

Report: Lebanon harsh on Iraqi refugees

by UPI

BEIRUT, Lebanon -- Iraqi refugees in Lebanon have almost no rights and live in fear of being imprisoned, a Human Rights Watch report said Tuesday. The 66-page report is called "Rot Here or Die There: Bleak Choices for Iraqi Refugees in Lebanon," and called on the Lebanese government to grant Iraqi refugees a temporary legal status that would provide at the very least renewable residence and work permits. Lebanon is not a party to the 1951 U.N. Refugee Convention and treats refugees as illegal immigrants, the group said. There are an estimated 50,000 Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, and about 580 of them are in jails, the group said. However, Nadim Houry, the Beirut-based Lebanese researcher for Human Rights Watch, said Lebanon is not solely responsible for the refugees' plight. "Lebanon is not the cause of the Iraqi refugee crisis, and Lebanese are understandably wary of hosting yet another refugee influx," Houry said. "The United States and other countries that participated in the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq must share the burden of caring for Iraqi refugees in Lebanon and provide durable solutions on their behalf."

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