



## Concept Note

### Human Rights Monitoring of the 2026 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections

Lebanese National Human Rights Commission (including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture)

Date: December 2025

## 1. Background and Rationale

Lebanon is scheduled to hold its next parliamentary elections in **May 2026**, in a climate marked by socio-economic instability, political fragmentation, concerns over shrinking civic space, and a persistent erosion of public trust in institutions. Ensuring that these elections are **genuine, free, fair, inclusive, and peaceful** is essential to fulfilling Lebanon's obligations under international human rights law, especially the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, art. 25)**, guaranteeing the right of every citizen to participate in public affairs.

Free and fair elections require the full respect of a wide range of rights and freedoms before, during, and after polling day, including:

- Freedom of opinion and expression,
- freedom of peaceful assembly and association,

- freedom of movement,
- freedom from discrimination,
- freedom from intimidation and fear,
- equal participation of women and men, and
- The ability of all voters to exercise their choice freely and secretly.

The **Lebanese National Human Rights Commission (NHRC-CPT)**, established in line with the **Paris Principles** and mandated to promote and protect human rights, has both the legitimacy and responsibility to play a central role in monitoring the human rights dimensions of the 2026 electoral process.

This concept note outlines a **structured, impartial, and rights-based framework** for NHRC-CPT engagement across all phases of the electoral cycle.

## 2. Objectives of NHRC-CPT Monitoring

The NHRC's monitoring seeks to assess whether the electoral process allows all individuals to exercise their rights **without hindrance, sanction, intimidation, or discrimination**, and whether authorities take necessary measures to prevent abuses, protect rights, and provide effective redress when violations occur.

### Specific objectives

1. **Monitor and document** human rights violations and abuses linked to the electoral process in all phases: pre-electoral, electoral, and post-electoral.
2. **Assess compliance** of the legal and administrative frameworks with international human rights standards.
3. **Evaluate the degree of freedom** of expression, assembly, association, media access, and movement throughout the electoral period.
4. **Monitor non-discrimination**, including the participation of women, persons with disabilities, minorities, IDPs, and other vulnerable groups.
5. **Monitor and assess the conduct of security forces**, including policing of rallies, campaign events, and election day activities.

6. **Advocate for corrective action** with relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Interior, the Supervisory Commission for Elections, and security agencies.
7. **Issue periodic public statements and a final report**, aligned with Paris Principles and international best practices.

## 3. Scope of Monitoring

The electoral cycle will be divided into **three phases**: pre-electoral, electoral, and post-electoral, and monitoring will span at least **four months before** and **one month after** polling day.

### 3.1 Pre-Electoral Phase (December 2025 – April 2026)

Focus areas include:

#### a. Legal and regulatory framework

- Review electoral legislation and regulations for conformity with ICCPR and international standards.
- Identify provisions that may result in discrimination, restrictions on candidates, or unequal media access.
- Assess implementation gaps, especially regarding the 2022 electoral lessons learned.

#### b. Voter registration

- Evaluate the inclusivity, accessibility, and transparency of voter rolls.
- Monitor discriminatory or arbitrary restrictions, including obstacles faced by women, persons with disabilities, and first-time voters.

#### c. Candidate and party registration

- Assess non-discriminatory access to candidacy and freedom to form and register political parties.
- Monitor potential pressures or exclusion of opposition candidates.

#### **d. Media environment**

- Monitor freedom of the press, independence of state-owned media, equitable access to media, and incidents of censorship, intimidation, or hate speech.
- Document attacks, threats, or criminal prosecutions against journalists  
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#### **e. Civil and political freedoms**

- Monitor the right to peaceful assembly, association, and expression.
- Document interference with rallies, restrictions on public meetings, and excessive use of force by security personnel.
- Assess equal opportunities to campaign, particularly in areas where political intimidation is more common.

#### **f. Gender dimension**

- Apply the gender-sensitive monitoring framework recommended by OHCHR, for example, assessing women's ability to register, campaign, speak publicly, access media, and vote without intimidation or family pressure.  
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### **3.2 Electoral Phase (May 2026 – Election Day)**

NHRC-CPT will deploy mobile and fixed monitors to priority regions based on risk assessment.

#### **Key areas of focus**

- Accessibility and security of polling stations.
- Presence and behavior of security forces; avoidance of intimidation.
- Freedom of movement for voters and observers.
- Conditions enabling secret voting.

- Equal treatment of all political actors.
- Incidents of violence, harassment, or pressure.
- Special procedures for persons with disabilities, elderly voters, detainees, and hospital patients, in line with OHCHR guidance on specific groups.

### **3.3 Post-Electoral Phase (Election Day +1 month)**

Monitoring will continue through:

- Counting and tabulation processes.
- Transparency of results transmission.
- Security conditions around counting centers.
- Investigation of electoral complaints and abuses.
- Assessment of judicial remedies and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Documentation of violations targeting candidates, supporters, journalists, or civil society.
- Monitoring of post-result tensions, protests, and security force conduct.

## **4. Methodology**

NHRC-CPT monitoring will follow internationally recognized human rights monitoring principles: **independence, impartiality, confidentiality, accuracy, and “do no harm”**.

### **4.1 Data Collection Tools**

- Structured interviews with victims, witnesses, journalists, candidates, civil society, security forces, and election management bodies.
- Field visits to monitor rallies, polling centers, and high-risk areas.
- Media monitoring (traditional and digital).
- Joint activities with domestic observation networks.

- Hotlines and secure communication channels for complaints.
- Coordination with National organizations, OHCHR, UNDP, EU Election Observation Mission, and the diplomatic community.

## 4.2 Deployment

- **National coverage** through regional focal points.
- Priority to areas identified as historically prone to electoral violence (Tripoli, Akkar, Baalbek-Hermel, Chouf, Beirut II, Saida-Jezzine, Tyre).
- Mobile teams on election day to monitor intimidation, misuse of security presence, or violations targeting vulnerable communities.

## 4.3 Coordination

NHRC-CPT will coordinate with:

- **Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE)**
- **Ministry of Interior**
- **Security agencies**
- **Civil society election networks**
- **UN agencies (OHCHR, UNDP Electoral Support Programme)**
- **EU EOM and international observers**
- **Media organizations and syndicates**

Coordination will ensure information-sharing, avoid duplication, and allow timely intervention to prevent abuses.

# 5. Monitoring Priority Themes for Lebanon

Based on Lebanon's 2022 electoral context and OHCHR guidance, the NHRC-CPT will prioritize:

1. **Freedom of expression and protection of journalists**, including online harassment.
2. **Peaceful assembly** and the policing of demonstrations.
3. **Intimidation, violence, and coercion** by political actors, armed groups, or security agencies.
4. **Vote-buying and clientelism** as violations of the free expression of the will of electors.
5. **Misuse of public resources** by incumbent actors.
6. **Women's political participation** and gender-based electoral violence.
7. **Participation of persons with disabilities**, including accessibility of polling stations.
8. **Participation of youth**, especially first-time voters.
9. **Hate speech, sectarian incitement, and discrimination**, particularly online and in the media.

## 6. Expected Outputs

### a. Monitoring Reports

- **Baseline report** (January 2026) on the pre-electoral environment.
- **Monthly updates** (February–April 2026).
- **Election Day report** documenting key incidents and preliminary findings.
- **Final comprehensive report** (June 2026) evaluating the human rights environment and providing recommendations.

### b. Public Statements

- Alerts on major violations requiring immediate corrective action.

- Press releases in cases of intimidation, threats, or violence.

### **c. Policy and Advocacy Recommendations**

- Legal and policy reforms aligned with Lebanon's international obligations.
- Guidance to the Supervisory Commission for Elections on rights-based electoral management.
- Recommendations to security forces on policing in line with human rights standards.

## **7. Required Resources**

To ensure effective national monitoring:

### **Human Resources**

- 1 National Coordinator
- 6 Regional Field Officers
- 12 Mobile Monitors
- 2 Media Monitoring Specialists
- 1 Data Analyst
- 1 Hotline & Complaints Officer

### **Material Resources**

- Field vehicles
- Data protection tools
- Media monitoring software

## Budget

A detailed budget will be developed separately, covering personnel, logistics, monitoring equipment, communications, transport, and publication costs.

## 8. Risk Analysis and Mitigation

Risk	Likelihood/Impact	Mitigation Measures
Political pressure on NHRC	Medium/High	Strict adherence to Paris Principles, transparency, and independence.
Restrictions on monitors' access	Medium	Formal coordination with the Ministry of Interior and SCE.
Threats to staff safety	High	Security protocols, mobile deployment, "do no harm" principle.
Public distrust of institutions	High	Public communication, transparency, and rights-based approach.
Online disinformation	Medium	Digital monitoring unit and rapid response.

## 9. Conclusion

This concept note positions the **NHRC-CPT** as a central, credible, and impartial actor in ensuring that the **2026 Lebanese parliamentary elections** meet international human rights standards. By adopting OHCHR's methodologies and emphasizing independence, non-discrimination, and preventive monitoring, the Commission can:

- Strengthen public trust,
- deter violations,
- Safeguard democratic participation, and
- Contribute to long-term institutional reform.

The NHRC-CPT's engagement will reaffirm Lebanon's commitment to the **rule of law, human dignity, accountable governance, and the will of the people.**