

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/lebanon-freed-from-detention-but-still-01-10-2012,43467.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Lebanon

Journalist tortured

## Freed from detention but still facing charges

2 October 2012

[Read in Arabic \(بالعربية\)](#)

**Rami Aysha**, a correspondent for major international media including *Time Magazine*, *Spiegel Online* and *GlobalPost*, was tortured during nearly one month of detention by Lebanese security forces.

Arrested on 30 August, Aysha was freed on 27 September on bail of 1 million Lebanese pounds (515 euros). Aysha told Reporters Without Borders that charges against him in military court remain unclear, but apparently center on alleged weapons-buying. *"I will fight in court to prove my innocence,"* he said.

Reporters Without Borders expresses its outrage over the entire episode. The organization demands that Lebanese authorities thoroughly investigate the mistreatment, punish those responsible, and withdraw all charges against Aysha.

Contacted by the press freedom organization, Aysha recounted a harrowing series of events that began when he was kidnapped by 12 men near the Beirut airport as he was reporting on arms trafficking in the south of the city. Ignoring his press credential, they handcuffed and blindfolded him. *"They took me to a nearby place where they put a pistol to my temple and asked me on which side I wanted the bullet,"* Aysha said. *"Meanwhile, they laughed then yelled at me. They broke my camera on my head."*

At one point during the three-hour ordeal, Aysha said, *"They asked if I was right- or left-handed. Then they struck me so hard on my left-hand index figure that it remains broken. I was sure they were going to kill me."*

Aysha said he was then turned over to the Lebanese intelligence service, where his treatment did not improve. Still blindfolded, he was beaten by men who told him, *"Fuck you, fuck journalism!"* From there, Aysha was transferred again, this time to the military police, where mistreatment continued.

Once in military police custody, Aysha said he was beaten again, then interrogated, still blindfolded and handcuffed. He endured four interrogation sessions, without having been given food or water or allowed to sleep.

Aysha then spent six days in a military police prison, where he was finally brought before a military judge. There, Aysha was represented by a lawyer, contacted by his family, who had learned of his arrest through a released prisoner. Initial charges apparently involved alleged arms smuggling and arms trafficking.

After six more days in a cell in the military court facilities, Aysha was transferred to a Tripoli prison, where he spent four days among prisoners accused of ordinary crimes, and then to a prison in Biblos. From there, he was released.

Apart from his injured finger, Aysha reported that he suffers broken ribs, and bruises all over his body, as well as psychological trauma.

Aysha's brother has meanwhile received threats and has been told he should not make a fuss

about what happened to Aysha.

With Aysha still in custody, Reporters Without Borders demanded on 18 September that Defense Minister Fayez Ghosn respond to Aysha's account of mistreatment by military police. The organization also demanded a full explanation of his arrest and of the charges against him in military court and requested that the minister use his authority to ensure Aysha's release.

Reporters Without Borders had also formally expressed concern for Aysha's safety to Marwan Charbel, minister of the interior and municipalities; and Justice Minister Shakib Qortbawi.

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