



الهيئة الوطنية لحقوق الإنسان

المتضمنة لجنة الوقاية من التعذيب

National Human Rights Commission

including the committee for the prevention of torture



Annual Report 2024

**Upholding Human Rights and
International Humanitarian Law**
Addressing Torture and Grave
Violations



Scan the report

Title: Annual report of the National Human Rights Commission that includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture [NHRC-CPT] for the year 2024

First Edition: 2025
Publisher: The Lebanese Republic | The National Human Rights Commission. which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture
Address: International Key Center. 3rd Floor. Jisr El Basha Street. Hazmieh. Mount Lebanon
Email: info@nhrc.lb
Website: <https://nhrc.lb>

Hotline: +961 3 923 456
Facebook: <http://fb.nhrc.lb>
Twitter: <http://twitter.nhrc.lb>
Instagram: <http://insta.nhrc.lb>
YouTube: <http://yt.nhrc.lb>

Some Rights Reserved [CC] National Human Rights Commission. including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture – Lebanon. 2025



This report was developed with the support of the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] in Lebanon. with funding from the European Union.

The views expressed in this report are those of the National Human Rights Commission. including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture. and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations. including the United Nations Development Programme. or the member states of the United Nations.

This document is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
Reproduction. storage in a retrieval system. or transmission of this book in any form or by any means—electronic. mechanical. photocopying. recording. or otherwise—for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without prior written permission from the publisher.
For more information. please visit the copyright page on the Commission’s website: <https://nhrc.lb/copyright>
Permissions: Requests for commercial use. additional rights. or licensing should be directed to: info@nhrc.lb

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, works to protect and promote human rights in Lebanon in accordance with the standards set out in the Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, relevant international treaties and conventions, and domestic laws aligned with these standards. It is an independent national institution established under Law No. 62/2016, pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly resolution [Paris Principles] which governs the creation and functioning of national human rights institutions. The Commission also serves as the National Preventive Mechanism against torture, in line with the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which Lebanon acceded to under Law No. 12/2008.2008.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction	6
Methodology	7
Chapter One: Human rights and International Humanitarian Law Violations in Lebanon during 2024	9
I. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	10
1.1 Right to education	10
1.2 The right to an adequate standard of living	11
1.3 Right to health care	15
2.1 Freedom of opinion and expression	15
2.2 Right to access to justice	18
2.3 Right to vote	19
III. The Rule of Law and Human Rights	19
3.1 Criminalization of torture	19
3.2 Independence of the judiciary	19
3.3 Laws and regulations	20
3.4 Status of prisons and detention centers	20
IV. Discrimination against the most vulnerable groups	21
4.1 Rights of the child	21
4.2 Women's rights	22
4.3 Rights of refugees and internally displaced persons	23
4.4 Rights of migrant workers	24
4.5 Rights of LGBTI community	25
V. International Humanitarian Law and the Impact of the War on Human Rights in Lebanon	25
5.1 Violations of international humanitarian law	25
5.2 Impact of the war on human rights in Lebanon	27
Chapter Two: Activities of the National Human Rights Commission including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture	28
I. Reports and Documentation	30
II. Communication and interaction with official authorities and civil society organizations	31
III. Attending the meetings of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee	33
IV. Activities of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture	34
Chapter Three: Conclusions and recommendations	36
I. Conclusions	37
1.1 Economic, social and cultural rights	37
1.2 Civil and political rights	38
1.3 Rule of law and human rights	38
1.4 Vulnerable groups	38
1.5 Violations of international humanitarian law	39
II. Recommendations	39
2.1 Economic, social and cultural rights	39
2.2 Civil and political rights	40
2.3 Rule of law and human rights	41
2.4 Vulnerable groups	42
2.5 Violations of international humanitarian law	43

INTRODUCTION

During 2024, Lebanon faced a critical phase characterized by unprecedented economic and political challenges. The economic and social crisis that began in 2019 continued during the past year for the sixth consecutive year due to the deterioration of the living conditions of large segments of society¹, amid increasing human rights violations and the absence of effective accountability mechanisms. In light of these facts, the effects of the Israeli war on Lebanon, which deepened divisions and burdened the Lebanese people, are added to the scene², which necessitated careful follow-up and in-depth analysis of the status of rights in the country.

This annual report of the National Human Rights Commission in Lebanon monitors the situation of economic, social and cultural rights in Lebanon during the year 2024, as well as civil and political rights and the reality of fundamental freedoms, and addresses the extent of the commitment of the Lebanese state to implement the international treaties it has ratified. It also reviews the most important laws and practices that have affected fundamental freedoms, the independence of the judiciary, conditions of detention and violations associated with torture and ill-treatment. In addition to the rights of marginalized or vulnerable groups in society, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, workers, migrants and refugees, as well as those forcibly displaced by the Israeli war on Lebanon, as the report highlights the most prominent challenges they faced during the year 2024.

Moreover, the report aims to document violations of international humanitarian law during 2024 during the Israeli war on Lebanon, where several incidents were deliberately targeted residential areas and vital facilities, resulting in mass human losses and destruction of vital infrastructure, which seriously affected the human rights reality in Lebanon, especially in areas that witnessed armed conflict.

Therefore, this report seeks to present a thorough and precise assessment of the human rights situation in Lebanon throughout 2024, drawing from credible sources, field reports, and detailed legal analysis. Additionally, it aims to offer practical recommendations to key stakeholders, with the goal of advancing comprehensive reforms that reinforce the rule of law and safeguard fundamental rights and freedoms.

¹Lebanon's Economic Contraction Deepens, Highlighting Critical Need for Reforms and Key Investments, World Bank Group, 10 December 2024, accessed on: 28 February 2025.

²Stephanie Radi, Lebanon 2024: Memories Burdened by Israeli Aggression and a «Fragile» Ceasefire Agreement [Report], Anadolu Agency, Beirut, 30 December 2024, accessed on: 28 February 2025.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in this report is based on the collection and analysis of data from a variety of sources with the aim of providing a comprehensive and accurate assessment of the legal situation of human rights in Lebanon during the year 2024. This methodology aims to highlight Lebanon's commitment to international human rights standards and the extent to which local legislation and practices conform to these standards. The data collected for this report is derived from an assessment of the overall human rights situation in Lebanon throughout 2024, documenting violations and challenges to human rights and fundamental freedoms. This includes reports from the United Nations, as well as Lebanese and international civil society organizations focused on human rights. Additionally, the report reviews official documents, positions, and statements issued by the executive and legislative authorities, as well as studies, publications, statements, and circulars from relevant ministries, judicial bodies, security services, and national institutions.

The data is analyzed to identify positive and negative dimensions in addressing human rights in Lebanon during 2024 in light of the Lebanese state's constitutional and international obligations and Lebanese national laws. Government practices will also be examined through a review of government decisions, decrees, and official statements issued by the Lebanese authorities. This will include analyzing the state's positions on human rights issues, such as freedom of opinion and expression, the rights of women and children, the rights of refugees and displaced persons, and ensuring social justice. The extent to which the State applies these practices on the ground will also be evaluated and ensure its implementation of international obligations in this field.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the data collected, the report will conclude with a set of conclusions on human rights violations in Lebanon and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law followed by a set of recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection of human rights in Lebanon. These recommendations will be geared towards addressing legal and policy gaps that may hinder respect for human rights, and offering practical solutions to improve the application of international human rights standards in the Lebanese context.

The report will be based on two main chapters that provide a comprehensive analysis of the current human rights situation in Lebanon during 2024, and that highlight the activities carried out by

the National Human Rights Commission. The first chapter will focus on the human rights situation in Lebanon for the year 2024, where the most prominent human rights issues witnessed by Lebanon during the year will be reviewed, whether at the level of human rights law or international humanitarian law. This includes analysing potential violations of civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression and freedom of the press, as well as potential violations of economic, social and cultural rights such as the right to work and a decent life, as well as women's rights, minority rights, and the situation of refugees. It will also address laws and regulations related to human rights in Lebanon, with a focus on legislative amendments, if any, and their compatibility with international human rights standards. In addition to the violations of international humanitarian law witnessed by Lebanon during the year, especially in recent months after the expansion of Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

The second chapter will review the activities of the National Human Rights Commission during 2024, including the role of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture. This includes independent participation in reports scheduled by the Lebanese state, receiving complaints and information and working to address them through negotiation, mediation or litigation, in addition to interacting with international organizations, official bodies and civil society. With a focus on activities related to monitoring and documenting violations of international humanitarian law. This chapter will also address the role of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture in protecting human rights in Lebanon.

In the third and final chapter, the report will conclude with a set of comprehensive conclusions and recommendations. The recommendations will include specific and effective solutions based on the type of violations or groups affected. For economic, social and cultural rights, recommendations will focus on improving living, health and educational conditions. In the area of civil and political rights, the recommendations will focus on guaranteeing fundamental rights such as freedom of opinion and expression and fair trial. It will also include recommendations on the rights of vulnerable groups such as women, children, refugees and internally displaced persons, with a focus on providing a safe and non-discriminatory environment. As for violations of international humanitarian law, the need to strengthen its application in Lebanon, especially in times of conflict, will be emphasized. With regard to detention centres, the recommendations will include improving conditions and providing effective monitoring mechanisms to prevent torture.

Chapter One: Human rights and International Humanitarian Law Violations in Lebanon during 2024

I. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

1.1 Right to education

The year 2024 witnessed grave violations of the right to education in Lebanon, as the expansion of the war led to unprecedented disruption of the educational process. While the school year was scheduled to commence in the first week of October 2024, this date was postponed due to the security and logistical situation, as public schools accounted for about 60% of the shelters for IDPs³, while a large number of teachers and students, estimated at about 400.000 students, were forcibly displaced due to the war, and 40.000 teachers left their homes specifically from four governorates: the south, Nabatieh, Bekaa and Baalbek-Hermel⁴.

Although the Ministry of Education was aware of the imminent dangers, it failed to implement a proactive plan to ensure the continuity of education in light of the conflict. This lack of preparedness exposed weaknesses in crisis management and highlighted the absence of a clear strategy to safeguard the future of thousands of students. As a result, students were deprived of their right to education, leading to a stark disparity in learning opportunities between the public and private sectors.

While private schools began their academic year based on independent decisions, offering a mix of on-site and distance learning, public schools remained closed due to Israeli attacks or their use as shelters for displaced individuals. As a result, thousands of students were unable to attend school, leading to significant dropout rates.

In addition to the repercussions of the war on the educational sector in Lebanon, the year 2024 witnessed a strike of university professors⁵, as contract professors, who constitute more than 70% of the teaching staff, announced their general strike in all faculties and institutes of the Lebanese university starting from the first day of teaching in the academic year 2024-2025, stressing the need to approve the sabbatical file as a prerequisite for the stability of the educational process. This strike has affected the right to education for thousands of students, deepening the gap between those who can afford private education and those who rely on the Lebanese University as the only option to pursue their studies.

1.2 The right to an adequate standard of living

Seizing depositors’ funds in Lebanese banks is one of the issues that has significantly affected the economic and social rights of individuals, especially in light of the severe financial crisis that Lebanon has been experiencing since 2019. Although depositors, whether Lebanese or non-Lebanese, have legal rights to their funds, their seizure by banks as a result of lack of financial liquidity or statutory decisions related to the crisis has resulted in violations of these rights.

In light of the worsening economic crisis, Lebanese banks are facing significant difficulties in meeting withdrawal requests, whether for deposits in Lebanese pounds or foreign currency. This situation has severe implications for the daily lives of citizens, further exacerbating their financial hardships⁶.

Lebanon’s legal system is based on laws that protect the secrecy of bank accounts⁷ and define depositors’ rights to access their funds unless there are justifiable legal grounds for holding them. However, this situation has been exacerbated by the crisis as depositors face difficulty in recovering their deposits, which has greatly affected their economic and social rights, as many individuals have lost their ability to secure their basic needs due to this seizure, such as education, hospitalization, etc.

By early 2024, the Lebanese parliament approved the draft budget law for 2024 after introducing amendments, which were described as addressing the immediate needs of the current economic phase. However, the law overlooked critical reforms⁸ that were essential for helping the country emerge from its prolonged financial crisis, a crisis that has severely impacted the public sector for nearly five years.

During 2024, Lebanon witnessed serious violations of economic and social rights as a result of the ongoing economic collapse and rampant corruption, which led to worsening living conditions and high rates of poverty and unemployment. A report⁹ issued by the World Bank in December 2024 showed that real GDP growth in Lebanon decreased by about 6.6% in 2024 due to geopolitical tensions, and the Lebanese economy declined sharply, bringing the cumulative decline in GDP since 2019 to more than 38% by the end of 2024.

This deterioration has been reflected in various social groups, as the economic crisis has prompted large segments of workers to strike to protest low wages and deteriorating working conditions, as in February 2024, Lebanon witnessed a series of strikes and protests by workers from various sectors, expressing their basic demands in light of policies perceived as unfair to them.

In this context, the Syndicate of Employees of Mobile Operators has announced a complete work stoppage in protest¹⁰ against the failure to adjust salaries and ensure full payment in U.S. dollars. Additionally, the delay in signing the collective labor contract has jeopardized the rights of more than 1.400 employees and their families.

Furthermore, the Constituent Commission of the Association of Retired Engineers has called for a sit-in at the Order of Engineers in Beirut to protest the rejection of the Pension Fund Management Committee’s demand¹¹. The demonstration seeks to advocate for the

³Children in Lebanon go back to learning. UNICEF, 04 November 2025, accessed on: 02 March 2025.
⁴ Minister of Education: The official start of the school year is November 4, National News Agency, 06 October 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2025.
⁵ Committee of Contracted Professors at the Lebanese University: We announced a general strike in all faculties and institutes starting from the first day of teaching, LBCI, September 15, 2024, accessed on: March 02, 2025.

⁶ محمد فحيلي، أزمة الودائع في لبنان: حقوق ضائعة بين السياسة والقوانين، النهار، 17 كانون الثاني 2025، تاريخ الزيارة: 11 آذار 2025. Mohammed Fahili, The Deposit Crisis in Lebanon: Lost Rights between Politics and Laws, An-Nahar, 17 January 2025, accessed on: 11 March 2025.
⁷ Bank Secrecy Law
⁸ Lebanon's parliament passes 2024 budget, shunning major reforms, Reuters, 27 January 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2025.
⁹ Lebanon's Economic Contraction Deepens, Highlighting Critical Need for Reforms and Key Investments, op.cit.
¹⁰ Mobile Employees Union: Complete suspension of work until the full salary in fresh dollars is paid and the collective work contract is signed, National News Agency, 05 February 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2025.
¹¹ The constituent Commission of the Association of Retired Engineers called for a strike on Wednesday to achieve the demands, National News Agency, 05 February 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2025.

adoption of a fair budget for 2024 that enhances pensions to meet the needs of retired engineers and their families. ensuring their right to a dignified standard of living and access to healthcare. Additionally. the protest demands the disbursement of funds owed by the Ministry of Finance and banks.

Simultaneously. the Order of Engineers in Tripoli organized a protest¹² against the failure of the acting governor of Banque du Liban to respond to their request for the release of a portion of engineers’ funds held in certain bank branches. The demonstration comes amid worsening living conditions in the country. which have led to the suspension of work for many engineers due to severe economic hardships.

Dozens of retired military personnel also demonstrated demanding social justice¹³. stressing in their protest that some ministers bear responsibility for ignoring their rights. considering that signing decisions that lead to the deterioration of their living and economic conditions represents a flagrant violation of their rights. They also declared civil disobedience and refrained from paying new fees and taxes¹⁴.

In addition. members of the Saida Municipality Police organized a protest against the living conditions they suffer from¹⁵. in an attempt to make their voice heard by those concerned. as they appealed to the mayor and officials concerned to improve their professional and living conditions. stressing that the salaries they receive are no longer sufficient to meet their basic needs. which makes them unable to bear the social and economic burdens of education. medicine. and hospitalization.

As for the agricultural sector. the farmers of Akkar carried out a protest to express their suffering¹⁶ due to the great damage caused to their agricultural seasons as a result of floods and torrential rains that destroyed greenhouses and crops. pointing to the absence of officials and deputies to address farmers’ issues. stressing the need for the Minister of Agriculture to intervene to visit the region and get to know the conditions of farmers closely. They also called for urgent action to stop smuggling. control borders. and regulate An agricultural calendar that supports the protection of local seasons. in a way that enhances the rights of farmers to a decent standard of living in accordance with international human rights standards.

In the educational sector. the official committee of contract professors at the Lebanese University highlighted the challenging conditions faced by contract professors. which they regard as a violation of their legitimate rights. These professors are unable to access their faculties and endure significant hardships due to the lack of financial support and recognition of their rights¹⁷. The committee emphasized that the strike by contract professors will continue. including their refusal to attend classes. monitor. or correct

exams. until the sabbatical issue is resolved and their legal rights. which have long been denied. are fully recognized and granted.

In a related context. retired teachers in private education staged a sit-in¹⁸ to demand that the Parliament approve laws to fund the compensation fund for members of the educational staff in private schools and to do them justice like their colleagues in public education. who receive six salaries per month.

The Employees Committee at the Ministry of Information issued a statement of protest in response to the government’s neglect of their rights¹⁹. The committee highlighted the discrimination faced by the ministry’s employees. noting that staff in other departments had benefited from financial assistance through a government loan in April 2023. while Ministry of Information employees were excluded from these grants despite continuing to work under challenging conditions. In response. the ministry’s employees have decided to strike until they are fairly compensated and justice is achieved in the distribution of bonuses and assistance across all public sector workers. The committee called on the government to take immediate action to address this discrimination and ensure the dignity of workers in all state institutions.

Moreover. the Public Administration Employees Association called for the continuity of the “dignity uprising” in defense of the rights of employees²⁰. denouncing the government’s procrastination in paying incentives and salaries. noting that the government responded to pressure to delay these incentives under the pretext of justice. without taking actual steps to implement the demands of employees. The association affirmed its solidarity with the employees of the Ministry of Finance. calling on the Ministry of Finance to publish details of the salaries and incentives received by employees in all public sectors. including military and civilian retirees. to reveal the reality of the disparity in treatment and injustice to which public administration employees are subjected.

Additionally. the Committee of Judicial Assistants in Lebanon has decided to continue their strike in protest against the disregard of their demands. In a statement. the committee explained that the government once again postponed the rights of public sector employees under the pretext of studying costs. despite the worsening living conditions and the lack of access to healthcare²¹.

These protests were a response to the sharp decline in purchasing power and social injustice. In February 2024. Lebanon experienced a significant surge in consumer prices. According to the Central Administration of Statistics²². the annual inflation rate for 2024 reached 45.24%. as reported in the Consumer Price Index study. This inflation has exacerbated the financial burden on citizens. who are already grappling with an

¹² Engineers in Tripoli at a protest in front of Banque du Liban. An-Nahar. 11 March 2024. accessed on: 02 March 2025.
¹³ Retired military personnel tried to block the entrances leading to the government palaces. demanding “social justice”. National News Agency. 08 February 2024. accessed on: 02 March 2025.
¹⁴ Military retirees declared civil disobedience and refrained from paying new fees and taxes. National News Agency. February 18. 2024. accessed on: March 2. 2025.
¹⁵ Protest by the Sidon Municipality Police demanding better living conditions. National News Agency. 20 February 2024. accessed on: 02 March 2025.
¹⁶ Farmers in Akkar protesting the negligence of officials. National News Agency. 09 February 2024. accessed on: 02 March 2025.
¹⁷ The official committee of contracted professors at the Lebanese University announces the continuation of the strike until the approval of the sabbatical file. National News Agency. February 13. 2024. accessed on: March 02. 2025.

¹⁸ Sit-in of retired teachers in private education in front of the parliament. National News Agency. 20 February 2024. accessed on: 02 March 2025.
¹⁹ Ministry of Information Employees Committee: Starting the strike and calling on the government to correct the mistake against the public sector. National News Agency. February 21. 2024. accessed on: 02 March 2025.
²⁰ Employees of the General Administration: Karama Intifada. An-Nahar. 23 February 2024. accessed on: 02 March 2025.
²¹ Judicial assistant committees decide to continue i’tikaf and forcibly stop working. National News Agency. 10 February 2024. accessed on: 02 March 2025.
²² Inflation in numbers. Central Administration of Statistics. accessed on 02 March 2025.

unprecedented decline in income levels.

In a similar context, the World Bank’s May²³ 2024 report on poverty in Lebanon revealed an alarming increase in poverty rates, as the report confirmed that a large percentage of the population is living below the poverty line, in light of the collapse of basic services such as health and education, which constitutes a clear violation of the basic rights of citizens.

In a related context, Lebanon was placed on the grey list by the Financial Action Task Force [FATF]²⁴ in October 2024, which increased Lebanon’s financial isolation, made it difficult to obtain international finance, and directly affected the economic and living situation.

In light of these developments, there is an urgent need to take urgent measures aimed at improving economic and social conditions, through the development of fair economic policies that ensure a decent standard of living for citizens, as well as radical reforms to combat corruption, achieve transparency in the management of public resources, as well as ensure effective social protection for the most affected groups. Addressing these situations requires real political will that puts the interest of citizens at the forefront of priorities, by activating oversight and accountability, guaranteeing workers’ rights and improving working conditions, ensuring A decent life for all.

In this context, the Minister of Labour in the caretaker government, Mustafa Bayram, announced after the cabinet meeting the approval of a series of measures aimed at alleviating the living crisis, including raising the minimum wage in the private sector²⁵ to 18 million Lebanese pounds, with the addition of 9 million Lebanese pounds as a transportation allowance, so that the minimum wage is not less than 300 US dollars. The Council also approved a decree to increase school scholarships for the private sector, so that every child receives Over 12 million Lebanese pounds annually, including up to three children, bringing the total to 36 million Lebanese pounds. Although these measures are a step forward, they still need to be complemented by broader reforms that ensure the sustainability of solutions and promote social justice.

Moreover, the International Monetary Fund²⁶ [IMF] stressed that the current economic reforms in Lebanon are still insufficient to address the severe financial crisis plaguing the country, noting that the worsening situation is due to interrelated factors, most notably the internal displacement crisis, the escalating security tensions on the southern border with Israel, in addition to the regional repercussions of the war in Gaza, which further complicates the economic scene.

In a report issued in November 2024, the World Bank revealed²⁷ the “preliminary assessment of damage and losses in Lebanon”, where the report indicated that the cost of material damage and economic losses resulting from the war in Lebanon is estimated

at \$ 8.5 billion, where the damage to infrastructure alone amounted to \$ 3.4 billion, while the economic losses reached 5.1 billion dollars.billion dollars. The conflict has led to an additional 6.6 percent contraction in real GDP for 2024, deepening the ongoing deterioration of the Lebanese economy, which has shrunk by more than 34 percent over the past five years.

On the humanitarian front, the report revealed that the number of internally displaced people has risen to 875.000, with the most vulnerable, including women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and refugees, at increased risk, 166.000 people lost their jobs, resulting in an estimated \$168 million in wage losses. The housing sector was the hardest hit, with 100.000 housing units damaged or partially or completely destroyed, worth 3.2 One billion dollars in damage and losses. Trade losses exceeded \$2 billion as a result of the displacement of employees and business owners, while losses in the agricultural sector amounted to \$1.2 billion due to crop and livestock destruction and the displacement of farmers.

1.3 Right to health care

Lebanon’s health sector has gradually collapsed as a result of the severe and ongoing economic crisis. Under these circumstances, the WHO Regional Director for the Middle East visited Lebanon and announced that Lebanon’s healthcare system faces multiple challenges²⁸, from hosting 1.5 million Syrian refugees to hostilities in the south targeting health workers, health facilities and ambulances. Other challenges facing the health system include a severe shortage of medical staff, including doctors and nurses, as well as shortages of medicines, medical equipment and essential health supplies.

This crisis worsened significantly during the war that affected the health sector and led to the disruption of a large part of it, and the deterioration escalated during the last four months of 2024, with the expansion of the aggression on Lebanon, where the Israeli army carried out 67 attacks on health facilities and hospitals in various Lebanese regions, according to the report of the Lebanese Ministry of Health²⁹. Sixteen medical workers were killed and 73 injured. These attacks led to the forced closure of seven hospitals and the partial outage of three others. In addition, 206 aid workers were killed and 257 injured as a result of 238 attacks on ambulance associations.

The destruction of health facilities and attacks on medical personnel impede individuals’ ability to receive health care, in clear violation of article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In addition, the targeting of hospitals and relief associations is a direct undermining of the ability of the health sector to perform its tasks and thus prevents individuals from accessing their right to health care.

²³ Lebanon: Poverty rate has more than tripled over the past decade to 44% under the weight of an ongoing crisis. World Bank Group. 23 May 2024, accessed 02 March 2025.
²⁴ “Black and Grey” Lists. FATF, accessed on: 02 March 2025
²⁵ Cabinet meeting statement on 04 April 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2025.
²⁶ Hatem Maher, Lebanon’s reforms insufficient for recovery, IMF says, Reuters, 23 May 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2025.
²⁷ New World Bank Report Assesses Impact of Conflict on Lebanon’s Economy and Key Sectors, World Bank Group, 14 November 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2024.

²⁸ Visiting Lebanon, WHO Regional Director affirms support to address multiple health system challenges, World Health Organization, 07 April 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2025.
²⁹ Overall toll of Israeli aggression and Lebanese Health Report, 04 December 2024, accessed on: 02 March 2025.

II. Civil and Political Rights

Civil and political rights form the core of any democratic system. with individuals guaranteeing freedom of opinion and expression to express their opinions. participate in public affairs. and access to justice without any discrimination. However. Lebanon witnessed a sharp deterioration in these rights during 2024. amid escalating repression. restrictions on public freedoms and the promise of judicial independence.

2.1 Freedom of opinion and expression

Article 13 of the Lebanese Constitution guarantees freedom of opinion and expression as a fundamental right. and international conventions ratified by Lebanon. such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. article 19. guarantee freedom of opinion and expression and the protection of journalists. However. events during 2024 have shown the increasing restrictions imposed on journalists. activists. and artists in Lebanon. through prosecutions and threats. which constitutes a significant regression in Lebanon’s international obligations. Freedom of opinion and expression continued to face significant challenges as pressure mounted on journalists and media professionals. which coincided with a series of investigations and threats against several media and TV figures³⁰.

As for threats and incitement against journalists. on November 12. 2024. Iman Chouikh was subjected to a campaign of threats. incitement and accusations of labor against the background of her political positions published on «X». which prompted her to leave work out of fear for her safety and the safety of her family³¹. On the same day. Hisham Haddad was subjected to a similar campaign³². receiving death threats because of his political positions about the crisis in Gaza. In a related context. the journalist Youssef Diab was subjected to a campaign of threats and incitement against the background of a television interview³³ on June 23. 2024. where he was accused of treason. and the matter reached the threat of physical assault. On April 14. 2024. journalist Dima Sadek was subjected to threats and accusations of labor after she posted a tweet related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. where she received hundreds of threatening messages. Moreover. journalist Maryam Majdoline Al-Lahham was also exposed in 02 June 2024 for a similar incitement and defamation campaign. Similarly. journalist Nabil Mamlouk was attacked because of a story he published on his news page³⁴. Additionally. journalist Christian Gemayel was summoned on August 22. 2024 by the Cybercrime Bureau after publishing an article³⁵ detailing depositors’ money in Lebanon.

In December 2024. journalists Sahar Ghaddar and Rola Bahsoun and a group of journalists and activists were summoned by the Cybercrimes Bureau in connection with a complaint filed by MTV against them³⁶.

³⁰ Center for the Defense of Media and Cultural Freedoms – SKEYES – Samir Kassir Foundation. Lebanon 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
³¹ Journalist Iman Chouikh is subjected to a campaign of threats. incitement and treason because of her positions and work on MTV channel. Beirut - Skeyes. Lebanon News. 13 November 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
³² Journalist Hisham Haddad subjected to a campaign of incitement. treason and threats because of a video. Beirut – Skeyes. Lebanon News. 13 November 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
³³ Journalist Youssef Diab subjected to threats and treason because of an interview. Beirut – Skeyes. Lebanon News. 24 June 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
³⁴ Young men assault journalist Nabil Mamlouk in Tyre because of a news item he published on his news page. Beirut – Skeyes. Lebanon News. 14 November 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
³⁵ Journalist Christian Gemayel refuses to appear before the Cybercrimes Bureau and abides by the law. Beirut – Skeyes. Lebanon News. 27 August 2024. Date of accessed on: 05 March 2025.
³⁶ The Cybercrimes Bureau investigates a journalist and summons another because of a complaint from MTV channel. Beirut-Skeyes. Lebanon News. December 17. 2024. accessed on: March 5. 2025.

On December 19. 2024. a complaint was filed against journalist Joe Maalouf on charges of defamation because of his statements on his program about detainees in Syrian prisons³⁷. and the case was referred to the Publications Court.

In a similar context. journalists Firas Hatoum and Nancy Al-Sabaa were also interrogated on December 4. 2024. against the background of a newspaper article about the «Battle of Pagers». where they were summoned by the judicial police³⁸. This came after they had previously been summoned on November 20. 2024 by the head of the Criminal Investigation Office³⁹.

On March 18. 2024. the Lebanese General Security interrogated writer Makram Rabah for an article in which he criticized Hezbollah. where he was interrogated for five hours before he was left under interrogation⁴⁰. Also. a complaint was filed against the journalist Riad Touq on January 18. 2024. by Judge Sabbouh Suleiman on charges of libel and defamation⁴¹. after he published a video attacking the judicial decision related to former Minister Youssef Fenianos.

In addition. media outlets and digital platforms have also been threatened and instigated. On 26 April 2024. an incitement campaign was launched against journalist Diana Moukalled and activist Wadih al-Asmar for supporting the rights of displaced Syrians⁴². On November 25. former MP Mohammad Itani filed a complaint against Megaphone over a report about Incrypt’s link to corruption files⁴³.

Furthermore. on 8 May 2024. comedian Shaden Fakih was subjected to a campaign of incitement and threats following a comedy video about Muslim clerics. prompting a complaint against her for insult⁴⁴. In addition. the Minister of Interior. Bassam Mawlawi. filed a lawsuit in January 2024 to stop the screening of the satirical television program «Marhaba Dawla» on the grounds that it insults the state and its institutions. and after the judge of urgent matters in Beirut. Carla Shawah. dismissed the case. the program’s producer. journalist Firas Hatoum. appeared before the intelligence unit of the Internal Security Forces after summoning him on the order of the government commissioner at the military court in March 2024. where he was asked to hand over the plastic weapons and uniforms used in the program. The television program satirically criticizes issues related to the Internal Security Forces. In response. the ISF filed a complaint against Hatoum based on the use of weapons and uniforms in the parade. based on article 144 of Lebanon’s Code of Military Justice. which criminalizes the use of military uniforms for camouflage and not for television work.

³⁷ Libel complaint against journalist Joe Maalouf for attacking Gebran Bassil in the introduction to his program. Beirut – Skeyes. Lebanon News. 19 December 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
³⁸ Journalist Firas Hatoum and journalist Nancy Sabaa appear before the Prosecutor for an investigation. Beirut-Skeyes. Lebanon News. 05 December 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
³⁹ CID summons journalist Firas Hatoum and journalist Nancy Sabaa for an investigation. Beirut-Skeyes. Lebanon News. 20 November 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
⁴⁰ “Moral assassination attempt” Interrogation of Lebanese academic who criticized Hezbollah. Beirut-Skeyes. Lebanon. 19 March 2024. accessed on: 5 March 2025.
⁴¹ The Criminal Investigation Department interrogates Riad Touq after summoning him on ground of a video. Beirut – Skeyes. Lebanon News. 24 January 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
⁴² Incitement and treason campaign against journalists and activists because of their positions on the issue of displaced Syrians. Beirut – Skeyes. Lebanon. 26 April 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
⁴³ A former MP files a defamation complaint against the Megaphone platform because of a press report. Beirut Skeyes. Lebanon. 26 November 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.
⁴⁴ Comedian Shaden Fakih is subjected to an incitement and threat campaign because of a video and Dar al-Fatwa submits a report against her. Beirut-Skeyes. Lebanon. 09 May 2024. accessed on: 05 March 2025.

The interrogation lasted about two hours, as Hatoum explained that the equipment, weapons and uniforms «were not purchased recently, but are used specifically for filming purposes and in more than one series or television program.» and that «the weapons are not real, but are intended for filming purposes.» Hatoum pointed to the arbitrary and selective treatment by the Internal Security Forces, rather than taking into account criticism and addressing the poor conditions suffered by the directorate's members⁴⁵.

Not only does this case violate the right to freedom of expression, but also the Lebanese laws, particularly Article 28 of the Publications Law, which states that offenses related to publication and media fall within the jurisdiction of the Publications Court, which means that the military court, which is considered a special court, has no jurisdiction but has recently replaced other civil and criminal courts in publication-related cases, which constitutes a clear violation of the Lebanese constitution, the international obligations of the Lebanese government, and the national laws.

In addition to that, the war on Lebanon has played a major role in influencing press and media freedom, as journalists during the Israeli war on Lebanon became a direct target of killing and intimidation⁴⁶. From 8 October 2023 to 28 October 2024, where Israel killed 11 journalists and injured at least 10 others⁴⁷ between 08 October 2023 and 28 October 2024.

Based on the above, the year 2024 witnessed numerous violations against journalists, including unlawful summonses, particularly targeting those whose cases, by law, fall under the jurisdiction of the Publications Court⁴⁸. This serves as a clear indication of the ongoing deterioration in the exercise of civil and political rights, particularly freedom of opinion and expression, that should be safeguarded under both international and domestic law. This alarming reality necessitates urgent intervention from the Lebanese authorities to curb violations and ensure a legal environment that upholds individuals' rights to expression and political participation.

2.2 Right to access to justice

The right to access to justice is a fundamental principle enshrined in international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 8, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2, which impose obligations on states to ensure justice and hold accountable those responsible for serious human rights violations, including political crimes and assassinations.

On 01 February, 2024, judicial assistants in Lebanon commenced an open strike in the palaces of justice⁴⁹, protesting poor working conditions and demanding improved salaries, as well as enhanced social, health, and educational benefits. This sit-in resulted in a complete paralysis of judicial proceedings at all levels, leading to the suspension of trial sessions in both the criminal and civil courts of cassation, as well as in the criminal, appeal, and first instance courts. Additionally, investigation departments ceased interrogation sessions, except for urgent cases involving detainees. The strike has severely disrupted

⁴⁵ Interview with Firas Hatoum on Al-Jadeed TV, 04 March 2024, accessed on: 08 March 2025.
⁴⁶ Naim Berjawi, Israel kills journalists. The story of a reporter who survived the bombing of southern Lebanon (interview), Anadolu Agency, Beirut, 02 November 2024, visited on: 05 March 2025.
⁴⁷ Mehdi Karim, Skeyes, 28 October 2024, accessed on: 11 March 2025.
⁴⁸ Publications Law
⁴⁹ Judicial assistants' strike paralyzes the palaces of justice, National News Agency, 01 February 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.

judicial processes, including case registration, legal reviews, and the issuance of permits for detainee visits, thereby indirectly violating the right to access justice and undermining the protection of individuals' personal rights.

On the other hand, the investigation of sensitive issues related to civil and political rights has been hampered by many obstacles, as no progress has been made in the investigation on the assassination of the Lebanese writer and political activist Lokman Slim, who was killed on 04 February 2021. UN experts have stressed⁵⁰ that the investigation into unlawful killings must be prompt, independent and transparent, and that continued delays may violate the right to life and reinforce a culture of impunity that harms freedom of expression and civil society in general. More than three years after the incident, no concrete results have been provided in the investigation. On 05 December 2024, a presumptive decision was issued to close the investigation file without revealing the identity of the perpetrators⁵¹.

In addition, during 2024, the Lebanese authorities continued to obstruct investigations related to the Beirut port explosion, as legal and political obstacles caused the investigation to be halted since December 2021. These practices have eroded public confidence in the ability of the Lebanese judicial system to deliver justice to citizens⁵².

2.3 Right to vote

The right to vote is one of the most prominent rights enjoyed by Lebanese citizens, as voting is considered an essential means of practicing democracy and participating in political decision-making. However, the right to vote in Lebanon faces significant challenges as a result of repeated postponements of municipal elections, as happened in 2024, when the Lebanese parliament decided to postpone the municipal elections⁵³ for 2025, the third postponement in two years, after they were supposed to be held in May 2024.

These successive postponements constitute an implicit violation of civil and political rights, including the right to political participation through elections. The right to vote is an essential part of human rights and enables individuals to express their will to choose their representatives and make decisions that affect their daily lives. Repeated postponements place a burden on Lebanese democracy, as this right is supposed to be exercised in stable conditions that guarantee free and fair elections.

III. The Rule of Law and Human Rights

The rule of law is the foundation necessary to ensure respect for and protection of human rights, and an independent judicial system requires legislation in line with international standards, and effective accountability mechanisms that ensure no impunity. In Lebanon, the rule of law faces significant challenges, most notably political interference in the judiciary and weak law enforcement.

⁵⁰ Lebanon: UN experts concerned at slow progress in investigation and continued impunity for killing of prominent intellectual Lokman Slim, United Nations OHCHR, February 2023, Special Procedures Press Release, accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁵¹ Laure Ayoub, Hypothetical Decision to Stop the Investigation into Lokman Slim's Assassination: Forbidden Justice, Legal Agenda, 05 February 2025, accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁵² UN Human Rights Council: Beirut Blast Inquiry Needed, Human Rights Watch HRW, 01 July 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁵³ Stephanie Radi, for the third time., Municipal elections in Lebanon postponed until 2025, Anadolu Agency, April 26, 2024, accessed on: March 11, 2025.

3.1 Criminalization of torture

Despite issuing the anti-torture Law No. 65/2017, torture and human rights violations continue in Lebanon. One of the most controversial cases in this context is the case of Bashar Abdul Saud, which was re-raised in November 2024, where the charges against the defendants were dropped and replaced with charges according to Article 166 of Military Judiciary Law⁵⁴, which is related to violating public regulations and instructions, which in its turn is an underestimation of the anti-torture law and a failure to activate justice mechanisms in such cases.

3.2 Independence of the judiciary

Judicial independence is a cornerstone in ensuring the rule of law and the protection of human rights. However, the Lebanese judiciary faces serious challenges due to political interference, and the failure to effectively enforce the laws on the independence of the judiciary is one of the factors that lead to the deterioration of the independence of the judicial system⁵⁵. The Beirut port explosion case is one of the most prominent examples of political interference in the judiciary, where investigations have been hampered by political pressure on judges. Additionally, the delay in passing the Judicial Independence Law further weakens the Lebanese judicial system and makes it difficult to achieve justice and protect rights.

The reality reflects significant challenges affecting the capacity of the judicial system to protect fundamental rights and freedoms. Although the Lebanese Constitution guarantees the independence of the judiciary, there are many factors that limit the effectiveness of this independence, most notably political pressures and practices that affect the course of justice, and this is manifested through the summoning of journalists, for example, before military courts⁵⁶, which constitutes a clear violation of their press rights and freedoms. Military courts, which are supposed to hear military-related or security cases, do not have the capacity to ensure a fair trial for civilians, including journalists. These courts do not always adhere to international standards for trying individuals and are often under political pressure.

On the other hand, the Lebanese judiciary suffers from a shortage of judges⁵⁷, which contributes to the backlog of cases and delays in judicial procedures. This places an additional burden on the judicial system and affects the speed of adjudication of cases, delaying individuals' rights to justice.

3.3 Laws and regulations

At the legislative level, ten deputies filed an appeal before the Constitutional Council against the constitutionality of Law No. 324 on February 12, 2024, related to the general budget for 2024, demanding its suspension and annulment⁵⁸. The appeal was based on several constitutional irregularities, with MPs pointing to a violation of key articles in the Lebanese constitution, such as Article 36 on not voting by call, and Article 87, which

⁵⁴ Lebanon: Missed opportunity to deliver justice in case of torture and death of Syrian refugee in custody. Amnesty International, 05 November 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁵⁵ Abboud: It would have been more useful to pass the draft law on the independence of the judiciary according to the observations of the Supreme Judicial Council. National News Agency, 02 December 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁵⁶ See Section 2.1
⁵⁷ Samer Ghamroun, Reine Ibrahim, Judges Leaving the Judiciary: How to Understand the "Most Difficult Decisions"? Legal Agenda 17 September 2024, accessed on: 11 March 2025.
⁵⁸ 10 MPs filed an appeal against the budget law based on seven legal and constitutional violations. An-Nahar, 27 February 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.

stipulates that the account must be cut before the budget is approved. The MPs also considered that the contested law includes articles contrary to the principle of credibility of parliamentary discussions, and contains "extraneous" amendments to the budget, in addition to granting unconstitutional mandates and amending laws after their approval by the parliament, which violates several articles of the Lebanese Constitution.

These appeals are based on constitutional considerations related to the transparency of parliamentary debates and the need to respect constitutional procedures in preparing the budget, highlighting the legal and political challenges facing the legislative process in Lebanon.

3.4 Status of prisons and detention centers

In light of the escalating security and economic crises, Lebanese prisons and detention centers have been experiencing unprecedented challenges⁵⁹, and the war has exacerbated the situation in these facilities. In these difficult circumstances, many prisons and detention centers in Tyre and other areas, such as Marjayoun and Bint Jbeil, have been closed as a result of increased security risks, prompting the authorities to transfer prisoners and detainees to other prisons and centers in safer areas, which in turn has led to an unprecedented rise in overcrowding and increased pressure on the prison system, which already suffers from a lack of basic services such as health care and food⁶⁰.

With regard to prisoners' rights, detention conditions have become increasingly challenging. Reports highlight a severe shortage of medical care and essential medications, leaving prisoners with significant difficulties in accessing appropriate treatment. Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding the inadequate quality of food provided, further exacerbating their hardships⁶¹. As the situation in Lebanon deteriorated and certain prisons faced security threats, authorities were compelled to close several facilities and relocate prisoners and detainees to more secure locations. This overcrowding has exacerbated the daily crises within prisons, where inmates continue to endure severe shortages of healthcare, food, and essential services.

On 26 December 2024, the "Civil Emergency Commission in Lebanon" held a press conference on the subject of the general amnesty law and prison conditions in Lebanon, in the presence of a number of lawyers and members of its "Lawyers and Jurists' Committee"⁶². In this context, the head of the commission, Elie Saliba, spoke about the current initiatives to reintroduce a general amnesty, noting that the "National Moderation Bloc" has begun to develop a draft law to this end, while the "General Amnesty Follow-up Committee" is intensifying efforts to approve it in parliament. Saliba added that the Commission continues to monitor prison conditions in cooperation with the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces, with the aim of improving detention conditions and speeding up trials. He explained that the commission has prepared a draft general

⁵⁹ Monitoring human rights violations in places of detention - deprivation of everything, National Human Rights Institution, Beirut, 16 August 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁶⁰ The National Human Rights Commission follows up on the conditions of detention centers affected by the Israeli aggression and raises recommendations. NHRC, Beirut, 27 September 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁶¹ 2024 Annual Report on the Annual Review of Human Rights Around the World, Human Rights Watch, Lebanon – 2024, accessed on: 7 March 2025.
⁶² Draft Amnesty Law and Prison Conditions in Lebanon: 8,300 prisoners, including 2,550 Syrians, An-Nahar, 26 December 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.

amnesty law that includes seven articles. where all individuals who committed crimes before the date of publication of the law. whether convicted or arrested. are exempted from punishment. with the exception of some crimes such as corruption and crimes of public money. The draft also stipulates doubling the penalties for beneficiaries of the amnesty if they commit new crimes after the amnesty. in addition to immediate rehabilitation of beneficiaries. This law aims to ease pressure on prisons and deliver justice while ensuring that those who continue to commit crimes are held accountable after benefiting from amnesty.

IV. Discrimination against the most vulnerable groups

The most vulnerable in Lebanon. including women. children. refugees. internally displaced persons. migrant workers. and LGBTI community. face many grave challenges that have significantly worsened in 2024.

4.1 Rights of the child

UNICEF declared 2024 one of the worst years for children in Lebanon⁶³. and the war in Lebanon was considered a humanitarian catastrophe that turned children’s lives upside down. causing serious physical injuries and deep emotional scars⁶⁴. According to the Lebanese Ministry of Health⁶⁵. 316 children have been killed since October 2023. and at least 456 children were injured until the ceasefire date on 27 November 2024. Children who survived the bombing suffered severe psychological stress and traumas due to the violence and chaos surrounding them. exposing them to severe psychological effects that include deep anxiety and fear of losing loved ones. as well as sleep problems. such as nightmares. headaches and loss of appetite.

In addition. the number of people displaced because of the war has risen to more than one million people. including more than 300.000 children⁶⁶ as of September 2024. with thousands of children and families living on the streets or in shelters. without any of their basic necessities. About 400.000 students who left their homes specifically from four governorates: the South. Nabatieh. Bekaa and Baalbek-Hermel were displaced until October 2024. ⁶⁷ preventing them from their right to education.

4.2 Women’s rights

In 2024. women’s rights faced increasing challenges in light of the multiple crises that the country is experiencing. especially the war that threatened the stability of society and increased the suffering of its members. especially women and girls. Lebanon witnessed an escalation in hostilities during the last few months of the year. The war on Lebanon resulted in 4.047 deaths including 70 women. and 16.638 injured people. including 2.100 women. from October 2023 till October 2024. One million people have been displaced. including some 2.567 women⁶⁸. While UN Women estimated that some 12.000 displaced

⁶³ UNICEF Lebanon. via platform X. 14 January 2025. accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁶⁴ The war in Lebanon is having devastating physical and emotional effects on children. statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. New York. 31 October 2024. accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁶⁵ 4047 Martyrs and 16.638 wounded: The updated total toll of the Israeli aggression. Lebanese Ministry of Health. 04 December 2024. accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁶⁶ Statement on the situation in Lebanon by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. UNICEF. New York 01 October 2024. accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁶⁷ Minister of Education: The start of the school year on November 4 and the holiday for private schools to distance education or obtain the approval of the parents’ committees if they decide in attendance. National News Agency. op. cit.
⁶⁸ Ibid.

families are supported by women⁶⁹.

As the conflict escalated. women and girls in Lebanon became more vulnerable to risks related to sexual and gender-based violence. along with the double burdens they bear in caring for the family and doing unpaid household chores⁷⁰. The United Nations in Lebanon⁷¹ has pointed out that women in Lebanon suffer from multidimensional structural discrimination due to prevailing social norms that restrict their rights. and also suffer from difficult economic conditions. where their burdens increase as a result of the lack of resources and opportunities available to them in the labor market. and that the most vulnerable groups. such as widowed women. women with disabilities and older women. suffer from extremely difficult conditions and need specialized humanitarian support.

On the other hand. strengthening legislation to protect women’s rights in Lebanon is crucial. especially with regard to protecting women from domestic and gender-based violence. In light of the increase in cases of domestic violence. as indicated by the latest figures published by the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces in 2024. where more than 594 complaints related to cases of domestic violence were submitted⁷² through the hotline of the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces during the period from April 2024 till December 2024. laws for the protection of women must be effectively strengthened. ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable and that victims have access to legal and psychological support.

4.3 Rights of refugees and internally displaced persons

As Lebanon’s humanitarian crisis persists and economic and social conditions continue to deteriorate. refugees. particularly Syrians. faced increasingly dire circumstances in 2024. The escalation of coercive measures and arbitrary practices against them has further exacerbated their suffering. exposing them to heightened risks. Additionally. the country has witnessed a surge in anti-refugee rhetoric and forced deportation campaigns. many of which lack legal and humanitarian safeguards. raising serious concerns about the protection of refugees’ fundamental rights.

Reports indicate that the situation deteriorated significantly in 2024. especially after the killing of Lebanese Forces coordinator Pascal Suleiman in Syria in April 2024. which led to violent reactions against Syrian refugees in Lebanon⁷³. As a result. some municipalities imposed discriminatory curfews on Syrians. in addition to the start of mass eviction orders for Syrians without legal residency in northern Lebanon. without providing alternative housing solutions.

On 13 April 2024. many Syrian refugee students in Lebanon were subjected to threats and physical assault by anti-refugee groups⁷⁴. with some forcibly expelled from public schools designated for refugee education. In a separate incident. a Syrian refugee was kidnapped

⁶⁹ UN Women calls for urgent action to address the needs of women and girls affected by the crisis in Lebanon. Lebanon 01 October 2024. accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁷⁰ Women and girls face serious risks to their health. safety and dignity amid armed conflict in Lebanon according to UN Women. Lebanon. 25 October 2024. accessed on: 7 March 2025.
⁷¹ Ibid.
⁷² Number of complaints of domestic violence reported on the hotline 1745 at the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces. National Commission for Lebanese Women. Al-Akhbar. March 2024 – January 2025. accessed on: 07 March 2025.
⁷³ Joint Statement: Lebanon Must End Practices of Refoulement and Torture. Anti-Racism Movement. 25 June 2025. accessed on: 08 March 2025.
⁷⁴ Refugee students in Lebanon expelled and beaten by anti-refugee groups. Access Center for Human Rights [ACHR]. 19 April 2024. accessed on: 7 March 2025.

by a gang demanding a ransom of \$10.000. where the perpetrators sent footage of his torture to his family. threatening to kill him if their demands were not met⁷⁵.

The practices against refugees have not been limited to racist rhetoric and hate speech by hostile groups but have also escalated into policies of forced displacement. On 8 May 2024, a range of harsh measures aimed at pushing Syrian refugees to leave Lebanon was announced, including severe restrictions on the residence permit of refugees, including suspending the renewal of residence permits and preventing Syrians from practicing certain jobs⁷⁶. The Lebanese authorities have circulated widespread raids and arrests since the beginning of May, prompting increasing numbers of refugees to forcibly return to Syria, despite international warnings of the risks of return as violence and instability continue in Syria.

According to a report by the Syrian Network for Human Rights, 36 people were arrested among those forcibly deported to Syria from Lebanon in June 2024⁷⁷, in addition to 23 others in May who were deported to Syria from Lebanon and Jordan⁷⁸. The Lebanese authorities have deported more than 1.400 Syrian refugees in 2024 so far, in flagrant violation of the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in the UN Convention against Torture.

In addition to the refugee crisis, Lebanon witnessed during 2024 a crisis for internally displaced persons, as the Israeli war on Lebanon led to the displacement of large numbers of Lebanese, especially residents of the southern Lebanon and Bekaa regions as well as residents of the southern suburbs of Beirut, which led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the country's history⁷⁹, as the number of forcibly displaced persons between October 2023 and October 2024 exceeded 1.300.000⁸⁰.

Internal displacement has added a new dimension to the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, with many displaced people forced to seek refuge with relatives in safer cities and towns or in temporary shelters, such as schools, universities and other public centers. However, these temporary solutions were not sufficient to accommodate the large numbers of displaced people, and while some displaced individuals were able to secure shelter, others were left stranded on roads and in public squares after the National Emergency Plan failed to provide them with a safe haven⁸¹.

The suffering of the displaced has worsened with the expansion of the scope of Israeli military operations to areas that were declared as "safe", as Israeli aircraft targeted what they claimed were Hezbollah targets, in the heart of the capital, Beirut, and in various areas of Lebanon such as Ain al-Delb, Ehden, Alamat and others, targeting and killing forcibly displaced people. This made the presence of the displaced a factor of suspicion

⁷⁵ Ransom demand of \$10.000 Gang kidnaps Syrian refugee in Lebanon and threatens to kill him, Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 20 April 2024, accessed on: 07 March 2025.

⁷⁶ Lebanon: Hundreds of thousands of refugees at imminent risk of deportation, Syrian Network for Human Rights, 28 May 2024, accessed on: 8 March 2025.

⁷⁷ On World Refugee Day: At least 4.714 cases of arbitrary detention of returning refugees and displaced persons by the Syrian regime forces, Syrian Network for Human Rights, 20 June 2024, accessed on: 08 March 2025.

⁷⁸ Syrian regime arrested 23 refugees returning from Lebanon and Jordan, Syrian Human Rights Check, 03 June 2024, accessed on: 08 March 2025.

⁷⁹ Ikrame Imane Kouachi, Lebanon says around 1 million people displaced due to Israeli attacks 'Lebanon is experiencing the largest wave of displacement in its history,' says Lebanese prime minister, Anadolu Agency, Beirut, 29 September 2024, last visited on: 08 March 2025.

⁸⁰ OCHA: The death toll in Lebanon exceeded 3.000 , UN, 6 November 2024, accessed on: 8 March 2025.

⁸¹ Sarah Matar, displaced people on the roads... , The New Arab, Beirut, 17 October 2024, accessed on: 08 March 2025.

and fear for some host communities, which showed militancy towards them. Official communiqués have been issued by municipalities to set conditions on how to receive the displaced, restricting their movements, and preventing some from receiving visitors⁸².

4.4 Rights of migrant workers

Migrant workers in Lebanon endure severe exploitation under the Kafala system, one of the most pervasive forms of labor abuse in the country. This system enforces the complete dependence of foreign workers on their employers, creating conditions ripe for exploitation. Under Kafala, workers are often required to submit their passports to their employers, leaving them vulnerable to economic and labor exploitation while severely restricting their freedom of movement and fundamental rights.

Lebanon's kafala system is one of the most prominent human rights violations targeting migrant workers, especially domestic workers. These workers are forced to work in cruel and inhumane conditions, without legal safeguards guaranteeing their basic rights such as fair wages, healthy working conditions, and reasonable working hours. This system not only restricts workers' freedom of movement, but also exposes them to psychological and physical exploitation, including humiliation and violence.

In 2020, LegalActionWorldwide filed a lawsuit related to the living conditions and inhumane treatment that Maysart Hailu was subjected to during her time as a domestic worker in Lebanon under the kafala system, and the charges included crimes of slavery, human trafficking, forced labor, deprivation of liberty, national, racial and gender discrimination, and torture for more than 8 years. In September 2024, the defendant's interrogation began and was decided to extend the due to the seriousness of the accusations⁸³.

In addition, 13 Ethiopian domestic workers filed separate lawsuits against their employers, accusing them of abusing them and preventing them from communicating with their families, depriving them of their salaries for many years, and subjecting some to physical and psychological violence⁸⁴.

The suffering of migrant workers has escalated during the war in Lebanon, with many Lebanese families reportedly abandoning their helpers after being forcibly displaced due to the conflict⁸⁵, leaving them in a critical situation often without legal documentation or means to contact their families, completely isolated and facing significant challenges in accessing humanitarian assistance or securing shelter.

These events have shown that migrant workers, especially domestic workers, are among the most marginalized groups in Lebanese society, with inadequate policies to protect or provide them with the necessary support. Despite the efforts of local and international organizations, there is an urgent need for a radical change in Lebanese laws to guarantee the rights of migrant workers and protect them from exploitation and violence.

⁸² Nagham Rabihi, 2024: The largest year of displacement in Lebanon's modern history, Al-Modon, 23 December 2024, accessed on: 08 March 2025.

⁸³ Slavery lawsuit of Ethiopian migrant domestic worker sparks global attention, An-Nahar, 08 March 2024, accessed on 08 March 2025.

⁸⁴ Ethiopian Revolution in Lebanon... 13 domestic workers filed separate lawsuits against their employers, An-Nahar, 25 July 2024, accessed on 08 March 2025.

⁸⁵ Rodayna Raydan, «Their safety matters too»: Migrant workers hired by Lebanese families left abandoned, homeless and without passports amid Israel's attacks, New Arab, 08 October 2024, accessed on: 08 March 2025.

4.5 Rights of LGBTI community

In 2024, legal and social restrictions on the LGBT community in Lebanon persisted, with prosecution under Article 534 of the Lebanese Penal Code remaining one of the most significant challenges faced by LGBT individuals⁸⁶. This article criminalizes “unnatural sexual intercourse,” subjecting LGBT people to legal actions that can result in imprisonment simply for expressing their gender identity or sexual orientation.

V. International Humanitarian Law and the Impact of the War on Human Rights in Lebanon

5.1 Violations of international humanitarian law

In the context of the recent Israeli aggression against Lebanon, which occurred from October 2023 to November 2024, the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health provided a comprehensive report detailing the humanitarian and health impacts of the aggression⁸⁷. Based on this data, the Israeli aggression on Lebanon resulted in the death of 4,047 people and the injury of 16,638, including people from vulnerable groups such as children, women and the elderly, where Israeli raids killed 316 children and 790 women and injured 1,456 children and 2,567 women. The war on Lebanon has led to numerous war crimes and mass atrocities against civilians, with nearly 20 massacres reported across various regions of the country.

This extensive number of civilian deaths and injuries resulted from indiscriminate attacks carried out by Israel in Lebanon. Among the most notable of these attacks were the indiscriminate detonations of pagers and radios, which failed to distinguish between combatants and civilians. Such actions are prohibited under international humanitarian law, which explicitly forbids attacks that do not target specific military objectives or that utilize means or methods of warfare incapable of being directed at a specific military target. Furthermore, the use of booby traps constitutes a violation of customary international humanitarian law, specifically Rule 80, which prohibits their deployment⁸⁸.

In addition, the latest tally of the Ministry of Health for the date of the ceasefire indicates⁸⁹ the magnitude of the attacks directed against the health sector in Lebanon, where hospitals, ambulance associations, and primary health care centers were directly targeted, as the number of attacks on hospitals reached 67 attacks, targeting 40 hospitals, which led to the closure of 7 hospitals completely, in addition to the killing of 16 health workers and the injury of 73 of its workers, as a result of these attacks.

The Israeli attacks also led to the closure of 56 primary health care centers, with 33 being completely destroyed, which had a direct impact on medical services provided to citizens in the affected areas.

The victims of these attacks also included people from groups protected under international humanitarian law, such as humanitarian workers, where 206 aid workers were killed and 257 others were injured as a result of 238 attacks on ambulance associations, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health.

In addition, journalists, who are protected under international humanitarian law as civilians who are not directly involved in hostilities, were directly targeted while performing their duties, as 11 journalists were

killed and at least 10 others were injured. In addition, a journalists’ shelter occupied by 18 journalists and photojournalists from 7 different media organizations was bombed during the early hours on 25 October 2024, despite the presence of their cars labelled “Press” in front of the building⁹⁰.

This aggression led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the country’s history, witnessing a wave of forced displacement of about 1.5 million displaced people⁹¹. In addition, Israel has targeted agricultural land with more than 366 airstrikes, including more than 74 on irrigated land⁹². Furthermore, during this aggression, Israel used internationally prohibited weapons such as white phosphorus⁹³ and cluster bombs.

5.2 Impact of the war on human rights in Lebanon

Based on the aforementioned, the recent Israeli war on Lebanon, which began in October 2023 and lasted until November 2024, shows a catastrophic impact on human rights in the country, as human rights violations have affected multiple aspects of the daily lives of Lebanese citizens. The humanitarian crisis caused by the aggression was not limited to human losses, but also included extensive destruction of infrastructure, health and relief sectors.

At the level of economic, social and cultural rights, the aggression has led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Lebanon as a result of the forced displacement of the population. Students in public schools were deprived of their right to education due to displacement and schools were used as shelters for the displaced. In addition, Lebanese people’s access to their right to hospitalization has been hampered by attacks on hospitals and health and ambulance facilities.

Moreover, the war has greatly affected the right to a decent standard of living, intensifying the economic crisis and creating a humanitarian crisis unprecedented in the country’s history. The damage was not limited to human and material losses, but also to the agricultural sector, which was subjected to devastating air strikes, which led to the destruction of crops and livestock and the displacement of farmers. This has resulted in a huge loss estimated at \$8.5 billion.

In addition, this war has had an impact on civil and political rights as well, as the targeting of journalists has restricted freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of the press and the right to access information. In addition to that, the war has negatively affected prison conditions, the right to access justice, and the right to elections by obstructing the holding of municipal elections again.

Moreover, among the vulnerable and marginalized groups most affected by this war, children who were deprived of their rights, women who were displaced and foreign workers who were left in harsh and inhumane conditions.

At the level of international humanitarian law, this war has caused flagrant violations of the law and the Geneva Conventions, as well as many fundamental rights guaranteed by international human rights instruments, such as the right to life, the right to health, the right to education, the right to housing, and the right to freedom of the press and access to information. It has witnessed the targeting of civilians, civilian objects, humanitarian and health workers... all which requires urgent intervention from the international community to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and work to hold those responsible for these violations accountable.

⁸⁶ Helm Organization, Lebanon 2024, accessed on: 08 March 2025.
⁸⁷ 4047 martyrs and 16638 wounded The updated total toll of the Israeli aggression, Lebanese Ministry of Health, op. cit.
⁸⁸ Lebanon: Bombings of pagers and radios targeting civilians and flagrant violation of international law, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 18 September 2024, accessed on: 11 March 2025.
⁸⁹ The updated toll of the aggression, Ministry of Health, op. cit.

⁹⁰ The Israeli army’s targeting of journalists: a new war crime committed in Lebanon, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 28 October 2024, accessed on: 11 March 2025.
⁹¹ Lebanese Minister: The number of displaced people exceeded one million and 400 thousand, Al Jazeera, October 16, 2024, accessed on: March 11, 2025.
⁹² The impact of the ongoing conflict in Lebanon - Impact assessment on agriculture and livelihoods, FAO Data, FAO, November 2024, accessed on: 11 March 2025.
⁹³ Lebanon: Israel’s White Phosphorous Use Risks Civilian Harm - Airburst Munitions Used Unlawfully in Populated Areas, HRW, 05 June 2024, accessed on: 11 March 2025.

Chapter Two: Activities of the National Human Rights Commission including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture

The National Human Rights Commission [NHRC], which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, was formed by Decree No. 3267 dated June 19, 2018 and Decree No. 5147 dated July 5, 2019. the Commission works to protect and promote human rights in Lebanon in accordance with the standards contained in the Lebanese Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international conventions and treaties related to human rights, and Lebanese laws consistent with these standards, in addition to performing the special tasks specified in this law. In doing so, it may communicate independently with international and local human rights bodies⁹⁴.

The Commission is mandated⁹⁵ to oversee and promote human rights in Lebanon. Its primary responsibilities include monitoring Lebanon's adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as ensuring compliance with international standards and legal frameworks. Additionally, the Commission is responsible for developing and publishing special and periodic reports on human rights matters. It also independently contributes to the reports that Lebanon is required to submit to international bodies. Furthermore, the Commission provides its opinion on relevant consultations with authorities and initiatives related to the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Commission has the right to express an independent opinion on all legislation, decrees, decisions, and draft policies concerning human rights. It also receives and addresses complaints and reports of human rights violations through negotiation, mediation, or litigation.

Lastly, the Commission actively promotes human rights awareness by advocating for the implementation and enhancement of human rights education programs.

The Committee on the Prevention of Torture, or its designated members, is entrusted with monitoring the conditions of persons deprived of their liberty⁹⁶. It has the authority to conduct both periodic and unannounced visits to places of detention at any time, without prior notification or approval from any administrative, judicial, or other authority.

The Committee is also empowered to conduct individual or group interviews with detainees in private, without any form of oversight or interference, and with the assistance of an interpreter if needed. Additionally, it may interview any other individuals who can provide relevant information or assistance and has unrestricted, confidential access to necessary information in accordance with its mandate. The Committee further has the right to receive complaints or interview requests from detainees and to conduct medical examinations when necessary.

Accordingly, this report reviews the activities of the National Human Rights Commission and the Committee for the Prevention of Torture during the year 2024.

⁹⁴ What is the National Human Rights Commission that includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture?

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

I. Reports and Documentation

Lebanon’s National Human Rights Commission [NHRC] is constantly working to promote and protect human rights in the country. In light of the extensive Israeli aggression on Lebanon during the year 2024, the Commission monitored and documented violations of international humanitarian law committed on Lebanese territory,⁹⁷ where it documented a set of serious violations committed by the Israeli army in several border villages in southern Lebanon⁹⁸. The Commission also monitored grave violations committed by the Israeli army against ambulance and humanitarian teams in Lebanon.⁹⁹

During 2024, the Commission carried out several field activities to document the situation of displaced people in various Lebanese regions. These activities included field visits to centers hosting IDPs in different areas of Lebanon, where the Commission closely followed their humanitarian situation and documented human rights violations that they may be subjected to.

Within the framework of these activities, the National Human Rights Commission conducted a field visit in Aley district¹⁰⁰, where a member of the Commission, Raymond Medlej, visited several shelters for the displaced, such as Al-Qamatia Public School and Al-Nahda School in Bamakin, with the aim of assessing the humanitarian situation of the displaced people who suffer from the repercussions of the aggression. The visit focused on documenting IDPs’ basic needs such as food, clothes, and heating tools, especially as winter approached.

In addition, the Commission visited the “Al-Ghuraba High School”, which was hosting a number of displaced Syrians¹⁰¹, and assessed their health and nutritional conditions, and ensured the availability of their basic needs such as water and medicines. During its evaluation, the Commission identified shortages in certain necessary supplies, such as diapers and underwear.

The Commission also conducted a field visit in the north¹⁰² in Darb al-Tabbaneh¹⁰³ and Akkar¹⁰⁴, where the challenges faced by IDPs in shelters were documented, including the lack of logistical support and coordination between schools and government agencies. The Commission also documented cases of harassment of displaced people in some schools, which indicated the need for the concerned authorities to intervene to improve conditions inside these centers.

In August 2024, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, released two reports on prison conditions in Lebanon¹⁰⁵. The

⁹⁷ The National Commission called for volunteering within its teams to document violations of human rights and international humanitarian law

⁹⁸ The National Commission Documents the Violations of the Israeli Occupation Soldiers in South Lebanon: Theft and Vandalism of Property Committed under International Humanitarian Law

⁹⁹ The National Authority monitors the serious violations of the Israeli occupation forces for the ambulance and relief teams

¹⁰⁰ The National Human Rights Commission documents the situation of displaced people in Aley district

¹⁰¹ The National Human Rights Commission documents the conditions of the displaced at Tripoli Public Secondary School for Girls

¹⁰² The National Human Rights Commission documents the situation of displaced people in northern Lebanon

¹⁰³ The National Human Rights Commission documents the conditions of the displaced in Darb al-Tabbaneh School

¹⁰⁴ The National Human Rights Commission documents the conditions of the displaced in Akkar Governorate: irregularities in Laayoune and Halba

¹⁰⁵ The National Human Rights Commission launches two reports on prison conditions in Lebanon

first report, titled “Monitoring Human Rights Violations in Detention Centers,” presented the findings of 228 visits to 182 detention centers under the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces and the Lebanese Army. The second report focused on “Tripoli and Zahle Prisons” and provided engineering, medical, and legal assessments.

The reports highlighted severe deterioration in detention conditions due to overcrowding, inadequate food supply, water and electricity shortages, and violations of privacy and hygiene standards. They recommended expediting judicial procedures, improving prison conditions, and strengthening preventive mechanisms against torture. The Commission further urged the government to fully cooperate in ensuring compliance with international human rights standards.

In May 2024, the NHRC including CPT, released its 2023 Annual Report¹⁰⁶. The report provided a comprehensive overview of the human rights situation in Lebanon throughout 2023, highlighting the challenges faced by citizens amid the ongoing economic crisis. It also documented grave violations particularly within detention facilities and during periods of armed conflict.

II. Communication and interaction with official authorities and civil society organizations

In addition to its role as the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in documentation and reporting, the Commission plays a vital role in the promotion and protection of human rights at the national and international levels through its continuous interaction with official bodies, international bodies, and civil society organizations. The Commission seeks to address diverse human rights issues, whether through contributions to international conferences or cooperation with various stakeholders locally and internationally.

In October 2024, the President of the Commission, Dr. Fadi Gerges, participated in the work of the twenty-third General Assembly of the Arab Network of National Human Rights Commissions held in Jordan¹⁰⁷. The conference was attended by representatives of national human rights commissions in Arab States and international human rights organizations. During this meeting, strategies for unifying regional and international efforts to support national human rights institutions in the Arab world were discussed, in addition to future cooperation to promote human rights in the region.

In another context, the Commission was keen to respond to the repercussions of the Israeli aggression on Lebanon, especially with regard to the situation in prisons and detention centers, as Dr. Fadi Gerges held two meetings with Judge Jamal Al-Hajjar, the Public Prosecutor of Cassation, and the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, President Suhail Abboud, in October 2024, with the aim of discussing the worsening repercussions on prisoners and detainees¹⁰⁸. Emphasis was placed on issues of overcrowding in prisons, particularly in light of The Israeli aggression against Lebanon, and possible ways to alleviate the suffering of prisoners and detainees. Through this cooperation, the

¹⁰⁶ The National Human Rights Commission launches its annual report for the year 2023

¹⁰⁷ The Arab Network of National Human Rights Commissions holds its twenty-third general assembly and its accompanying annual conference in Jordan

¹⁰⁸ The NHRC strengthens its initiative to reduce overcrowding in prisons: a circular from the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation and a request for cooperation to the Minister of Defense

Commission proposed practical solutions that include facilitating the release procedures for detainees, and presented legal proposals to reduce the number of prisoners in light of the difficult economic conditions.

On the other hand, the National Human Rights Commission confirmed its participation in the international dialogue on mental health and human rights, as it made an official contribution to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in October 2024¹⁰⁹. This contribution focused on the challenges facing persons with psychosocial disabilities in Lebanon, and the need to adopt human rights-based policies to improve mental health services. The Commission also noted the importance of achieving a balance between human rights and mental health services, while ensuring the protection of dignity Individuals with psychiatric conditions.

With regard to children’s rights, the Commission continued to activate its role in addressing children’s rights issues, providing a written contribution to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Commission stressed the importance of providing effective mechanisms to access justice for children and minors and ensuring that they have effective remedies against violations of their rights¹¹⁰.

In response to the cyberattack of September 2024, which led to the explosion of thousands of wireless devices across Lebanon on September 17 and 18, resulting in the deaths of dozens of civilians and injuring thousands, including children and humanitarian workers, the Commission strongly condemned the indiscriminate targeting of civilians. It called for those responsible to be held accountable, emphasizing that such acts constitute a grave violation of international humanitarian law and must not go unpunished. The Commission further underscored the urgent need to end impunity for such crimes and advocated for the development of a new international convention to prohibit lethal weapons and cyberattacks that fail to distinguish between military and civilian targets¹¹¹.

In addition to that, the President of the NHRC, Dr. Fadi Gerges, met with an Iraqi delegation in May 2024, with whom he discussed ways of joint cooperation between the National Commission in Lebanon and the High Commission in Iraq, and an invitation was extended to the President of the Commission to participate in the conference that the High Commission will organize in Iraq during October 2024¹¹².

In another context, the National Human Rights Commission participated in a training course for male and female lawyers organized by the Human Rights Institute on judicial procedures for children in drug cases¹¹³, in May 2024. The training dealt with the role of the Committee to Combat Addiction and the mechanisms of referral to the Committee, as well as judicial procedures for children in drug cases.

In April 2024, the NHRC also supported a project addressing the issue of human trafficking, where Dr. Fadi Gerges participated in a seminar in Beirut entitled “The Impact of Legislation on Reducing the Crime of Human Trafficking”. During which the attendees discussed the

¹⁰⁹ NHRC makes contribution on mental health and human rights to the Office of the High Commissioner
¹¹⁰ The NHRC submits its contribution to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on General Comment No. 27
¹¹¹ The National Human Rights Commission calls for the development of a new international convention to ban lethal weapons systems and cyber attacks
¹¹² Gerges discusses ways of cooperation with the High Commission for Human Rights in Iraq
¹¹³ The NHRC participates in the training course on the judicial procedures adopted for children in drug cases

role of national and international legislation in combating human trafficking, as well as the importance of regional and international cooperation in this regard¹¹⁴.

Furthermore, the NHRC in Lebanon has engaged in a broad campaign calling for an independent investigation into the targeting of journalists by Israel in Lebanon, especially in the incidents that resulted in the deaths of three journalists and the injury of others in October and November 2023. Official letters were submitted to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, and the Director of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, in February 2024 demanding international investigations into these attacks, which constitute war crimes under international law .

Through these activities and continuous interactions with local and international stakeholders, the National Commission for Human Rights in Lebanon continues its work to promote and protect human rights, and to ensure the application of international laws and standards to ensure justice and dignity for every member of Lebanese society.

III. Attending the meetings of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee

During 2024, the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee held a series of meetings that addressed a range of topics related to human rights in Lebanon in the presence of representatives of the National Human Rights Commission. The main objectives of these meetings were to improve legislation and enhance the protection of individuals from the various violations they may face.

The first topic discussed was the introduction of amendments to Law No. 673/1998 on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, which was raised within the framework of the effort to update the laws related to drugs to keep pace with the current challenges and meet the needs of society in combating this scourge more effectively, while ensuring the provision of support for treatment and rehabilitation.

In addition, a proposed law aimed at amending some phrases in Lebanese laws that degrade human dignity was also studied. This proposal came within the framework of promoting human rights and ensuring respect for the dignity of individuals in Lebanese legal texts, in order to avoid any manifestations of discrimination or repression that may contradict the universal principles of human rights.

Regarding prisons, Lebanese prison conditions and the measures required to improve these conditions were discussed, including attention to the rights of prisoners and the need to ensure humane conditions in places of detention.

The Committee also heard from the National Human Rights Commission, which presented a report on the obstacles that prevent the effective exercise of its functions, and discussed the need to adopt organizational, financial and administrative decrees that contribute to facilitating the work of the Commission and enhancing its ability to achieve its objectives in the field of human rights.

¹¹⁴ The NHRC participates in the seminar of the League of Arab States on the impact of legislation on reducing the crime of human trafficking
¹¹⁵ The NHRC and more than 120 entities call for an independent investigation into Israel’s targeting of journalists in Lebanon

As for the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the Commission discussed with the Committee the effects of this crisis on human rights and ways to improve the security and humanitarian situation of refugees, in order to guarantee their rights and improve their living conditions.

Regarding protection from the dangers of exploitation and violations of human dignity online, discussions focused on strategies to safeguard individuals from digital exploitation, as the internet has emerged as a new domain where human dignity is increasingly threatened through activities such as fraud, cyber harassment, and other harmful actions targeting individuals.

Moreover, a proposed law amending certain articles of the Penal Code relating to crimes against morals and public morals was also studied, with the aim of updating laws to keep pace with social transformations in order to enhance the protection of society from crimes that harm moral values.

Finally, the measures taken by the Government to confront Israeli attacks, particularly attacks on civil defense personnel, were reviewed. The situation was also discussed at the diplomatic and legal levels, and appropriate positions were taken that reflect Lebanon’s commitment to the protection of human rights in the context of armed conflict.

IV. Activities of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture

Lebanon’s National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, plays a crucial role in safeguarding human rights and overseeing the conditions of places of detention in the country. Established under Law No. 62/2016, the Commission is responsible for preventing torture by monitoring detention facilities, including prisons and security centers. Its mandate is to ensure that individuals deprived of their liberty are treated humanely and protected from torture or any form of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

One of the most important tasks of the Committee is to develop observations and recommendations on the conditions of detention and the conditions of persons in places of deprivation of liberty, which it submits to the Commission and to the relevant authorities in order to improve conditions and enhance the protection of the rights of detainees. These activities include conducting field visits to detention centers and prisons throughout Lebanon, and providing legal and factual observations on the conditions to which detainees are exposed.

In light of the critical security situation in Lebanon, the Commission assigned the expert, General Joseph Kallass, to visit detention centers in the southern areas that have been subjected to Israeli attacks, with the aim of examining the conditions of detainees and ensuring the protection of their rights. This visit included several centers in Nabatieh and Tyre¹¹⁶.

In the context of the escalating Israeli aggression against Lebanon, many detainees have been transferred from the most affected security centers to other, safer detention facilities. Despite facing significant security and logistical challenges, including difficulties in providing adequate nutrition, water, and electricity, the committee has continued to monitor and document the situation, and through close coordination with local authorities and NGOs, it has ensured that the basic needs of detainees are being met¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁶ The National Human Rights Commission follows up on the conditions of detention centers affected by the Israeli aggression and makes recommendations
¹¹⁷ Ibid.

In October 2024, the Commission launched a new initiative aimed at reducing overcrowding in Lebanese prisons. This initiative involves a group of lawyers tasked with reviewing the files of detainees and submitting requests for the release of those deemed eligible. The initiative seeks to improve conditions within prisons, alleviate the burden on both the judiciary and correctional facilities, and expedite judicial procedures¹¹⁸.

On 29 October 2024, the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation, Judge Jamal Al-Hajjar, issued notification No. 122/2024 stipulating that the National Human Rights Commission is to receive from prisons and ensure that these requests are forwarded to the judicial authorities responsible for reviewing detainee files, with the aim of expediting decisions on them in accordance with Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. This notification is significant as it reaffirms the mandate of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture to monitor the affairs of prisoners and detainees, ensuring their files are reviewed and that they are able to exercise their rights under both national and international law.

Based on this, and within the framework of the ongoing efforts to promote human rights in Lebanon, the National Human Rights Committee, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, implemented an emergency legal project during the period from 21 October 2024 till 21 December 2024, which aimed to assess the conditions of detainees and facilitate their release, with a focus on addressing overcrowding issues in prisons.

In this context, the Committee conducted a series of comprehensive visits to several prisons to assess the conditions of detainees. The visited facilities included Roumieh Prison [on October 21, 24, and November 1], Koura Prison [October 16], Halba Prison [October 27], Zgharta Prison [October 30], Amyoun Prison [November 7], and Zahle Prison [November 20]. These visits aimed to identify detainees eligible for release and to address critical issues related to overcrowding in the prisons.

The priority of the project was to focus on detainees not charged with serious crimes. Lists were compiled to identify court file numbers, with particular attention given to whether detainees had legal representation or support from NGOs. Despite various challenges faced by the NHRC-CPT team during the implementation of the project, including the absence of electronic databases, resistance from court staff, the excessive workload of judges, and financial difficulties faced by detainees’ families, the project achieved notable success. A total of 403 detainee files were collected, 301 requests for release were submitted, and 43 detainees were released, with additional decisions still pending.

In conclusion, the Commission’s emergency legal project has made significant achievements in facilitating the release of detainees and addressing issues of overcrowding in prisons. Collaborative efforts with judicial, security and legal bodies and civil society institutions have been pivotal in overcoming the challenges. In a related context, bail was provided to some detainees in cooperation with civil society organizations such as RESTART and CLDH.

¹¹⁸ The National Commission initiates an inventory of Lebanese prison files to submit release requests

Chapter Three: Conclusions and recommendations

I. Conclusions

1.1 Economic, social and cultural rights

1.1.1 Right to education

- In 2024, Lebanon witnessed major violations of the right to education as a result of the security crisis resulting from the war, which led to disruption of the educational process and unprecedented disparity of opportunities among students.
- The lack of a proactive plan by the Ministry of Education to confront the repercussions of the war reflects weakness in managing the crisis, and the absence of clear strategies to ensure the continuation of education.
- The interruption of education has negatively affected students in public schools compared to the private sector, which contributes to increasing the educational gap between different social classes.

1.1.2 The right to a decent standard of living

- The continuing crisis of banks and the seizure of depositors' funds further exacerbate the economic situation of many families, as citizens suffer from difficulty in accessing their deposits, leading to significant economic impacts that include education, health care and other basic rights of individuals.
- The severe economic crisis that has been going on for 5 years has affected various sectors, including education, health, and labor, with strikes and protests against low wages and deteriorating working conditions increasing.
- Increasing poverty rates and economic contraction lead to a deterioration in the lives of citizens, which contributes to worsening living conditions, and exposes individuals' economic and social rights to increasing violations.

1.1.3 Right to health care

- Lebanon's health sector is gradually collapsing due to the ongoing economic crisis and security challenges, including shortages of medical staff, medicines and medical equipment.
- Attacks on health facilities and medical personnel during the war disrupt the delivery of health services, impeding citizens' access to health care, a clear violation of basic rights to health.

1.2 Civil and political rights

- **Deterioration of freedom of opinion and expression:** Civil and political freedoms in Lebanon deteriorated significantly in 2024, with threats and judicial summons against journalists and activists escalating, reflecting a decline in respect for the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which is a violation of constitutional and international standards.
- **Disruption of access to justice:** The right to access justice was severely

affected in 2024 by judicial strikes, as well as the ongoing halt in investigations into sensitive cases such as the Beirut port explosion. This obstruction of litigation leads to a lack of justice and fosters a culture of impunity, contributing to undermining confidence in the Lebanese judicial system.

- **Repeated postponements of elections:** The postponement of municipal elections in Lebanon again reflects a decline in democratic practices, as repeated postponements constitute a violation of the right to political participation and negatively affect confidence in the democratic process in the country.

1.3 Rule of law and human rights

- **Violations continue despite legislation:** Despite the passage of the law criminalizing torture in Lebanon, cases of torture and human rights violations continue, as evidenced by the verdict in cases such as Bashar Abdul Saud, indicating a wide discrepancy between actual legislation and practice.
- **Political pressure on the judiciary:** Political interference in judicial affairs is one of the most prominent challenges affecting the independence of the Lebanese judiciary, reinforcing the lack of justice in the country and preventing victims from accessing their right to justice.
- The increasing summoning of journalists before military courts indicates an imbalance in the application of fair trial standards.
- **Opaque legislative practices:** Constitutional challenges against the 2024 budget law expose legal challenges in Lebanon related to the lack of transparency in parliamentary debates and the violation of constitutional articles, affecting the credibility of the legislative system and impeding the progress of institution-building and strengthening the rule of law.
- **Prison crisis and deteriorating prisoners' rights:** Lebanese prisons are living in tragic conditions exacerbated by overcrowding and lack of health care and nutrition, especially with the closure of some prisons and detention centers due to security risks.
- **Ineffective Laws and Mechanisms:** Weak accountability mechanisms in Lebanon promote impunity and reduce the effectiveness of the application of human rights laws. Despite the existence of legislation and laws, weak enforcement and political interference limit the ability of the judicial system to ensure the protection of rights and freedoms.

1.4 Vulnerable groups

- **Children's rights:** Children's rights have been severely affected by the war, with hundreds of children dying or seriously injured, and many children suffering severe psychological effects. Thousands of families have been displaced, denying children their right to education and health care.
- **Women's rights:** Women in Lebanon, especially during the war, have been exposed to increased risks related to gender-based violence, in addition to

the increasing economic and social burdens.

- **Rights of refugees and internally displaced persons:** Syrian refugees in Lebanon have suffered many racist practices and are at risk of forcible transfer. During the war, especially the last months, about a quarter of Lebanon's population was forcibly displaced from their towns and homes, resulting in an acute humanitarian crisis.
- **Rights of migrant workers:** Migrant workers in Lebanon face systematic exploitation within the kafala system, where they are subjected to physical and psychological exploitation, which translates into inhumane working conditions, including the denial of their basic rights such as fair wages and adequate working conditions.
- **LGBTI people's rights:** LGBTI people in Lebanon continue to suffer significant legal and social discrimination as their relationships continue to be criminalized under article 534 of the penal code, subjecting them to prosecution and imprisonment solely for expressing their sexual identity.

1.5 Violations of international humanitarian law

- **Serious violations of international humanitarian law:** The Israeli aggression on Lebanon in 2023-2024 resulted in serious violations of international humanitarian law, manifested in the indiscriminate targeting of civilians, and the use of internationally banned weapons such as white phosphorus and cluster bombs. Medical, relief and press facilities were also targeted, all of which are examples of clear violations of international conventions such as the Geneva Conventions, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention, and customary international humanitarian law.
- **Impact of the war on human rights:** The Israeli aggression has exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Lebanon, where civilians have suffered loss of life and property, and the destruction of infrastructure, affecting basic rights such as the right to health and education.

II. Recommendations

2.1 Economic, social and cultural rights

2.1.1 To promote the right to education

- Preparing a proactive educational emergency plan to ensure the continuity of education in light of crises, including distance learning, and finding alternatives to the current situation.
- Support public schools to ensure that students can resume their education equally with students in private schools.
- Settle the rights of teachers and university professors and address their living and contractual conditions by establishing full-time and protecting their rights, and negotiating with them on improving their salaries and working conditions.

2.1.2 To protect the right to a decent standard of living

- Implement immediate and urgent banking reforms to allow citizens access to their funds, achieve fairness in dealing with depositors, and ensure sufficient liquidity to support the local economy.
- Implement wide-ranging economic reforms that include transparency in resource management, fighting corruption, increasing job opportunities, and raising wages in line with the rising cost of living.
- Improve the social safety net to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable groups in society, such as the poor, the unemployed, and people with special needs.

2.1.3 To promote the right to health care

- Provide hospitals and health facilities with the necessary protection from attacks, allocate a special budget for the maintenance of these facilities, and abide by the warring parties' obligations under international humanitarian law and end impunity for war crimes.
- Rehabilitate the health system and develop a comprehensive plan, including the provision of necessary medicines and medical equipment, and rehabilitate damaged hospitals and health centers.

2.1.4 Policy development

- Activate accountability and monitoring mechanisms at all levels of government to ensure the effective implementation of economic and social policies.
- Cooperate more with international organizations to obtain technical and financial support to confront the crisis and mitigate its economic and humanitarian repercussions.

2.2 Civil and political rights

2.2.1 Strengthening the protection of journalists and the right to freedom of opinion and expression:

- Take effective measures to ensure the protection of journalists and media professionals from threats, attacks and arbitrary or illegal judicial summonses by amending applicable legislation and applying laws fairly.

2.2.2 Expedite judicial proceedings and ensure access to justice:

- Resume investigations into critical human rights cases, such as the Beirut port explosion, while ensuring the independence of the judiciary and its freedom from any political pressure.
- Take measures to enable judicial assistants and employees in the judicial sector to perform their duties normally, by improving their working conditions and guaranteeing their rights.

2.2.3 Ensuring free and fair elections:

- Hold elections on time without delays while ensuring a fair and transparent electoral environment.
- Develop and improve election laws to ensure fair representation of all groups and reduce corruption.

2.2.4 Compliance with international standards:

- Take serious steps to comply with international treaties ratified by Lebanon, especially those related to human rights, such as the International Covenant

on Civil and Political Rights.

- Review laws that restrict freedom of expression and the press, and adopt laws that prevent any violations of civil and political rights.

2.2.5 Combating impunity:

- Take the necessary steps to ensure that perpetrators of serious violations are brought to justice, thereby promoting a culture of justice and accountability.
- Accept the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court to try crimes committed on Lebanese territories during the war on Lebanon, including war crimes and crimes against humanity.

2.3 Rule of law and human rights

2.3.1 Strengthening the application of human rights laws:

- The Lebanese government should work more seriously to enact laws such as the anti-torture law and ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are held accountable. This requires independent and transparent mechanisms that monitor and investigate violations, and ensure that laws are implemented with the utmost seriousness.
- Train judges and law enforcement members to effectively enforce these laws and handle cases in line with international standards.

2.3.2 Ensuring the independence of the judiciary and freedom of the press:

- Take serious steps to ensure the independence of the judiciary from political interference, by passing the Judicial Independence Law and activating effective accountability mechanisms.

2.3.3 Improving prison conditions and promoting prisoners' rights:

- Work urgently to improve prison conditions by providing appropriate health care, reducing overcrowding, and providing prisoners with decent food.
- Implement correctional projects for prisons that include the renovation of infrastructure, the provision of medical services, and the establishment of rehabilitation programs.
- Review legal policies on detention and enforce legal provisions to ensure a fair and expeditious trial and reduce arbitrary detention.
- Digitize detainees' records and conduct training sessions for court staff to encourage cooperation with the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, particularly with regard to the release project.

2.3.4 Enhanced accountability and transparency in investigations:

- Conduct transparent and independent investigations into cases such as the Beirut port explosion, political assassinations and torture.
- Establish independent bodies to investigate crimes and violations related to human rights, free from political influences.

2.3.5 Work on the legislation of amnesty in a balanced manner:

- The general amnesty law should be designed in a way that balances the community's right to justice and the right of prisoners to benefit from the amnesty, with serious crimes such as corruption and public money crimes being excluded from the amnesty, and strict monitoring mechanisms for amnesty beneficiaries to ensure that they do not commit new crimes after

the amnesty.

- Prioritize amnesty for those imprisoned on minor grounds or who have served long periods of time, while making sure that social and economic justice is not affected.

2.4 Vulnerable groups

2.4.1 Protection of children's rights:

- Intensify humanitarian efforts to provide psychological and medical support to war-affected children, and provide them with educational and psychological support programs.
- Establish care and support centers for displaced children, ensure their access to basic education, and support and equitable distribution of humanitarian assistance to ensure that children receive basic necessities.

2.4.2 Promotion of women's rights:

- Strengthen legislation to protect women from domestic and gender-based violence, while ensuring that penalties are enforced against abusers.
- Work to strengthen laws that allow women to participate in the labor market and provide protection from economic and social discrimination.
- Support displaced women, widows and the elderly by providing them with the necessary humanitarian assistance and job opportunities.

2.4.3 Improving the situation of refugees and displaced persons:

- Respect the rights of refugees based on international conventions and memorandums, including ensuring non-refoulement and their right to access education and health care.
- Eliminate discriminatory policies against refugees and stop forced deportation campaigns that lack legal and humanitarian safeguards.
- Provide safe and adequate shelters for IDPs, taking into account their basic rights to work, education, and health care.

2.4.4 Reform of the Sponsorship Law and Protection of the Rights of Foreign Workers:

- Abolishing the kafala system and restructuring the Lebanese labor market to guarantee the rights of foreign workers and protect them from exploitation.
- Provide legal mechanisms to ensure that foreign workers receive fair pay and appropriate working conditions, as well as ensure their freedom of movement and the non-withholding of their passports.
- Allocate teams of lawyers to provide legal support to foreign workers in Lebanon to preserve their rights.

2.4.5 Support for LGBTI rights:

- Repeal article 534 of the penal code and pass laws protecting the rights of LGBT people from discrimination and persecution.
- Promote a positive societal culture towards sexual and gender diversity, and provide safe spaces for LGBT people to express their identity.
- Form legal and psychological support channels for LGBT people to ensure that their rights are respected and protected from harassment and

discrimination.

2.4.6 Improving the economic and social situation of vulnerable groups:

- Work to implement economic support programs for the communities most affected by the economic crisis, including refugees, women, children and persons with disabilities.
- Provide scholarships and training opportunities to improve the professional skills of marginalized groups such as to expand their employment opportunities.

2.5 Violations of international humanitarian law

- The international community should ensure that perpetrators of atrocities and IHL violations are held accountable.
- Provide emergency humanitarian support to conflict-affected communities and rehabilitate critical infrastructure to alleviate the suffering of the population.
- Lead initiatives to mitigate the impact of armed conflict on children's rights, while developing educational programs aimed at safeguarding the future of affected children, ensuring that this generation is not lost to the consequences of war.
- Adopt comprehensive human rights policies to respond to crises that protect civilians and forcibly displaced people, including women, children, the elderly and people with special needs.
- Develop programs for the reconstruction of destroyed civilian, agricultural and economic infrastructure to alleviate poverty resulting from devastating damage. These programs can be funded through cooperation with international organizations and civil society.

