



PRI in Lebanon



Country Population ¹ :	4,220,000
Prison Population:	5,122
Prison Population rate:	121
% pre-trial detainees:	62.5 %
% of women in Prison:	3.8 %
% of children:	2.8 %

Project Title:	Promoting a better protection mechanism against arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trial in Lebanon
Donor:	EU
Lead contractor:	Association Libanaise pour l'Education et la Formation [Lebanese Association for Education and Training – ALEF]
Duration:	36 months

Background

The Lebanese record with regard to establishing a State of Democracy and ensuring respect of human rights has been evolving in the last couple of years, especially actions taken in relation to ensuring an independent and sovereign State. However the human rights record is still weak and actions taken by the government and other civil society organizations to ensure the respect of those rights, especially the rights of detainees, are inefficient and sometimes insufficient.

No protection mechanism or prosecution strategy for the prevention of arbitrary arrest and delays in trials has been addressed by the State institutions and security organisations. Civil society is not influential and the public is unaware and/or indifferent to the many violations perpetrated by the

¹ Latest available Statistics from International Centre for Prison Studies
http://www.prisonstudies.org/info/worldbrief/wpb_country.php?country=180 accessed 14 June 2011

State officials. Impunity is still rife, and the absence of the appropriate provisions in domestic laws to ensure an effective and preventive legal mechanism for dealing with such abuses makes the reduction in such cases almost impossible.

More problems could be detected with respect to arbitrary arrest, pre-trial detention and long delays in trials such as the poor coordination between the judiciary and security officials; gaps in the legal process; pursuing too many suspects with no credible evidence for their criminal involvement; primitive investigation techniques that result in a slow pace of trials; use of torture; lack of quality staff to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases; and policy of repression rather than of prevention along with other abuses.

To address these problems, ALEF in partnership with PRI will implement an action that will target different segments of the Lebanese society. Through organised training, journalists, law students/newly graduated lawyers and civil society organisations will receive an effective theoretical and practical presentation on ways to reduce arbitrary arrest, pre-trial detention and long delays in trials. State officials that have a responsibility towards their citizens to ensure their protection and security are the main target groups of the project. They have an indispensable role for promoting a better and more efficient judiciary, and producing ideas on the best protection mechanism against crimes of arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials. The final beneficiaries of this project are the vulnerable groups at risk of arbitrary arrest and delays in trial, current detainees and future potential victims of such violations.

The lack of knowledge on the existing international protection mechanisms with regard to right to liberty and security of the person will be addressed by the community mobilisation component. The latter will increase the knowledge of the trainees and familiarise them with international mechanisms directly related to the protection of persons in custody and subject to arbitrary arrest. This component will not only enhance their knowledge on the theoretical level but it will also give them the skills to find alternative solutions in case of arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trial.

Furthermore, due to the lack of awareness on arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials, in addition to the inefficient and obsolete reporting and investigation conducted by most journalists and civil society activists, a monitoring and intervention unit will be established for reporting. It will constitute an alert network that will act as a watchdog of this project. The research and advocacy component will offer remedy for the absence of legal provisions in domestic laws and lobby state officials to ensure consistency between national laws and international standards by advocating for a law reform proposition as the best model for legal protection against arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials.

The above actions that will target different segments of Lebanese society, as described above, will have a major role in reducing arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials through strengthening their capacities and giving them the necessary tools to monitor, detect and report such violations and taking the perpetrators to courts, mainly by ensuring the pass and ratification of a law reform proposition.

Overall Objective

The overall objective of this action is to create civil and communal awareness to reduce arbitrary arrest, increase the respect of the rights of detainees during pre-trial proceedings and to ensure an expeditious trial that is conducted with full respect of the rights of the accused.

Specific Objectives

1. Strengthening the knowledge of journalists, law students/newly graduated lawyers and civil society organisations on ways to reduce arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials;
2. Contributing to more effective monitoring of arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials and their reporting by creating a monitoring and alert network and increasing the cooperation between the different stakeholders; and
3. Promoting the respect of the rights of detainees by launching a public debate on the whereabouts of detention and on ways to remedy arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials.

Activities to include

1. Production of the first draft of the situation assessment on the root causes of arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials.
2. Establishment of a monitoring and intervention unit
3. Establishment of an alert network
4. Conduct three capacity building training workshops for journalists, law students/newly-graduated lawyers and civil society organisations
5. Conduct first-level monitoring and intervention activities by the trainees
6. Awareness-raising activities conducted by trainees at grass-roots level
7. Production of a report including a situation assessment with a protection model along with a law reform proposition
8. Advocate and urge stakeholders to address the root causes of arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trial and to consider the best protection model and to ratify the law reform proposition and raise public awareness of these violations

Expected Results

1. Increased reporting by civil society, journalists and lawyers of cases of arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trial.
2. Decrease impunity and increase the number of judicial proceedings undertaken to remedy cases of arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trial.
3. Adoption and implementation of new laws that are in accordance with international standards that will contribute in reducing arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trials
4. Promotion of prompt, impartial and effective investigations into allegations of arbitrary arrest, lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trial.
5. Creation of a network of journalist, lawyers, civil society activists and other stakeholders to establish an effective monitoring and alert system.
6. Heightened awareness of the most vulnerable groups such as the Palestinian, Iraqi refugees and illegal immigrants on their rights and the available protection mechanism.

PRI will be involved in the training and research component and will provide expertise in the monitoring and intervention unit. PRI will also be involved in co-managing the other activities of the projects such as the advocacy and community mobilisation components.

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