



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Syria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 25 & Tuesday 26 March 2013

Treatment of professionals by the authorities, i.e. university professors, lawyers, critics, who have written articles in the past that have been published in newspapers

A report issued in January 2013 by *Human Rights Watch* reviewing events of the preceding year notes:

“Security forces subjected tens of thousands of people to arbitrary arrests” (Human Rights Watch (31 January 2013) *World Report 2013, Syria*).

This document also points out that:

“Those arrested include peaceful protesters and activists involved in organizing, filming, and reporting on protests, as well as journalists, humanitarian assistance providers, and doctors” (ibid).

This report also states:

“In one case on February 16, Air Force intelligence forces raided the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM) and arrested 16 people, including seven women. In September, seven members of the SCM staff were charged and convicted of publishing banned documents with the intent to change the basic principles of the constitution” (ibid).

In February 2013 the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

“Hospitals and medical personnel, journalists and cultural property have been treated as military objectives by both sides to the conflict and viewed in terms of strategic gain” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (5 February 2013) *Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*, point 139).

A publication released in December 2012 by *Reporters Sans Frontiers* notes:

“Bashar Al-Assad's bloody crackdown in Syria has hit news providers hard because they are the unwanted witnesses of the atrocities being committed by a regime with its back to the wall. Journalists have also been targeted by armed opposition groups, which are increasingly intolerant of criticism and ready to brand journalists as spies if they fail to reflect their views” (Reporters Sans Frontiers (19 December 2012) *2012 Roundup in Numbers (Syria excerpt)*).

A *UNHCR* paper in December 2012 points out that:

“UNHCR considers that many Syrians seeking international protection are likely to fulfil the requirements of the refugee definition contained in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, since in many cases their well-founded fear of

persecution will be linked to one of the Convention grounds. Where persons are found not to meet the 1951 Convention criteria, criteria for complementary forms of protection, including those elaborated in binding or non-binding regional protection regimes or principles, or situation-based refugee criteria are likely to apply” (UNHCR (24 December 2012) *International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing the Syrian Arab Republic, Update I*).

No further information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

Human Rights Watch (31 January 2013) *World Report 2013, Syria*

<http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/syria>

Accessed Monday 25 March 2013

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (5 February 2013) *Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/report-independent-international-commission-inquiry-syrian-arab-republic-2#toc20>

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UNHCR (24 December 2012) *International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing the Syrian Arab Republic, Update I*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/international-protection-considerations-regard-people-fleeing-syrian-arab-re-0>

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Accessed Tuesday 26 March 2013

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Google

Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Minority Rights Group International
Online Newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
Reliefweb
Reuters
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
UNHCR Refworld