by Aziza Khalidi.

▶ June 25th, 2011

UNHCR held the “Talent without Borders” show, where refugees from around Lebanon participated in a talent show competition, on the occasion of World Refugee Day.

▶ June 17th, 2011

The Sunflower Theater hosted an event entitled «You're not a fish after all / Sen balık değilsin ki Mihran Tomasyan» which was devoted to those who were killed due to their opinions, starting from Hrant Dink who is an Armenian journalist in Turkey.

▶ June 17th, 2011

Kafa & Youth of the East hosted a talk on the risks of the internet - Sexual Harassment of Minors.

▶ June 16th, 2011

In partnership with the Goethe-Institute Lebanon, Issam Fares Institute hosted a two-day interdisciplinary conference exploring Youth, Sexuality and Self-expression in the Arab world.

▶ May 19th, 2011

THE HANGAR - UMAM hosted an audio-intervention by Tania El Khoury on MONOPOLIS – A House of Cards by Souheil Sleiman.

▶ May 18th, 2011

CLDH (Lebanese Center for Human Rights) released a statement expressing solidarity with the inmates of Roumieh central prison who are asking to be finally respected in their rights after years, or even decades of waiting, sufferings and disappointments.

▶ May 16th, 2011

The Danish Refugee Council organized a panel discussion about the «Mechanisms of Service Provision to Undocumented Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon», the speakers included representatives from the Lebanese General Security, UNRWA, the Embassy of Palestine in Lebanon and the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee.

▶ May 3rd, 2011

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights & the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality conducted a two-day specialized training on Identifying and Responding to LGBT Refugees.

DISCLAIMER

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The material contained in this newsletter is for information only. The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors and publication does not constitute an endorsement by Lebanon-Support of the opinions expressed in them.

Please do not quote without citing the source.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Marie-Noelle AbiYaghi, Bassem Chit in collaboration with Cynthia Aoun and Bernadette Daou

CONTACT US

Professionals involved in the field of Aid, Recovery and Development are invited to contribute their views and opinions, or to exchange and share information with other professionals in the sector.

Let us know what you think of individual articles, or suggest topics you feel we should take up in future issues.

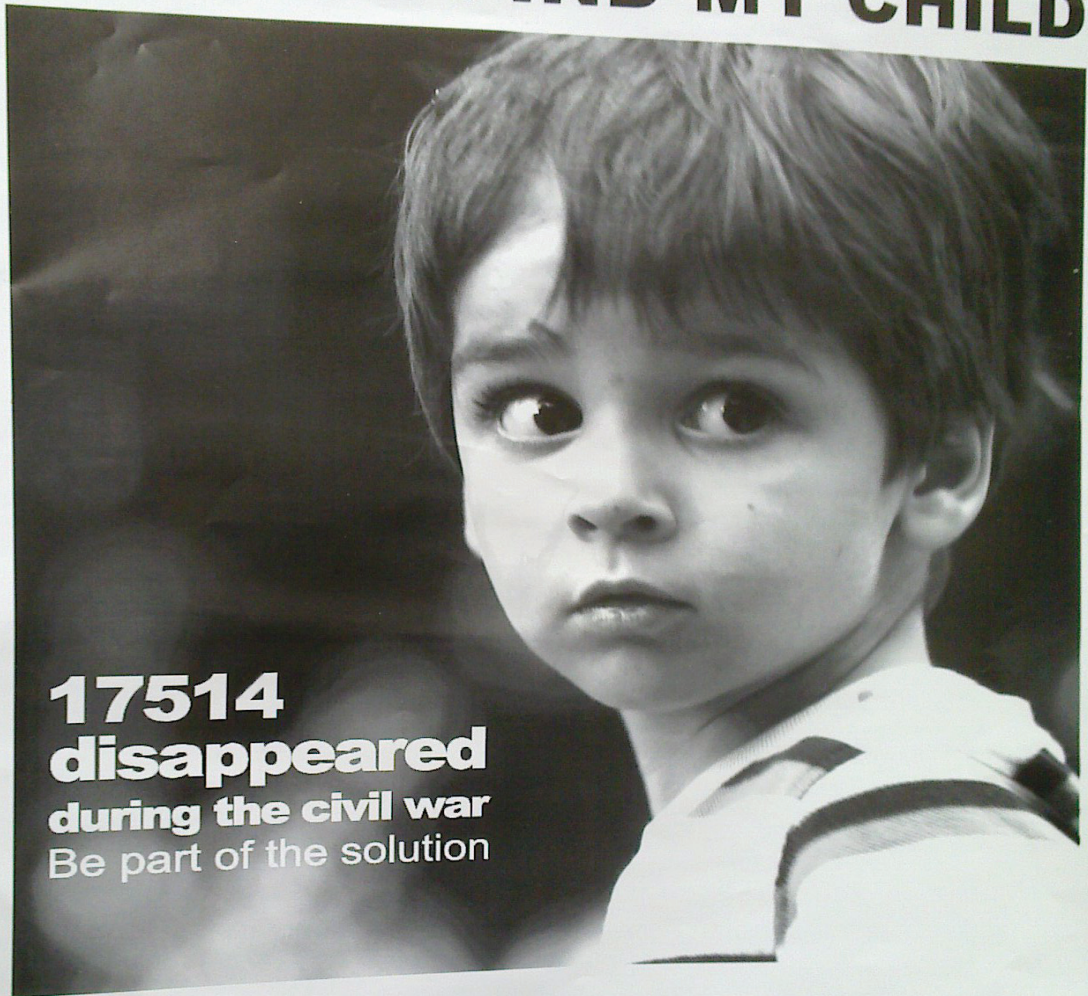
Contact us at the following address:
tatimma@darem.org



17,514 disappeared during the Lebanese Civil War, should not be forgotten

MISSING

HELP ME FIND MY CHILD



17514
disappeared
during the civil war
Be part of the solution

ACT
FOR THE
DISAPPEARED

JOIN US

September 3 and 4, 2010

for the International Day of the Disappeared
Gibran Khalil Gibran garden, UN House/ESCWA, Downtown Beirut

"The people who went missing during Lebanon's civil war in the 1970s and 80s are in danger of being forgotten as their parents and siblings grow older. One mother I knew died without ever discovering what happened to her children". Dalila Mahdawi, BBC

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