

Who Is Behind the Ongoing Injustice in Lebanon's Prisons?!

(Translated)

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The issue of Islamic detainees in Lebanon is considered one of the most sensitive matters on the security and political scenes. It is a thorny issue tied to major regional and international shifts, and it has long been used as a bargaining chip in the political marketplace. Meanwhile, the tragedy continues for hundreds of young Muslims languishing in prisons for years, with no clear horizon for resolution, and no genuine political will to grant them justice.

This issue first emerged with the Dinniyeh events in 2000, followed by the Nahr al-Bared camp clashes in northern Lebanon in 2007 and what became known as the "Fatah al-Islam" phenomenon. Since then, it has been a ready-made card in the hands of the authorities to justify arbitrary arrests under the pretext of "combating terrorism." With the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in 2011, the issue entered a new and more complex stage, as the Lebanese political authorities adopted harsh repressive measures against anyone who sympathized with the revolution or provided it with support, in line with American policies aimed at strangling the revolution, pressuring its popular platform, and enforcing the political solution that Washington wanted in Syria. During that phase, large numbers of revolution supporters in Lebanon were arrested under pretexts such as supporting terrorism, belonging to armed groups, or fighting against the fallen Syrian regime.

At that time, the number of Islamic detainees exceeded five thousand people. Today, their number stands at around 400 including 170 Syrians, with the rest being Lebanese along with some Palestinians. These detainees live in extremely harsh conditions with suffocating overcrowding, deliberate medical neglect, and the absence of the most basic prisoner rights. However, the deepest suffering lies in fabricated charges, forced confessions extracted under torture, and detainees left for years without trial. Even when trials occur, they take place before the military court dominated by Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezb, issuing unfair sentences reaching life imprisonment and even execution. Estimates indicate that about 55% of detainees have not been tried, while 45% have faced varying sentences.

The exploitation of this issue has not been limited to the opponents of the detainees. Lebanese politicians, especially those counted as "Sunnis," have also used it as an electoral tool. They frequently made promises to families about issuing a general amnesty law and ending the suffering of their sons, but such promises quickly evaporated once election seasons ended.

This exploitation deepened the families' sense of betrayal by the authorities, until they came to see their sons' suffering as nothing more than a cheap bargaining chip in the game of political power.

After the fall of the Assad regime, the issue resurfaced again, since most of the arrests were linked to opposing that regime and supporting the Syrian revolution. However, the detainees paid the price for their stance, being branded as “terrorists.” With the arrival of Syria’s new government, there was talk about reviving the issue and demanding the release of Syrian detainees in Lebanon. Yet the families rejected limiting demands to Syrians only and insisted that the pressure should include all detainees — Lebanese, Palestinians, and Syrians — because the issue at its core is not nationalistic. Instead, the core issue is the cause of supporting the Ummah’s revolution against a bloody and tyrannical regime.

There are countless tragedies: families who lost their sole breadwinner, children growing up without their fathers, wives waiting hopelessly for the return of their husbands, and mothers aging at prison doors. All this while the world parades its slogans of human rights and fair trials, yet turns a blind eye to the systematic violations practiced in Lebanon, under the cover of “counterterrorism.” All this is due to the dominance of political decision-making, directly tied to American and Western interests.

These shebaab had erased the Sykes-Picot borders from their minds when they supported the Syrian revolution as the revolution of the Ummah as a whole, not one confined to a land or nation. They sacrificed all they had to support their brothers, so the least that should have been done was to honor them for their stance, not to humiliate and imprison them! In the eyes of any fair observer, they are medals of honor representing the sincerity and will of the Ummah, not “terrorists” as the authorities tried to portray them as.

It is clear that this issue is entirely political, and that Lebanon’s authority is subject to American dictates aimed at besieging Islam and its people under the pretext of “fighting terrorism.” The matter is not one of law or fair trials; instead, the matter is a struggle of wills, where the aim is to suppress the Ummah and throw its leaders into prisons, to serve as a deterrent for others.

Hence, it is necessary to mobilize all energies and efforts popularly, politically, in the media, and legally to create strong pressure on the Lebanese authorities and those behind them, so that this grave injustice may be lifted and this tragic issue finally closed.