



**Lebanese Republic | National Human Rights
Commission, including the Committee for the
Prevention of Torture (NHRC-CPT)**

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Fourth Review of Lebanon under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

UPR Submission by the NHRI of Lebanon

July 2025

A. Preliminary remarks

1. The National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (NHRC-CPT), is Lebanon's independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and designated National Preventive Mechanism (NPM). The Commission is mandated to monitor Lebanon's compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law and to issue special or periodic reports on its findings. It is further tasked with monitoring and documenting violations of human rights and international humanitarian law during periods of armed conflict¹ and actively working through all available means to combat impunity and promote accountability.
2. This submission cannot provide a comprehensive picture of the human rights situation in Lebanon, nor a detailed assessment of all 297 recommendations made in the third UPR cycle of 2021. Instead, it focuses on areas that the Commission considers particularly important. Issues that the NHRC-CPT considers to be of particular concern and that should be taken up in recommendations to Lebanon are italicized. This submission focuses on the years 2021-2025, during which Lebanon has been, and continues to be, confronted with several crises and their serious consequences: economic collapse and denial of socioeconomic rights; deep political and institutional paralysis and recurring constitutional vacuums; Israeli aggression and internal displacement.
3. The NHRC-CPT hopes that the fourth UPR cycle will become a central instrument for the Lebanese Republic in shaping its human rights policy. The government should, therefore, establish a follow-up and review mechanism for the recommendations emanating from the UPR and the UN treaty bodies, which engages all levels of the state and ensures the participation of civil society and the national human rights institution.

B. Suggested topics to be taken into account by the Human Rights Council Working Group for the 4th Universal Periodic Review of Lebanon

I. Weak Institutionalization of NHRI and NPM

4. During the third UPR review, Lebanon accepted twelve recommendations to speed up the establishment of the National Independent Commission for Human Rights, which includes the establishment of a permanent national committee to prevent torture ². Despite the efforts and actions taken since the ratification of Law No. 62/2016, the Lebanese government has not demonstrated a commitment to taking serious and practical actions without delay to enable NHRC-CPT to commence operations with adequate personnel and financial resources, thereby ensuring its effective and independent work. Despite all challenges and obstacles, the Commission managed, driven by its members' effort and donors' support, to fulfill its role in the human rights sector through organizing local, regional, and international activities on the protection and promotion of human rights and participating in such activities ³.
5. Since March 2018, when the first members of the NHRC-CPT were appointed, and up until July 2025, four governments have succeeded one another in Lebanon. All of them failed to adopt the regulatory decrees necessary for the Commission's functioning. According to its founding Law, five regulatory decrees are required: the internal regulations, the financial regulations, the code of ethics, the decree on members' monthly compensation, and the decree on contracting arrangements. In addition, a cabinet decision should be issued to allocate a vacant, state-owned premises for the NHRC-CPT
6. Lebanon acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment pursuant to Law No. 12, issued on 5 September 2008. In accordance with Article 17 of the Protocol, the State committed to establishing an independent National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) within a maximum period of one year. Lebanon has also exhausted the five-year deferral period permitted under Article 24 of the Protocol. Sixteen years later, it has yet to fully fund, institutionalize, or guarantee the independence of the NPM.

7. The Lebanese Ministry of Justice has adopted an arbitrary approach in its handling of the activation of the NHRC-CPT. It has disregarded official letters and correspondence addressed to it, as well as the legal studies conducted to refute the unlawful claims raised concerning the adoption of the Commission's internal regulations, which were submitted to the State Council, the judicial body authorized to provide legal opinions on decrees. The Commission fully complied with all the observations provided by the Council in Opinion No. 7/2021–2022, dated 23 November 2021. A revised version of the internal regulations was subsequently submitted to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, which has nonetheless refrained from including an item related to the review and adoption of the Commission's decrees on its agenda.
8. NHRC-CPT led years-long advocacy campaigns in response to administrative practices imposed by the Ministry of Finance, which threatened its independence. In 2020, the Ministry took steps to amend the law governing the Commission, placing it under the financial authority of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. After the NHRC-CPT succeeded in securing a legislative amendment following an intense advocacy battle in Parliament, the Minister of Finance issued Decision No. 518/1, which provided for the inclusion of a dedicated chapter for the Commission in the state budget under the section for independent national bodies. It also created a new budget line (No. 1073) titled "Protection and Promotion of Human Rights." Although the Commission's budget⁴ was included in the general state budget for the years 2023–2025, the limited funds allocated, combined with the continued absence of an approved financial regulation and a decree on fixed monthly compensation, have left the Commission institutionally fragile and financially insecure.

→ In this context, the following recommendations are made:

- *Adopt all outstanding decrees required for the activation of the NHRC-CPT, including those related to internal regulations, financial management, and staffing, and ensure the provision of adequate and sustained financial resources to support its operations. These steps are essential to enable the Commission to function independently and effectively, and to secure "A" status accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).*
- *Guarantee the complete legal and institutional independence of the NHRC-CPT by ensuring that no ministry or executive authority has the power to impose or influence its internal policies and regulations. Such safeguards are essential to uphold the Commission's autonomy and effectiveness in accordance with the Paris Principles;*

II. Torture, III-Treatment, and Prison Conditions

9. Despite the eighth anniversary of the passage of the Law on the Criminalization of Torture and the Punishment of Its Perpetrators ⁵ 65/2017, Lebanese judicial authorities failed to investigate serious torture allegations reported by NHRC-CPT. The Central Criminal Investigations Department of the Internal Security Forces (ISF), the Military Intelligence Directorate of the Lebanese Army, and other state security agencies continue to conduct investigations into torture cases, even though the anti-torture law prohibits security agencies from investigating such allegations. Investigations conducted by agencies into acts committed by their personnel lack both independence and impartiality.
10. On December 10, 2021, the NHRC-CPT received a complaint from Lebanese citizen M.H., alleging that he was subjected to torture on December 9, 2021, during interrogation by officers of the Baabda Judicial Detachment, part of the Regional Criminal Investigation Department within the Judicial Police Unit at the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces. The Commission admitted the complaint and initiated an investigation, which included interviewing the victim, conducting a forensic evaluation by two medical experts, and assigning a legal advisor to prepare the case for judicial proceedings. On April 24, 2022, the victim filed a direct complaint before the First Investigative Judge in Mount Lebanon. The NHRC-CPT's efforts contributed to the referral of the case of M.H. to the judiciary, resulting in the registration of case No. 1707/2022—the first torture complaint to be investigated by a civilian court rather than a military one. However, three years after the complaint was initially filed, the case remains pending before the First Investigative Judge.
11. Between 2023 and 2025, the NHRC-CPT conducted hundreds of comprehensive visits⁶ to assess the conditions of detainees across Lebanon. The findings from visits to more than 200 detention facilities—operated by the Directorate General of Internal Security Forces (Ministry of Interior) and the Lebanese Army (Ministry of Defence)—revealed harsh and degrading conditions in Lebanese prisons.
12. Detainees in Lebanese detention centers and prisons face a range of serious and systemic violations. These include the requirement to pay bribes for access to basic rights such as medical care, family visits, or legal assistance, and the imposition of illegal “rent” for beds or space in cells. Smuggling and trafficking of contraband, including drugs and mobile phones, reportedly occur with the complicity of prison administrators. Severe overcrowding exacerbates already dire conditions, while unsanitary facilities, lack of ventilation, and limited access to clean water further endanger detainees’ health. Medical care is grossly inadequate, with authorities failing to address both physical and mental health needs.

13. Judicial backlog, institutional inertia, and administrative inefficiency are the primary drivers behind Lebanon's high rate of pre-trial detention, with approximately 60% of the prison population comprising individuals who have not yet been convicted. NHRC-CPT has documented cases where pre-trial detainees have remained in custody for up to five years, and in some instances, more than ten years. This alarming reality is further compounded by the critically outdated Lebanese Criminal Procedure Code, as well as a severely dysfunctional court system.
14. Law No. 65/2017 does not meet the requirements of Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). In January 2020, the Lebanese Parliament considered amending the law; however, the proposed amendments failed to reach the General Assembly. The NHRC-CPT has observed that the definition of torture under Law No. 65/2017 remains limited in scope and does not adequately cover acts falling outside its narrow parameters. Accordingly, the law requires revision to address these shortcomings and to explicitly criminalize acts of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.
- In this context, the following recommendations are made:
- *Ensure the full operationalization and sustained support of the (NPM), including by providing it with the necessary legal, financial, and institutional resources to carry out its mandate independently and effectively in line with the (OPCAT).*
 - *Improve Conditions of Detention and expedite case processing by reducing the excessive use of pre-trial detention, ensuring reliable and timely transport of detainees to court, and implementing effective alternatives to detention.*
 - *Amend Law No. 65/2017 to ensure complete alignment with international standards by explicitly excluding exceptional circumstances—such as a state of war, threat of war, internal political instability, or any other public emergency—as justifications for acts of torture, in line with Article 2(2) of the Convention against Torture.*

III. Rule of Law and Accountability

15. Lebanon extended a standing invitation to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council on 17 March 2011. However, thirteen Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups have been awaiting visits to the country for several years. While some delays may be due to logistical and technical challenges, persistent obstacles related to political and diplomatic clearances must be resolved to ensure the timely and unhindered conduct of country visits by special procedures mandate holders.

16. The failure to activate Lebanon's National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting, and Follow-up (NMIRF) since 2021 has severely undermined the country's capacity to fulfill its international human rights obligations. This institutional paralysis has effectively stalled the government's reporting processes to UN treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), resulting in missed deadlines, fragmented data collection, and weak inter-ministerial coordination. Critically, the prolonged inaction has also excluded civil society and independent national institutions from meaningful consultation, thereby eroding the transparency, credibility, and inclusiveness of Lebanon's human rights monitoring and follow-up framework.
17. The National Human Rights Action Plan for Lebanon (2014–2019) was neither fully respected nor implemented, primarily because it lacked a binding legal framework for both Parliament and the Government. In 2021, NHRC-CPT actively participated in the meetings of the Committee for the Evaluation, Review, and Development of a new NAP for 2020–2024, contributing substantially to the drafting of its final version. However, Parliament did not go beyond merely taking note of its preparation and failed to issue a binding recommendation to the government calling for its implementation. To ensure its effectiveness, the NAP should be ratified as a legally binding instrument. The NAP should be ratified as a legally binding instrument that prevents adverse human rights impacts, guarantees protection, and provides effective access to remedies.
18. Lebanon remains significantly overdue in reviewing its human rights record before four UN treaty bodies⁷. It was scheduled to appear before the Committee against Torture in May 2021, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in October 2021, the Human Rights Committee in April 2023, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child in June 2023. Lebanon has also failed to meet its reporting obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, with its initial report remaining overdue since 8 December 2006. Furthermore, Lebanon has not submitted the required follow-up information on the implementation of recommendations issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination—specifically paragraphs 11 (on the National Human Rights Institution), 13 (on the National Human Rights Action Plan), and 19 (on birth registration)—which were due one year after the adoption of the concluding observations, by September 2022.

→ In this context, the following recommendations are made:

- *Ensure full cooperation with international human rights mechanisms by guaranteeing unhindered access for UN Special Procedures, reactivating and adequately resourcing the National Mechanism for*

Implementation, Reporting, and Follow-up (NMIRF), and fulfilling all overdue reporting obligations to UN treaty bodies.

- *Review, update, and ratify a new National Action Plan (NAP) for the period 2026–2030, in response to evolving contexts and building on cumulative progress in the promotion and protection of human rights.*

IV. Violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) during the Israeli Aggression against Lebanon

19. Israel intensified its war against Lebanon under the name "Operation Northern Arrows" on September 23, 2024, a campaign that had been escalating gradually since October 8, 2023. Israeli military attacks between October 2023 and November 2024 resulted in severe humanitarian consequences and grave violations of International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL).
20. On 27 November 2024, Lebanon and Israel reached a ceasefire agreement for 60 days, which was later extended on 27 January 2025 for several additional weeks. Despite this, Lebanese authorities documented more than 3,138 Israeli violations, resulting in approximately 245 deaths and at least 609 injuries, as of 14 July 2025, according to official data. These violations continue daily. Israel also failed to complete its full withdrawal from southern Lebanon by the February 18 deadline, maintaining control over five strategic hills captured during the conflict. Based on field monitoring and official documentation, the NHRC-CPT recorded ⁸ more than 14,775 Israeli attacks during the assault, causing over 4,000 deaths—including 1,106 women and children—and injuring more than 16,600 people. The offensive displaced an estimated 1.4 million civilians ⁹.
21. Israel's killing of journalists in the course of their work through direct strikes constitutes a war crime ¹⁰. Israeli forces deliberately and repeatedly targeted rescue workers, medical personnel, and healthcare facilities¹¹, acts classified as 'apparent war crimes.' Documented violations also include the intentional targeting of civilians¹² and UNIFIL premises; the unlawful use of white phosphorus¹³; and the destruction of cultural heritage sites, each amounting to a grave breach of international humanitarian law.
22. The Lebanese government faced significant challenges in implementing the national emergency plan effectively in response to the crisis. Its response was slow and inadequate, particularly in addressing the urgent needs of displaced persons. Major shortcomings were observed in the provision of shelter, access to food, healthcare, and legal protection, especially for persons with disabilities, women, children, refugees, and migrant workers. Many among these vulnerable

groups faced discrimination, exploitation, and neglect, leading to serious violations of their fundamental rights to dignity, shelter, education, and health.

23. Post-war challenges, including the lack of a comprehensive, state-led plan for reconstruction and the safe and dignified return of displaced persons, the continued Israeli occupation of border areas, and the lack of infrastructure and basic services in affected regions, continue to undermine the prospects for a safe and dignified return.

→ In this context, the following recommendations are made:

- *Advocating at the United Nations Human Rights Council for the establishment of an independent, international investigation mechanism that is sufficiently resourced to: Investigate, document, and establish the facts, circumstances and root causes of all alleged human rights violations and abuses, violations of international humanitarian law, and crimes under international law committed by Israel in Lebanon since the October 2023, to ensure that perpetrators are identified and held accountable.*
- *Referring the crimes committed by Israel in Lebanon to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court by reversing the suspicious withdrawal of the Lebanese Cabinet' decision of 26 April 2024, which accepted the Court's jurisdiction to investigate crimes falling within its mandate committed on Lebanese territory since 7 October 2023 and to prosecute those responsible, in accordance with Article 12, paragraph 3 of the Rome Statute.*

Endnotes

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8. National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, Challenges to the Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights during the Israeli War on Lebanon (special report), last updated June 2025, accessed July 12, 2025, <https://nhrcb.org/en/archives/3131>.
9. According to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, the updated total toll of the Israeli aggression is 4047 deaths and 16638 injuries, 4 December 2024. Data are available at <https://vo.la/UCdHEp>.
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