

Baalbek Archbishop Hands Muslim Girl who Converted to Christianity Back to Her Family

by Naharnet Newsdesk 14 May 2012, 12:50

Archbishop of Baalbek-Deir al-Ahmar Semaan Atallah handed over on Monday Banin Qataya back to her parents after she had left their home two weeks ago.

Qataya, who had converted to Christianity from Islam three years ago, had fled her home following psychological and physical abuse from her father as a result of her conversion, said Semaan.

He revealed that she had left her home “out of her own freewill.”

She was handed over to her parents at Hizbullah official Sheikh Mohammed Yazbek’s office.

Semaan said: “Qataya left her home and her parents had the right to search for her.”

“We had the duty to help to find out what she wants,” he continued.

“My hand is extended to Sheikh Yazbek to cooperate in order to demonstrate Lebanon’s message of coexistence in the region,” he stressed.

For his part, Yazbek said: “This issue should be dealt with in an open heart and mind.”

The pastor of Baalbek’s Our Lady of Good Help Church, Father Walid Gharious, aka Father Elias Maroun Gharious, was recently kidnapped for baptizing the girl.

Her father Sheikh Ahmed Qataya had vowed to LBC television on Thursday that he will recover his daughter “even if it will create a civil war in Lebanon.”

On May 7, unknown individuals kidnapped Father Walid Gharious on the Baalbek road near the intersection leading to the town of al-Ansar.

He was released later that day.

LBC had said that Gharious was handed over to Yazbek following his release.