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Guardians of Equality Movement

## Joint statement | Forced deportation is a crime.

### The forced deportation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon must cease.

The signatory human rights organizations condemn the continued forced deportation of Syrian refugees from their host territory to Syria by Lebanese authorities. Such forcibly returned persons may be at immediate risk of arrest, torture, rape, sexual violence, enforced disappearances upon their arrival in Syria, and other human rights violations committed by the Syrian regime and other parties of the conflict.

The Lebanese authorities continue to ignore their legal and international obligations, and the campaign of forced deportation violates international human rights law, including the principle of non-refoulment, which prohibits states from returning persons to a place where they may be at risk of persecution or other gross violations of human rights. There is an obligation to give any person at risk of deportation access to legal advice, to meet with UNHCR's representatives, and appeal against his deportation to the court.

These campaigns fuel discrimination and hostility towards refugees and expose them to additional risks of violence and abuse. We, therefore, stress that the Lebanese State has a responsibility to ensure the security and protection of all refugees, regardless of their nationality, race, or sexual orientation. The Lebanese authorities should adopt measures to counter hate and racism campaigns against Syrian refugees and to promote a culture of respect and tolerance towards refugees and other vulnerable groups.

This escalation in the practice of violation, racism, incitement, and forced deportation threatens the lives of Syrian refugees, particularly members of the Syrian LGBTQIA+ community present in Lebanon, who face harsh conditions and stratified challenges in terms of living, economic autonomy, security, and law along with the major barriers to the labor market and access to basic and necessary civil services.

The signatory rights organizations, therefore, call on the Lebanese authorities to take immediate action in preventing and combatting hate and discriminatory campaigns against Syrian refugees, and to ensure the protection and respect of all refugees; including members of Lebanon's Syrian LGBTQIA+ community, in accordance with international law and conventions. It also calls on the international community, the United Nations, and all relevant organizations and actors to intensify their assistance in the area of resettlement programs, alternative pathways, and the protection of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, particularly vulnerable members of the Syrian LGBTQIA+ community.

#### The signatory human rights organizations:

- Guardians of Equality Movement (GEM)
- LGBT Arabic
- HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement