



## The Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women in Lebanon Rape of 45 Syrian Women “Bitterness of Humiliation”

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### I. Excusive Summary and Report Methodology

No one can imagine this volume of sexual violence against Syrian women refugees in Syria before the warrant that was issued by The Division of Public Relations of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces on 31 March 2016. The information started to unfold about rival and widespread mobs which trade with women bodies as if they enslave them sexually which is similar to ISIL practices. These mobs practice torture, rape, abortion, deformation, and sexual enslavement then threaten victims to publish their photos and videos and many others sadistic practices. With sole difference between ISIL and this mob is that ISIL acknowledges its brutal barbarity and doesn’t threaten and expose the victims.

After this news was published to the public, SNHR representatives in Lebanon attempted to connect with survivors to obtain their live testimonies and document the incidents’ details. In this report, SNHR depicts testimonies of four survivors and a journalist’s narration of investigations in the Detachment of Survey in Mount Lebanon. SNHR illustrated the purpose of interviews and received the victims’ approval to use their testimonies in this report. We interviewed the eyewitnesses and verified the footage and image we received.

The testimonies came similar regarding the circumstances of female, their detention, torture, sexual violence, and intimidation.

According to SNHR study, not less than 45 Syrian women were exposed to continuous sexual violence including 8 girls «under 18 years old» in two clubs «Chez Mauric» and «Silver» which are owned by Mauic Jaeajea in Al Muamaltain region in Jouynia city which is popular with widespread night clubs during the period from the end of 2013 until March 2016.





Victims' testimonies reveal the presence of an expert mob in human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Their members are Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians. We call them « The Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» since targeted two categories of women in an organized and examined way.

First category: Syrian women inside Syria: The mobs are systemically attempting to persuade women to escape from the conflict in Syria and refuge to Lebanon through tricking them with jobs and good salary by working in Lebanese restaurants. After deceiving her, the Syrian mediator took the victim to Lebanon, and then she was taken to a hotel in Al Kora region.

Second category: it targeted Syrian women refugees in Lebanon: Taking the advantage of the difficult circumstances and the decline of UN support. The mobs select their victims with experience and focus. They select the poorest women, who had lost their husband, and who psychologically unhealthy. Then the victims are forced to go to «Chez Maurice and Silver» nightclubs. The victims are detained, threatened and tortured. Then the mobs force the victims to practice sex with night customers and according to the victims, they were raped many times for several years.

Just like a mafia, these mobs transferred some of these Syrian women from raped women to guards in exchange for stop raping them and some incentives. We recorded 12 Syrian guards that tortured and humiliated the Syrian women who were detained by this mob.

*SNHR chairman Fadel Abdul Ghany says:*

*«We have real fear about the fate of the 45 women, they are unable either to neither return back to Syria nor stay in Lebanon, that the enslavement mobs will target them with kidnapping or killing. UNHCR have to hold its responsibility toward this case. And UN high commissioner for human rights has to protect Syrian women refugees and offer psychological and health support and safe housing as possible as they can and the Lebanese state has to protect them»*

## **II- Accidents' Details:**

After that one of the victims managed to escape, she contacted the Lebanese security forces from a bystander's phone. After three hours of investigation, the Lebanese security managed to discover some places of «Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» and some of the detained women, where the raid took place early on the 27 March 2016 in the night clubs and apartments that used to house the girls. Lebanese security forces have arrested some members of the «Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» and freed a number of detainees.

On 29 March 2016 Lebanese security forces raided a number of apartments and chalets in the town «Jounieh», and succeeded in freeing a number of other girls, and arrested a number of members of the «Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women»

On 31 March 2016, the Lebanese Internal Security Forces issued a statement in which it announced





in a statement the presence of a larger network of human trafficking in the area of Al Ma'amelteen in the town of Jounieh.

So far, the 45 ladies who have been freed, were subjected to all of sorts of rape and sexual violence, as well as terrorism and physical and psychological torture.

Lebanese security forces have arrested some of the members of the «Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» and its 12 guards.

It seems that there are several other groups, not disclosed until now, which have the same approach in the exploitation of Syrian girls, and in particular that «Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» which was discovered in an area teeming with clubs neither night, nor disclosed until one of the victims managed to escape.

SNHR contacted with Mrs. «A.H.», who is from «Al Raqqa Province» and she was a resident of Damascus city, informed us how she arrived to Lebanon, and specifically in “Chez Maurice” building:

*«Someone got in touch with me when I was in Damascus and offered me a good job in a restaurant. I left Syria and arrived to Lebanon in March 2014. He was waiting for me, and booked me a room in the «Kora Hotel» for one day. The next day, he took me to the club, «Chez Maurice» where a Syrian lady, calling herself «Sofia», greeted me. She took my phone and my passport and made me wait in one of the interior rooms of the club. The room was more like a prison and the door had an iron lock. Then, someone with a long hair and aged nearly 45 years, entered the room and hit me then he raped me. Then he took several photos and videos, and threatened to send explicit photos to my family in Syria, and post them all on the Internet, before leaving warned me to not to escape or take refuge in the police and the security services, because many officers and officials are the customers of the club as he mentioned.*

*The next day the guards forced me to wear inappropriate clothes, and escorted me to the club lounge in order to show myself to the customers of the club. We continued on this case for nearly 15 hours per day, and we were forced to have sex. We have been raped between 4 to 9 times per day by the club customers.*

*For further intimidating and oppressing, the guards used to hit us with a wooden stick and turn off their cigarettes on our bodies and deprive us from food. We were also directed to insults and derogatory phrases. We were as well as isolated from the outside world and prevented from communicating with anyone.*

*Even when we get sick, they provide only Analgesics and Anti-inflammatory but never expose us to doctors except Dr. Riad Alam; who is a Gynecologist. He used to make all the abortion operations for the pregnant women. I have witnessed first-hand exposure 17 women who were with me for forced abortion operations caused by pregnancy from customer's sexual slavery. Some women carried several times, and thus exposed to several abortions. Abortion operations took place in «Alarz» hospital in «Jal El Dib» under the supervision of Dr. Riad Alam» and a nurse who had worked for him directly “*





Ms. M. A. 25 years, from the Governorate of Homs, gave SNHR her testimony about the circumstances of the detention and torture in which she was exposed to:

*«I am resident in Lebanon since 2010, married but I do not have children. At the beginning of 2015, Ahmad Chahine, a Palestinian man offered me a job in a restaurant in «Junieh». When I arrived there he took me to «Chez Maurice Club» where I met a Syrian man called «Imad Rihawi», learned later that he was the direct responsible for forcing women to sexual enslavement.*

*After my arrival, the guards who were at the club took all my documents and my cell phone. At the beginning, they detained me in an apartment next to the club, and then a practical stage began as a girl in the night club. We weren't allowed to communicate with the employees, and we were only allowed to talk only with the guards, Emad Rihawi, and his partners.*

*They put us in small rooms with distributed iron beds within as if we were in prison, and in each room, we used to be 4 to 5 Women. We were not allowed to leave except for labor practice or go to the gynecologist*

*Every day we were exposed to all sorts of insults, torture and beatings for very simple reasons such as not wearing good make up or when we don't reach the money target.*

*We were humiliated in an unbelievable way.»*

SNHR managed to communicate with (S. M), the 17-year-old (a girl), from Aleppo. She informed us about the exploitation of her husband and the forced prostitution in «Chez Maurice Club»:

*«I was living with my family in the city of Tripoli since 2010. At the beginning of 2015, I got married to a person who forced me, after marriage, to work as a prostitute at «Chez Maurice Club». I was detained and not allowed to talk with my family.*

*I was severely beaten and I was also exposed to torture by my husband and by one of the guards because of my refusal to work, and when I realized the impossibility of escape, I yielded to their demands and started work in «Chez Maurice». Sometimes they used to take me to customers' houses outside «Junieh» to have sex for money. At the end of 2015, I learned that I was pregnant in the fourth month but I did not know who the father was. They brought me a medicine to kill the fetus. Then they were forced to take me to a doctor's clinic for the sake of abortion. Condoms and other preservatives weren't allowed to be used as it prevents the customers from pleasure.*

*After three days of abortion I was forced to return to work, we were not treated as human beings. We were nothing but commodities for sale.»*

SNHR communicated with Ms. (R. S.), 24 years, from the governorate of Homs. She informed us about the circumstances of being detained and tortured:





*«I had to resort with my husband and newborn baby to a refugee camp in Bekaa Valley of Lebanon by the end of 2014 after it turned out that we cannot stay at our region due to the fighting between the Syrian regime and opposition forces, especially after I lost many family members.*

*We stayed for 6 months in the camp with very bad conditions, then we moved to Tripoli where my husband found job, after 5 months I decided to work to help my husband. At the beginning of 2016, a Syrian man offered me a job and he told me that he needs a worker in one of the restaurants in «Jounieh». The salary was very attractive for our situation and he told me that my husband can also work with me after managing my official papers in Lebanon. My husband and I agreed on the work. After about a week, a person called me and said that he needs to see me for some matters relating to a contract of employment, then he came and took me with him to «Junieh».*

*Hours after my arrival, I was detained in one of «Emad Rihawi»s apartments' he said that my work with him has started since my arrival here, I asked him about the action, and he said that it is prostitution. I tried to get out but I wasn't allowed and the guards took all my documents. I begged him to let me go as my husband and my child are waiting for me but all went in vein. He hit me so badly and forced me to prostitution. I was daily humiliated and beaten for three months long until the Lebanese Security forces released us. My life is totally destroyed and my husband won't accept me back. No one will understand that this is not my fault. I was kidnapped and forced to do all this.»*

We communicated with journalist «Rabih Damaj», who visited the Survey Detachment of Mount Lebanon and met with the freed ladies and stated to the SNHR that:

*«I saw the effects of torture, especially to women who narrated, during investigation, what happened with them and how they were subjected to torture and an affront to human dignity and depriving them from their families. However, they felt as happy as they are released again. Therefore, they requested covering their faces during videotaping them. They said that they become trafficked in the street as they were shocked by the light of the sun, and most of them are in need of treatment and rehabilitation for so long.»*





### III- Conclusions and Recommendations:

It is clear to us that the most prominent members of the «The Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» are:

Emad Rihawi - Syrian

Hussein Ziter - Lebanese

Maurice Geagea - Lebanese

Eli Abu Rjeily - Lebanese

Ahmed Shahin - Palestinian

According to Law 164/2011; the law of punishing trafficking in human beings, which was approved by the Lebanese parliament in September 2011, stated: «distinguishing between the perpetrator of the crime, the doer, and their partners on one hand, and the victims of this crime on the other hand».

The distinction between the perpetrators of and the victims is necessary because the law must punish the criminal and protect the victims.

As for the legal description applicable to the reaction of trafficking in human beings, whether Lebanese or foreigner, exploitation in «prostitution or sexual exploitation is one of the aspects or manifestations of exploitation that enumerated in article 586 (item 1) of Law 164», article 586 (item 4) that «a penalty of imprisonment for 15 years, and a fine of 300 times to 600 twice the official minimum wage, if committed the crime set out in article 586 (item 1). This code provides for the punishment of any offense that took place:

1 - by a group of two or more persons committed criminal acts both in Lebanon and in more than one State.

2 - If the crime is more than one victim.

In this case there are the doer of the crime, the partner, the interferer, and the one who's hiding the people or the criminal tools. This makes the article 586 (4) applicable in terms of the type of crime and the multiplicity of actors and the multiplicity of victims.

Article 586 (article 8) deals with the situation of the victims of «The Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women as they are caring for the work of the punishable act, which means «prostitution». The article states that: the victim, who proves that he/she was forced to commit punishable acts by law or violated the conditions of residence or work, is exempted from any kind of punishment. This means that the Lebanese authorities permit the victims until the trial of criminals and their traffickers.

As for medical cadres that contributed in abortions; the law consider them as assistants of the crime of trafficking in human beings in accordance with article 219 of the Penal Code which sets out the faces of intervention in crime.





For the victims who were referred to associations of shelters, the law stipulates that the Ministry of Justice has contracted under article 586 (item 9) with associations or specialized institutions to provide assistance and protection to victims of offenses.

The same Law further stipulates 586 (10) must be confiscated amounts derived from the crime of trafficking in persons and to deposit it in a special account to help the victims and support them.

## **Recommendations:**

### **The Lebanese Government:**

- Ensure the protection and care of survivors of rape and sexual violence.
- Work with the greatest possible effort to detect links to the ramifications of the «The Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» must be hundreds of victims waiting for revealing their fate and release them, they are subjected to bondage which is so similar to the one already reported.
- Lowering the maximum possible sanctions «The Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» to freeze all active and highly migratory illegal even licit because it is used as a cover to finance and support illegal activities
- Exposing the «The Enslavement Mob of Syrian Women» and published their photos in mass media after the end of the investigations and the arrest of the rest of the criminal networks.

### **The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:**

- Documented cases of debt bondage of Syrian girls in Lebanon and the issuance of the report of the detailed statement to expose the perpetrators of crimes and demands the rights of victims.

### **The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees:**

- Compensation for the victims as much as possible psychologically and physically, given priority in all forms of aid and grants.
- The claim of improving the conditions of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon in general, to protect them from falling into the networks for the trafficking of human beings.

### **The Security Council:**

- Issuing a statement condemning what happened to the Syrian females, and follow-up of the Lebanese government to fulfill its obligations in accordance with its domestic law and the international law of human rights.
- Loading the Syrian regime, the responsibility of the Chairperson what happens of Syrian citizens, after long decades of tyranny and plundering the wealth of the country as the documents revealed from the smuggling of 48 billion dollars, then the horrific war launched by all the components of the Syrian society since March 2011 and is still going on up till now.





#### IV- Attachments:

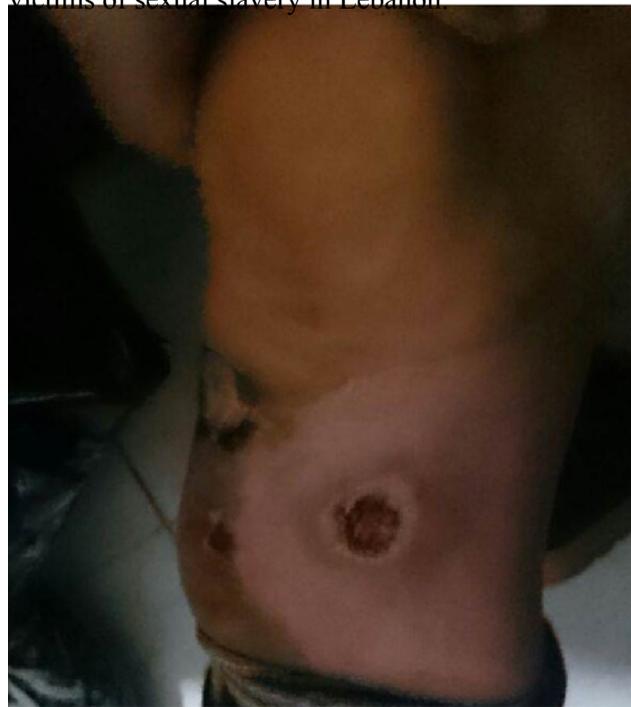
Video for women who are in a Survey Detachment, Mount Lebanon, the effects of torture on their bodies, shows the segment building of «Chez Maurice and Silver Clubs» after invading them by Lebanese Public Security.



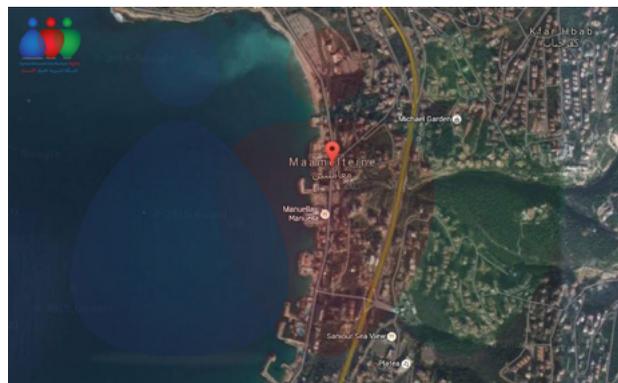
A picture that is showing the wooden stick whipping railway, which was used in the torture and beating women:



A picture that is showing the effects of abrasion wounds and swelling in the area below the knee resulting from beatings with an iron whip of one of the victims of sexual slavery in Lebanon.



The image from «Google Map» that shows region where the detention, sexual slavery for Syrian businesswomen women in Lebanon.



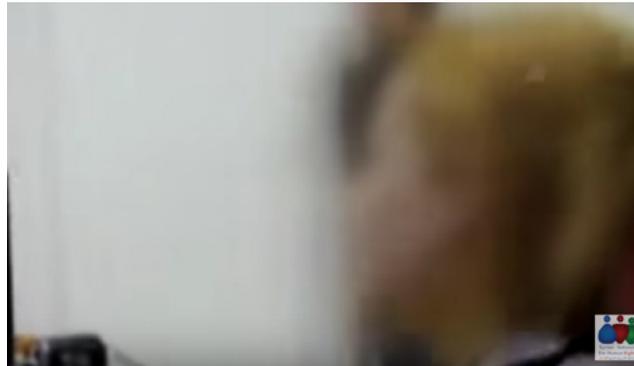


Video shows one of the victims of torture by the so-called Emad Rihawi

Video shows stories of some victims of sexual slavery in Lebanon.



Video shows the stories of some victims of sexual slavery in Lebanon.



The link to the statement by the Internal Security Forces



Thanks and Solidarity

Our sincere thanks go for the victims and witnesses whose stories enriched the report and all the solidarity with them to achieve the justice of their cause.

