

## Torture to Death: Military Justice Fails to Deliver

On November 1, 2024, the Beirut military court issued its verdict in the case of Syrian refugee Bashar Abdel Saud, who died as a result of torture during his interrogation at the General Directorate of State Security in Tebnine on August 31, 2022. Nearly two years after his death, the military court presided over by Brigadier General Khalil Jaber, dismissed the charge of torture as a felony crime leading to Saud's death. Instead, it convicted State Security officers of torture as a misdemeanor that did not result in any physical or mental harm to other prisoners.

The court sentenced a Captain to six months in prison, an Adjutant to one and a half years, two Adjutants to three months each, while the Chief Sergeant received a two-month prison sentence. In doing so, the court acknowledged that torture had occurred against other prisoners, as most of the defendants were sentenced under the Anti-Torture Law No. 65/2017 but denied that the torture caused Saud's death.

This verdict was issued without sufficient justification, despite the presence of substantial evidence proving that the severe violence and torture Saud endured during his detention at the General Directorate of State Security directly led to his death.

This ruling contradicted the findings of two forensic doctors appointed by the judicial authorities to examine Saud's body, who concluded that his death resulted from the severe beating inflicted on him while in custody.

Consequently, the undersigned organizations stress the following:

- We urge the Lebanese judiciary to enforce Law No. 65/2017 to hold perpetrators accountable for these violations, put an end to impunity, and guaranty victims' access to justice, compensation, and protection.
- We demand that all judicial authorities refer all torture cases to the ordinary judiciary rather than the military courts, in line with the mandating reasons of Law No. 65/2017 and Article 15 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which stipulates in its final paragraph that the ordinary judiciary is the competent authority to examine violations committed by judicial police officers, in line with international standards and the principles outlined in international treaties.
- We call for the effective implementation of all forms of oversight mechanisms, including the national preventive mechanism, which has the authority under Law 62/2016 to visit all places of deprivation of liberty at any time, with an effective

and frequent pace, in order to put an end to such grave violations against those deprived of their liberty.

**Signatories:**

- The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
- Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH)
- ALEF - act for human rights
- Cedar Center for Legal Studies (CCLS)
- Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture
- The Legal Agenda
- MENA Rights Group
- Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)