

Advocacy dossier

Ghassan Abdallah

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At liberty **Lebanon**

Director of the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation in Lebanon, Ghassan Abdallah has faced repeated airport searches, interrogations, and arbitrary detention in retaliation for his advocacy on behalf of Palestinian refugees.

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The case at a glance

Director of the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation in Lebanon, Ghassan Abdallah has faced repeated airport searches, interrogations, and arbitrary detention in retaliation for his advocacy on behalf of Palestinian refugees.

Status	Arrested	Country
At liberty	**15 May 2018**	**Lebanon**

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Drop any charges that remain on record against Ghassan Abdallah in connection with peaceful human rights work.

02 Confirm publicly that Ghassan Abdallah faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case.

03 Guarantee that Ghassan Abdallah can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal.

04 Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

Arbitrary detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9

Judicial harassment UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12

Threats and intimidation UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12

03

How the case unfolded

2013

Context

Visit to the West Bank

Abdallah travelled to the West Bank. This trip became a focus of repeated interrogations by Lebanese security services in subsequent years.

14 May 2018

Context

Summoned to General Security

General Security summoned Abdallah to its central headquarters in Beirut and questioned him about his activities, networks, and his 2013 visit to the West Bank.

15 May 2018

Arrest

Transferred to military intelligence

General Security referred Abdallah to the military intelligence headquarters at El-Yarzeh, where he was re-interrogated and detained overnight after refusing to sign a pledge not to travel to the West Bank.

16 May 2018

Release

Released without charge

Following a media campaign and embassy interventions, Abdallah was released without charge after two days in detention.

4 March 2019

Context

Summoned again by General Security

Ghassan Abdallah received a summons at his home to appear at General Security on 6 March 2019. No reason was given.

12 May 2022

Movement restriction and exile

Airport search before departure

At Beirut airport, General Security summoned Abdallah, searched his belongings thoroughly, and delayed his departure for a human rights seminar in Tunis.

16 May 2022

Ill-treatment

Forced removal of prosthetic leg

On his return to Beirut, General Security officers publicly searched Abdallah and ordered him to remove his prosthetic leg in front of other passengers, despite his objections.

04

The full story

Background and Work

Ghassan Abdallah directs the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation, a Beirut-based member organisation of the International Federation for Human Rights. The organisation promotes and defends the rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, a population whose legal protections remain fragile and whose access to employment, property ownership, and social services is heavily restricted.

Abdallah holds dual Lebanese and Canadian nationality. He uses a prosthetic leg. These personal details became relevant when Lebanese security services began targeting him.

2018 Detention and Interrogation

On 14 May 2018, General Security summoned Abdallah to its central headquarters in Beirut. Officers questioned him about the activities he attended, the participants in those events, and the regional and international networks with which the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation is affiliated. They asked detailed questions about a visit he had made to the West Bank in 2013.

The following day, General Security transferred him to the military intelligence headquarters at El-Yarzeh. He was interrogated again on the same subjects. Officers presented him with a statement and demanded he sign an undertaking never to travel to the West Bank again. He refused.

He was held overnight at the military intelligence facility. On 16 May 2018, following a media campaign by the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation and intervention from several embassies, he was released without charge. The authorities offered no explanation for his detention.

2019 Summons

On 4 March 2019, Abdallah received a summons at his home to appear at General Security on 6 March 2019. No reason was given.

2022 Airport Harassment

On 12 May 2022, Abdallah arrived at Beirut airport to board a flight to Tunis, where he was scheduled to attend a human rights seminar organised by the International Federation for Human Rights. He presented his Canadian passport to the border control officer, who instructed him to go to the General Security office without providing a reason.

After a prolonged wait, security personnel conducted a thorough search of his belongings. He was eventually permitted to board the flight.

Four days later, on 16 May 2022, when he returned to Beirut from the seminar, General Security officers again summoned him to their airport office. They escorted him back to the border police area and searched him in front of other passengers. They ordered him to remove his prosthetic leg. He told them the practice was humiliating and that a scanner would suffice. They refused. No reason for the search was given.

Pattern of Retaliation

The repeated interrogations, the 2018 detention, and the degrading airport searches form a consistent pattern. The questioning returns to the

same themes: Abdallah's attendance at international forums, the networks of which his organisation is a member, and his travel to the West Bank. No charges have ever been filed. The harassment serves to punish him for his work and to signal that his advocacy for Palestinian refugees is monitored and unwelcome.

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