



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to
the Republic of Lebanon

Beirut, 26 June 2016

PRESS RELEASE

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, Ambassador Christina Lassen, made the following comments:

"In her statement on the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, High Representative Federica Mogherini reaffirmed the European Union's strong commitment to the eradication of all forms of torture and the full rehabilitation of torture victims. Torture is inhumane and unequivocally prohibited under international law.

We welcome the steps taken by Lebanon to translate its international commitments into practice. Lebanon has ratified the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT) and its Optional Protocol. It has also taken some decisive steps towards the implementation of its relevant commitments. We welcome in particular the establishment of a Department of Human Rights and a Committee against Torture within the Internal Security Forces, (ISF) as well as the adoption of a Code of Conduct and a Memorandum that describes the role of ISF units in the application of the UNCAT. We hope for similar steps to be followed by the Lebanese Armed Forces and the General Security. We also recognise the will of Lebanese authorities to introduce a comprehensive definition of torture in the Penal Code in accordance with the UN Convention, and to establish a National Preventive Mechanism in line with the Optional Protocol.

In Lebanon, the prevention of torture and ill-treatment has been on the European Union's agenda for a long time. The EU is currently implementing two projects aiming to rehabilitate victims of torture, prevent torture, increase accountability and fight impunity. Under these two projects, the EU seeks to strengthen the capacity to apply international mechanisms and standards related to torture cases as well as to improve prison conditions and build the professional capacity of law enforcement. On this occasion, it is also important to underline our good cooperation with Lebanese civil society organisations that play an indispensable role in combatting torture and raising awareness, including in sometimes very difficult situations.

On this day, we shall remember all those around the world who have been exposed or continue to be exposed to torture. Only global and joint efforts will raise awareness of the damage that torture does to individuals and society as a whole."