



المنظمة الفلسطينية لحقوق الإنسان (حقوق)

Palestinian Human Rights Organization (Rights) - PHRO

Member: Euro – Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)

Member: International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)



Beirut, May 23rd, 2008

Executive Report

Serious Challenge Reached Threatening Our Lives at the PHRO

*****Your Urgent Action is Needed*****

This executive report was prepared in light of the serious challenge that reached threatening our lives at the Palestinian Human Rights Organization (PHRO), in particular the lives and safety of both, **Mr. Ghassan Abdallah - General Director**, and **Mr. Edward Kattoura - Vice President**, since they are directly involved in following up a human rights violation case. Within this case, there are others whom are threatened. This will become clearer through this document.

On April 8, 2008, **Mr. Rabieh Rashed Hussien^{1[RRH]}** who is disabled as a matter of half paralysis was kidnapped from his home. This incident took place as per the orders of **Mr. Jamal Mahmoud Dandashli^{2[JMD]}**, known as "**Gateaux**", due to the involvement of Rabieh's Brother - **Mr. Nader Rashed Hussien^{3[NRH]}** in a family problem with Mr. Dandashli "**Gateaux**". It is essential hereby to clarify that "**Gateaux**" claims that **Nader** has kidnapped his daughter, **Mrs. Nisreen Jamal Dandashli^{4[NJD]}**. Supposedly, his claims are true, however **Gateaux's** reaction represented and caused several cruel human rights violation (personally punishing, arbitrarily detaining, grueling **Rabieh** for his brother's action ...)!!!

The PHRO knew about this incident on April 11, 2008; starting from April 12, 2008 and until April 16, 2008, we were trying to solve the matter through dialogue, with leader(s) in Fateh Movement whom are known to be close to **General Sultan Abo El-Ainien⁵ "Abo Riad"**, and without involving media and laws. Evidently, this did not achieve fruitful results, thus we issued the famous press release that was highly publicized on April 17, 2008 in the Lebanese Newspapers. Within this press release, dated April 16, 2008, we declared the incident and considered it an informative note to the General Prosecutor. *(All the mentioned documents are available on our website home page www.palhumanrights.org)*

Such a step caused a clamor, and instead that the kidnapper & his accompany release **Rabieh**, they started to generate lies, deny the kidnapping, and try to finding journalists and human rights

¹ RRH: Palestinian Refugee, born in Lebanon on 1974, Married, Father for three young children, live in Rachidieh Camp

² JMD: Palestinian Refugee, Responsible for a Military Unit at the Fateh Movement which is the biggest Palestinian Political Party and lives in Rachidieh Camp

³ NRH: Palestinian Refugee, born in Lebanon on 1976, Married, Father for three young children and also lives in Rachidieh Camp

⁴ NJD: Palestinian Refugee, born in Lebanon on 1985, Married to **Mr. Mohammad Hussien Askoul^[MHA]**, and also lives in Rachidieh Camp

⁵ General Secretary of Fateh Movement in Lebanon



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organizations that could hide their lies and violations. Hereby, **Mr. Ibrahim El-Khatib**^[IK] contacted the President of the Palestinian Human Rights Foundation (Monitor), **Mr. Abedelaziz Tarakji**^[AT] – since he consider that (Monitor) is close to them (Fateh)-. On the contrary and opposite to what they have thought and wanted, (Monitor) and after ensuring on their turn that the incident is real, issued in April 17, 2008, a press release that make certain what was mentioned in our 16 April press release, furthermore, they expressed their solidarity with the PHRO. Monitor's press release was also published in the Lebanese Newspapers on April 18, 2008, and afterwards the series of threats and intimidations started to take place. The majority of these threats were directed to **Mr. Abedelaziz Tarakji** and part of them targeted Mr. Ghassan Abdallah. Note that, all these threats were recorded by time, number, caller ID ...etc.

Dealing with the received threats, it is noteworthy to reveal that since we, at the PHRO, started to follow up this case, **Mr. Ghassan Abdallah** didn't file a lawsuit. Such a decision came up due to our determination about keeping the issues in their professional track and not turning them into personal ones. But on another level, we have adopted **Mr. Tarakji** lawsuit that he raised in light of the threats he received. It is essential hereby to mention that **Mr. Tarakji** requested our assistance, and after he provided us with the sufficient authorizations, we assigned a lawyer who could competently follow up on his case before the concerned bodies.

Due to the pressure that we generated, **Mr. Rabieh Rashed Hussien**^[RRH], who was kidnapped, got released on April 23rd, 2008 after being forced by his kidnapper to sign at the Notary office a statement, which he is not sure about its content. He approached us on the dawn of May 2, 2008 and throughout his stay, where he permitted us to document⁸ the interview, he told us the details of his kidnapping incident, the physical and psychological torture that he was subjected to and the humiliations as well as degradations that he received. **Rabieh** assured that until he reached us (May 2, 2008), he was still threatened and he gave us recorded phone calls which indicated that he and his family will be harmed if his brother (*Nader*) and the lady (*Nisreen*) didn't give up themselves to Nisreen's father - "*Gateaux*" - who has swear to kill them both (*his daughter & Nader*). **Rabieh** requested our assistance in a way that secures the protection of himself and his family. We succeeded to find an adequate apartment, outside Rachidieh Camp, which could secure **Rabieh's Family** (*he, his wife, & 3 young children*) and **Nader's Family** (*the wife & her 3 young children*) whom joined them at a later stage. It is significant to point out that, **Mrs. Linda Ghazal** (*Nader's Wife*) was threatened on her

⁶ IK: Palestinian Refugee, Officer in charge of the Personal Security of Fateh Movement General Secretary in Lebanon, General Sultan Abo El-Ainien

⁷ AT: Mr. Tarekji is the president of the Palestinian Human Rights Foundation (Monitor). He has contacted the Frontline and he informed us about the appreciated Financial Assistance that they have provided as well as the letters of support that they have disseminated

⁸ Since he suddenly approached us at a very late time, at the General Director's home, we only managed to have the interview voice recorded, due to the available equipments.



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turn when she was in the camp. According to her recorded phone call conversation with **Rabieh** she indicated -“*Gateaux*” has declared that she and her three children are under compulsory residency in the camp, until his daughter returns-. The apartment that we’ve rented to **Rabieh** is considered, until now, safe. Rather to such assistance, we have provided **Rabieh** with the first-hand and necessary tools (sleeping mattresses, cover sheets, blankets, pillows and kitchen appliances “small cook, dishes, cups ...etc”), clothes, hygiene and food products and cash money in order to secure his and his families’ daily needs. Furthermore, and after he provided us with the sufficient authorization, we assigned a lawyer for him in order to proceed filing a lawsuit against his kidnapper and all who are involved in this incident.

This case didn’t stop here and it greatly developed. At the evening of May 19, 2008, both **Mr. Nader R. Hussien** and **Mrs. Nisreen J. Dandashli** reached us. Throughout interviewing them, separately, which were documented⁹ as well, we found out that Nisreen was not kidnapped by **Nader**. On the contrary, they both gathered on the fact that she escaped from her father, and in that she requested the assistance of **Nader**. As she said and he affirmed, they are in love with each others since a long time (four years) and before her forcibly marriage with **Mr. Mohammad Hussien Askoul** took place a year and a half ago.

In her elaboration for the reasons that encouraged her to escape, **Nisreen** indicated that her father forced her to marry **Mr. Mohammad Hussien Askoul**¹⁰[MHA] in order to guarantee that his crime will not be discovered, and if it was discovered by his follower, the latter will be frightened to declare it. In relation to the crime that the father wants to hide, **Nisreen** indicated that she has been raped by her father since she was 8 years old and until she reached 18 or 19. She continued to say that despite being married a year and a half ago, however, she didn’t allow her husband to come close to her and she refused any sexual relation with him. **Nisreen** revealed that she experienced several kinds of domestic violence because of her sexual refusal. She was also tortured from her family “especially her father” who from time to time got informed by the husband about such refusal. **Nisreen** said that she escaped at the same night, which was planned by her family to be her last night of resistance. Her family wanted to tie her, and allow the husband to forcibly take what she doesn’t want to give; they planned to make her undergo rape by their knowledge and by snatching her resistance resources, but at that night, and before executing the plan, she succeeded to escape.

Regrettably, until now we did not manage to assign a lawyer to **Nisreen** in order to process a lawsuit for her, because she escaped from her family’s home without taking her ID. Due to such a major

⁹ Nisreen’s interview was Audio-Visual documented, where as Nader’s one was only Audio documented

¹⁰ MHA: a very plain man, under the *Gateaux*’s control since he is a combatant within his armed unit - as described by Nisreen-



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obstacle, we currently are trying to find out way(s) to issue her an ID that could prove her legal personality, and consequently allow us to progress the case.

On the meantime, we have secured **Nisreen** with a family and we have provided to **Nader** a financial assistance that enables him to conceal for a period until we find a better solution. Hereby, we should clarify that, since her arrival to PHRO, and in order to insure their minimal safety, **Nader** could not stay, any more, with her at the same place. He also refused to stay at the same apartment with his brother and the families in order not to subject them to further danger.

Due to several international solidarity correspondence(s), **especially Front Line**¹¹, that took place with the Lebanese Government where the latter was asked to secure the protection of human rights defenders, the government transferred the case to the **Department of Fighting Terrorism (DFT)**, which belongs to the **Internal Security Forces (ISF)**. With this regard, on May 21, 2008, and a matter of processing the lawsuits, we were contacted by the **DFT** who asked us to present at the department on May 22, 2008 where **Mr. Tarakji** has to provide his statement. On the second day (May 22, 2008), **Mr. Tarakji** presented at the **DFT** where he gave his statement in the presence of his lawyer and Mr. Ghassan Abdallah - PHRO General Director. It is noteworthy to mention that on May 24, 2008 **Rabieh** should present at the same department in order to provide his statement; where as **Nisreen & Nader** will do the same on May 26, 2008.

Now and since the **DFT** interfered, the case took another and stronger incline, which consequently subjected us to a high level of pressure. Part of this pressure could be explained by the indirect threats that we are receiving through friends (leaders and politicians) whom are expressing their real apprehension and worries about us!! They are stressing us to end this “dilemma” through a settlement, which we did not exclude at all. On the contrary, we have stated that clearly in our document dated May 3, 2008 that was prepared in light of the developments which took place until that date, where we have indicated that the solution should be through a just and fair judgment/settlement.

Today, we are sensing a real danger; we perceived from raising up the discussion about securing the protection for the victims (**especially Nisreen**) with the **Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Interior Affairs, DFT, the General Prosecutor** that such service doesn't exist in Lebanon's legal system. We essentially were trying to secure such protection for **Nisreen**, in order to decrease from the level of pressure that we are experiencing. In fact, day after day, the pressure is becoming much more hectic, not only from the security side, but also from the financial one. The case which started

¹¹ Front Line: International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders www.frontlinedefenders.org who provided Mr. Tarakji with a slight appreciated financial assistance in addition to the solidarity by advocating for the benefit of the case with the concerned bodies



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by exposing to public the severe human rights violations that were taking place (kidnapping, arbitrary detention of Rabieh ...etc) and afterwards supporting **Mr. Tarakji** through assigning a lawyer to follow up his lawsuit, reached a stage where we became responsible for two families each consists of 5 members in addition to the lady (**Nisreen**) by covering not only the expenses related to the lawsuits, but also the daily needs. This is without mentioning the expenses related to ensuring the security of the working team who are engaged in following up the case(s), **particularly, Mr. Ghassan Abdallah and Mr. Edward Kattoura, who are considered in the biggest circle of danger and it is very essential that we fortify ourselves, which incur very high expenditures.**

We consider this executive report a follow up for the documents that we disseminated on April 16 , April 19 and May 3 (all available on our home page www.palhumanrights.org) and that we were not able to translate into English due to timing constraints. We hope that you would be able to provide us with your assistance, which definitely will cause a difference.

We are looking forward to receive your support, solidarity and encourage to be able to handle the exerted pressures and sustain our efforts. Your support is significant and valuable, especially when we as human rights activists got threatened, for following up such case(s), by our lives and safety from factions, who we assume that their responsibility is insuring the protection of the Palestinian cause which essentially includes the Palestinians. Because of internal political quarrel(s) amongst such factions/leaders in same faction ...etc, issues got highly politicized which pave the way and allow the interference of other non-Palestinian decisions. All this lead to the polarization of Lebanese Parties, of which the decision of part of them is not Lebanese and they as well have internal problems amongst themselves; in total, this allow some de-facto leaders (such as the "Gateaux" who even did not hesitate to hassle institution(s) that belong to the UN inside Rachidieh Camp, where he propelled a group from his combatants to close UNRWA schools in the morning of May 21, 2008) to flee from their responsibilities, through playing on contradictions, as compared to the general tight interests and their personal ones, ignoring the supreme interest of ensuring the protection of the lower human security ingredients to the people

The Palestinian Human Rights Organization (PHRO) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization (NGO) registered under the number 36/AD, operating in Lebanon and concerned in promotion and protection Human Rights for Palestinian Refugees.

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