

# Convicted Israel collaborator confessed under torture, NGO says

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A local human rights organization is alleging that the case of Faisal Moqalled, convicted for collaborating with Israel in 2009, was a fabrication of Hezbollah and Lebanese Army Intelligence, a charge denied by the military. The group made the claims Thursday in a report which assessed the body of evidence compiled against Moqalled after carrying out its own investigation.

The case of Moqalled, the group maintained, illustrated the consequences of arbitrary detention and torture, which, according to the Lebanese Center for Human Rights, affected the majority of people in 2011 and 2012.

“We have been hearing about [forced confessions under torture] for 30 years. If he hadn’t done anything, he wouldn’t have confessed,” a spokesperson for the Lebanese Army told The Daily Star.

The Internal Security Forces could not be reached for comment when The Daily Star went to press.

Moqalled was arrested in February 2006 by Hezbollah under suspicion of collaborating with Israel and sentenced to life in prison for the crime in 2009 by the Military Tribunal. Currently serving his sentence in Roumieh Prison, he admitted to collaborating with Italian intelligence services to monitor terrorism plots in Europe while working as a ship captain in Cyprus, but throughout his incarceration and arrest has denied having links to the Israeli Mossad.

He appealed his life sentence in 2009, but his trial was postponed on numerous occasions and the next session is scheduled for March 2014.

LCHR maintains that Moqalled’s confession, on the basis of which he was

found guilty, was extracted under torture by Army Intelligence in 2006 and in the absence of counsel. He had no access to a lawyer until 2008, after he had been in custody for two years. The substance of the confession is riddled with contradictions, the report contends, as are the circumstances and reported chronology of the events leading to his arrest.

The report said Moqalled was charged with entering Israel in May 2005 aboard El Al Flight 313 from Paris to Tel Aviv, a flight LCHR said did not exist, after searching the log of archives at Charles de Gaulle Airport.

The report questioned the plausibility of key charges against Moqalled, which included entering Israel and collaborating with its army, and concluded that, notwithstanding the contradictory reports of the Army Intelligence and the investigating magistrate, the events in his investigative report were inconsistent and lacked evidence.

Moqalled's case epitomizes the pitfalls of arbitrary arrest and torture, a practice that LCHR believes is widespread. The report found that 66 percent of detainees in the last two years have been subject to torture and ill treatment by security authorities.