



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE RED CROSS

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# Lebanon: Time is running out



**Beirut (ICRC) – Today the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) held events across Lebanon to mark the International Day of the Disappeared. In Tripoli, Baalbek and Tyre, families of people who have gone missing gathered with national associations and civil-society representatives to remember their loved ones and urge the authorities to take action. Decades have passed since the end of the civil war in Lebanon, but thousands still remain unaccounted for.**

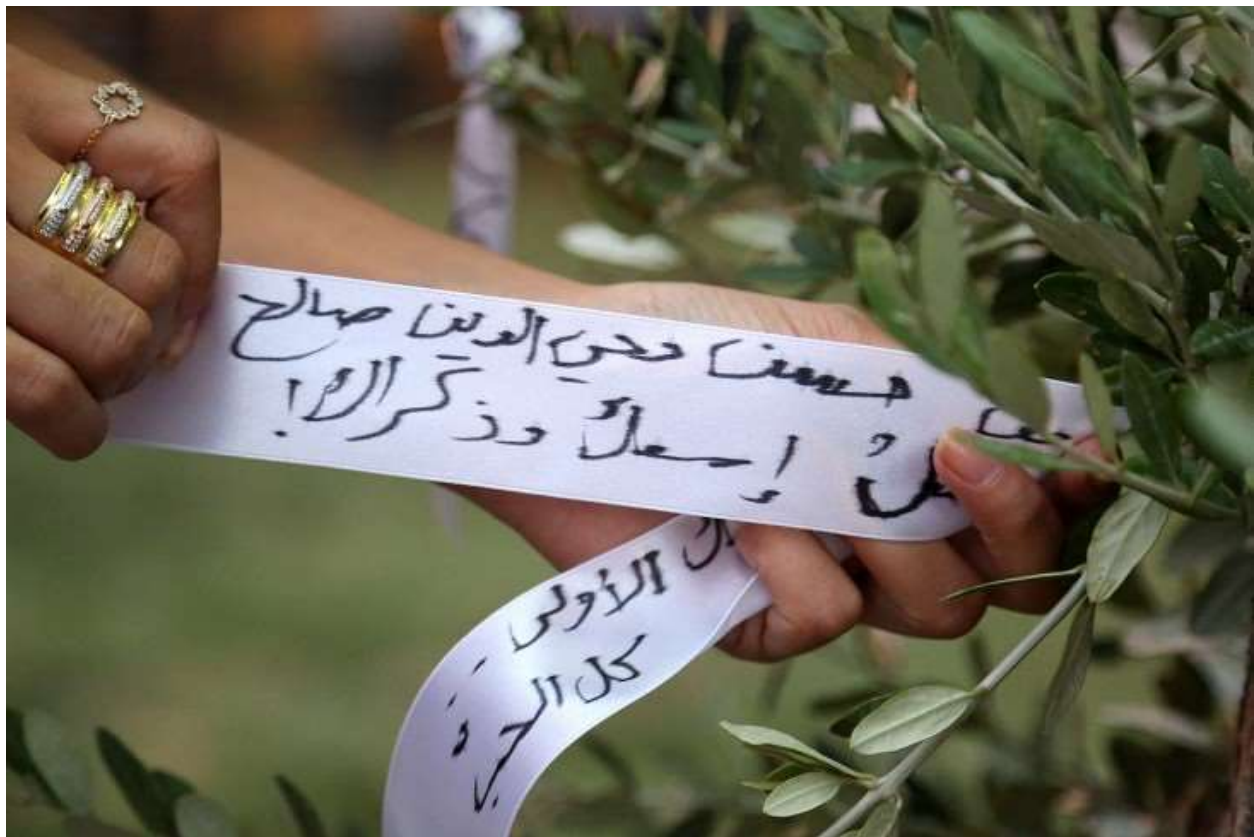
"We're running out of time. The parents are growing old – some pass away without ever knowing what happened to their children," said Fabrizio Carboni, the head of the ICRC delegation in Lebanon. "Everyone has the right to know what happened to their loved ones and mourn them properly. Providing those answers is chiefly the responsibility of the government."

However, no meaningful progress has been made as yet. To speed up the process, in 2012 the ICRC began compiling a consolidated list of missing persons. It has interviewed families across the country and collected information from various authorities, unions and associations.

The ICRC also assisted in the drafting of a law on missing persons. If passed, the law would create a national commission for exhuming mortal remains from mass graves and identifying them.

"We strongly encourage the Lebanese authorities to enact this law as soon as possible," said Mr Carboni. "Once the national commission is set up, we'll hand over all our information, which should make their work a lot easier."

The families of missing people often need medical and psychosocial support and legal and financial assistance. In 2014, the ICRC launched a programme that offers psychosocial support group sessions run by ICRC mental health specialists. The programme also refers families to local NGOs that offer other types of assistance.



On past International Days of the Disappeared, families have gathered in the Gibran Khalil Gibran garden in Beirut. This year, owing to the massive demonstrations, that was not possible. "We hope that the current social and political difficulties will not overshadow the need to find these missing people. Time is running out," said Mr Carboni.