

Radio Charity in Lebanon is bombed

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The Voice of Charity, a Christian radio station with an inter-faith perspective in Lebanon, was destroyed by a bomb on May 6. This is the most recent of a series of bomb attacks in Christian areas that no-one has claimed responsibility for.



The radio station, that has been run by Maronite Catholics in the Lebanese port of Jounieh since 1984, was destroyed by an estimated 50 pounds of explosives. Nearby buildings were also affected.

Fr Elie Nakhoul, representing Radio Voice of Charity on a visit to the UK, explained that "the attack was in response to the radio station's focus on Lebanese prisoners in Syrian jails". Syrian authorities have denied the prisoners exist and the Lebanese government has ignored the issue.

"Many mothers and fathers are sure that their children are in Syrian prisons" he said, "and we all want our children back from the Syrian prisons, back to their parents, this is our message and our goal". The radio has hosted phone-ins and focused programming on the prisoners. The radio and this campaign enjoys support from Christians and Muslims alike. "This is a human rights issue" insists Father Nakhoul "every Lebanese person supports the return of the prisoners".

Prisoners were taken during the Lebanese civil war, the last of them in 1989. It is believed that among them are two priests, Fr. Albert Cherfan and Fr. Sleiman Abou Khalil, missing presumed to be prisoners. The total number of undeclared prisoners is said to be between 500 and 600.

Partly because of the coverage of the issue given by radio Voice of Charity, a commission has been named by the government to investigate.

The radio station has broadcast harrowing interviews with ex-prisoners, whose existence was denied and who have told of being tortured while in jail. Other interviews have focused on the frustrations and anxieties of the family members of people presumed to be in Syrian prisons.

The radio station has responded to the attempt to silence it by going straight back on the air broadcasting from a tent in the ruins of the bombed building. "The cry for the return of the prisoners will not be silenced by the bombing" said Fr Nakhoul defiantly.

Voice of Charity's signal is picked up in Israel/Palestine, Cyprus and parts of Egypt and Jordan via its satellites and around the world through internet. As well as Arabic programming it also airs in French, English, Armenian and Italian, as well as eight other languages for migrant workers.

Link

<http://www.radiocharity.org>

[Lebanese forces page on prisoners](#)