



Annual Report 2025

As hostilities persist
and violations mount

Visit to the Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre for Children in Conflict with the Law in the West Bank on 24 July 2025



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The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, works to protect and promote human rights in Lebanon in accordance with the standards outlined in the Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international conventions and treaties, and domestic laws consistent with these standards. The NHRC is an independent national institution established under Law No. 62/2016, pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly's Paris Principles, which provide the framework for establishing and operating national human rights institutions. The NHRC also serves as Lebanon's National Preventive Mechanism against Torture (Committee for the Prevention of Torture), in accordance with the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), to which Lebanon acceded under Law No. 12/2008.

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Executive Summary

This Annual Report provides a comprehensive assessment of the human rights situation in Lebanon during 2025, in light of the Lebanese State's constitutional and international obligations. It is based on an analysis of information drawn from multiple sources, including reports issued by international bodies and national and international human rights organizations, official data published by public authorities, and information collected by the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, through its field activities, the receipt of individual complaints, and the monitoring of issues of public concern.

The Report is presented against a complex political, economic, and social backdrop. During the reporting year, Lebanon elected a new President of the Republic. It formed a new Government, which pledged to launch a reform process aimed at restoring the effectiveness of State institutions, strengthening judicial independence, and addressing the repercussions of the economic and financial crisis that has persisted since 2019. Nevertheless, ongoing economic and social pressures, coupled with domestic and regional political and security tensions, directly affected the human rights situation and public institutions' capacity to protect fundamental rights adequately.

In the field of **civil and political rights**, the NHRC's monitoring revealed continuing challenges related to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the media. Throughout the year, several journalists, media professionals, and activists were summoned for questioning or investigated for comments or reports concerning corruption or the management of public affairs. Human rights reports also documented several incidents involving threats, intimidation, and assaults targeting journalists while carrying out their work. At the same time, the year witnessed several judicial decisions that strengthened the protection of freedom of expression, including rulings acquitting activists or dismissing proceedings against them in cases related to political or artistic expression. The findings indicate that the legal framework governing freedom of expression continues to generate considerable debate, particularly regarding the use of

criminal defamation provisions to prosecute media-related expression, as well as discussions surrounding the draft Media Law intended to modernize Lebanon's media legislation.

Regarding the **right to liberty and security of person**, cases involving arrest and detention continued to be recorded, including arrests pursuant to judicial warrants and the detention of persons who had entered Lebanon irregularly. The year also saw several kidnapping and unlawful detention incidents in certain areas, with security forces successfully rescuing victims and referring suspects to the competent judicial authorities in several cases. Through its complaints mechanism, the NHRC received several reports concerning detention conditions and loss of contact with detainees. The Commission engaged with the relevant judicial and security authorities to verify the legal basis for detention and ensure compliance with procedural safeguards under Lebanese law and international treaties.

In the area of **preventing torture and ill-treatment**, available information demonstrated the continuing need to strengthen prevention and accountability mechanisms. During the year, several important judicial decisions reaffirmed the inadmissibility of investigations conducted in violation of the legal safeguards established under the Code of Criminal Procedure, particularly the suspect's right to legal counsel during the preliminary investigation. A landmark judicial ruling holding the Lebanese State liable for damages suffered by a victim of torture in a well-known case also marked a significant step toward judicial recognition of violations and the provision of redress to victims. At the same time, these developments underscored the need to strengthen the independence of investigations further and ensure accountability for perpetrators of torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law.

Regarding **access to justice**, 2025 continued to highlight challenges affecting the administration of justice in Lebanon, particularly in major cases of national significance. The investigation into the Beirut Port explosion witnessed renewed judicial activity, including the resumption of investigative proceedings and the summoning of several officials. However, ongoing procedural obstacles and the refusal of certain individuals to

appear before the investigating authorities contributed to delays in the investigation's progress. Other cases involving homicide and serious assaults also experienced varying judicial developments. At the same time, several files remained pending because of issues relating to the composition of judicial panels or the lack of quorum in certain exceptional courts. These developments illustrate the continuing structural challenges facing the Lebanese judiciary regarding human and logistical resources and the preservation of judicial independence.

Concerning the **right to life and physical integrity**, several cases of homicide and violent assaults resulting from personal disputes and local conflicts were recorded during the year. The persistent practice of celebratory gunfire also continued to pose a serious threat to civilian safety. Certain regions experienced isolated security incidents and limited armed clashes, which in some cases resulted in casualties and required intervention by the security and military forces to restore order. Available security data indicate the need for more effective policies to combat the proliferation of illicit firearms and strengthen measures to prevent community violence.

In **personal status**, 2025 saw several judicial and legislative developments reflecting the ongoing debate over regulating civil marriage and personal status matters in Lebanon. Certain courts issued decisions on registering civil marriages concluded abroad, while new legislation or amendments to the personal status laws of certain religious communities were also enacted. These developments illustrate the continuing divergence between Lebanon's confessional personal status system and growing demands for an optional civil personal status law.

With respect to **economic, social, and cultural rights**, the prolonged economic and financial crisis continued to undermine living standards and the enjoyment of fundamental rights. Declining purchasing power, rising unemployment, and increasing poverty significantly affected many households' ability to meet basic needs, including food, housing, healthcare, and education. Challenges also persisted in providing essential public services, particularly in the electricity, municipal, and healthcare sectors. International organizations estimate that a significant proportion of the

population continues to live below the poverty line or faces serious difficulties in accessing basic services.

Within this context, particular challenges continued to affect **groups in vulnerable situations**, including refugees, migrant workers, children, women, and persons with disabilities. Human rights organizations documented the ongoing difficulties faced by refugees in accessing essential services, employment, and education, as well as cases concerning the living and working conditions of migrant workers. These findings demonstrate the continuing need for more inclusive social policies and stronger social protection systems that can guarantee minimum economic and social rights for the most vulnerable groups.

Throughout 2025, the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, continued to fulfill its mandate to monitor the human rights situation, receive individual complaints, and follow up on matters of public concern. Data derived from complaints and notifications received during the year indicate that the Commission handled **83 cases**, including **15 documented cases** and **9 complaints** that met the admissibility requirements for formal registration. These cases covered a broad range of human rights violations and risks. Matters relating to arrest, detention, and judicial proceedings constituted the largest category, including allegations of ill-treatment during detention, arrests carried out pursuant to judicial warrants, prolonged pre-trial detention, and airport detentions resulting from arrest warrants or mistaken identity. Family-related disputes and threats of violence also featured prominently, including death threats and serious domestic conflicts. One case involved online harassment and extortion, reflecting the growing digital dimension of violations affecting privacy and human dignity. The Commission also received one complaint concerning alleged sexual offenses committed outside Lebanon, as well as a case involving the humanitarian and social circumstances of a migrant worker seeking assistance due to deteriorating living conditions. The data further show that approximately one-third of all cases involved foreign nationals or dual nationals, highlighting the cross-border nature of certain complaints concerning detention and

legal disputes. The NHRC's institutional responses included follow-up with competent authorities, requests for official information, referrals to appropriate judicial or administrative mechanisms, and registration of correspondence for follow-up where evidence or jurisdictional requirements had yet to be established. These indicators reflect the NHRC's expanding role as a national mechanism for receiving complaints and monitoring violations amid the increasing diversity of cases involving detention-related violations, social and humanitarian risks, and digital rights violations, underscoring the need to strengthen legal protection mechanisms and institutional coordination to ensure effective responses.

As part of its **work**, the Committee carried out an extensive program of visits to places of detention during the year. The Committee conducted **60 documented visits and attempted visits**, including **12 visits** to prisons, central holding facilities, and specialized detention centers, such as Baabda Women's Prison, Qobbeh Women's Prison, Dhour El Bacheq Juvenile Girls Rehabilitation Center, the Roumieh Juvenile Rehabilitation Center, the Central Holding Facility, the Tripoli Palace of Justice Holding Facility, the State Security Detention Center, and the General Security Holding Facility in Beirut, as well as **48 visits** to police stations, security units, detachments, and barracks in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Akkar, and Nabatieh. The visits also focused on particularly vulnerable groups, including women, juveniles, foreign nationals, refugees, and persons with serious physical or mental health conditions, to assess their detention conditions and ensure compliance with legal safeguards and international standards governing the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty.

These visits sought to evaluate detention conditions and their conformity with international standards, including the **United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)**, while monitoring the situation of detainees and prisoners and documenting any potential violations. The findings confirmed the persistence of challenges related to overcrowding and the need to improve healthcare services and living conditions within detention facilities, despite efforts undertaken by the competent authorities to address these issues.

Information derived from international cooperation activities and engagement with United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms indicates that the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, undertook an extensive program of institutional initiatives during the reporting period, comprising **at least 16 international activities and contributions**. These included official reports and written submissions, participation in conferences and workshops, awareness-raising initiatives, and the publication of reference materials. These efforts included two written submissions to United Nations mechanisms: one on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems and another contributing to the international discussion on interpreting Article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. The NHRC also participated in three international and regional events organized by institutions such as the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In addition, the NHRC published at least four reference materials and international reports concerning the work of National Preventive Mechanisms, the implementation of international obligations, and the role of national human rights institutions in addressing cross-border violations. At the institutional level, the NHRC held three high-level meetings with international partners, including the Delegation of the European Union and the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, and continued its engagement with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. The NHRC also participated in several initiatives organized by the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions, including cooperation in preparing and disseminating regional reference materials on human rights education and promoting exchanges of expertise among national institutions in the Arab region. A major institutional milestone was achieved in **November 2025**, when the NHRC submitted its application for international accreditation to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to obtain "**A Status**" accreditation in accordance with the Paris Principles. These developments reflect the NHRC's expanding presence within the international human rights community, its growing contribution to the development of international standards, and

its strengthened cooperation with the United Nations and regional partners in support of the protection of human rights and the prevention of torture in Lebanon.

In light of these findings, the Report concludes that the human rights situation in Lebanon during 2025 reflects a complex reality characterized by persistent structural challenges alongside limited opportunities for reform. On the one hand, the continuing economic and financial crisis remains a significant constraint on the State's ability to guarantee fundamental rights. At the same time, certain administrative and judicial practices still require closer alignment with international human rights standards. On the other hand, several judicial and institutional developments demonstrate the potential for gradual progress in accountability and the rule of law, provided the necessary political will and legislative and institutional reforms are sustained. Accordingly, the **National Human Rights Commission** emphasizes that strengthening the protection of human rights in Lebanon requires a comprehensive approach combining legislative and institutional reform, improvements in public administration, stronger judicial independence, and expanded social protection systems, together with the promotion of a human rights culture and the consolidation of accountability and transparency in public governance, thereby ensuring the protection of human dignity and the enjoyment of rights and freedoms by all individuals without discrimination.

Methodology

This Report is based on a multi-source analytical methodology, drawing on the principles applied by the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** and **National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)** in preparing human rights reports, in accordance with the **Paris Principles**. The methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive and objective assessment of the legal and practical human rights situation in Lebanon during 2025 by evaluating the extent to which the Lebanese State complies with international human rights standards and the degree to which national legislation, policies, and practices are aligned with those standards.

The preparation of the Report was guided by fundamental methodological principles, foremost among them credibility, impartiality, independence, and verification. Data were collected and analyzed using an evidence-based approach, with particular emphasis on multiple, corroborating sources to ensure accuracy and objectivity. Cross-verification was applied throughout the research process by comparing information obtained from different sources, including official sources, international reports, civil society documentation, and credible media reports.

Data collection involved reviewing a broad range of sources, including reports issued by the **United Nations system**, such as reports of the **Human Rights Council**, its Special Procedures, and the treaty bodies, as well as reports published by international and regional human rights organizations. The Report also draws upon reports and studies produced by Lebanese and international civil society organizations, together with official documents issued by the Lebanese authorities, including legislation, decrees, governmental decisions, administrative circulars, statements issued by the executive and legislative authorities, and relevant judicial decisions and jurisprudence.

The analytical process also included a review of academic studies and specialized legal publications, as well as reports and documents issued by the competent ministries, security agencies, and relevant national institutions. These materials were analyzed in light of Lebanon's constitutional and legal framework, its international obligations arising

from the human rights treaties to which it is a party, as well as the customary rules of international human rights law and, where appropriate, international humanitarian law.

The Report adopts a **human rights-based approach** to analyzing policies and practices, with particular emphasis on the principles of non-discrimination, equality, accountability, transparency, and participation. The analysis also takes into account the situation of groups particularly vulnerable to human rights violations, including women, children, persons with disabilities, refugees, displaced persons, and persons deprived of their liberty, with a view to assessing the extent to which public policies respond to their specific needs.

The Government evaluated policies and practices by analyzing official decisions, decrees, legislation, and administrative measures, and assessing their practical impact. The analysis covers several key human rights areas, including the rule of law and judicial independence, freedom of opinion and expression, the rights of women and children, the rights of refugees and displaced persons, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as conditions of detention and the prevention of torture and ill-treatment.

In accordance with the ethical standards governing the documentation of human rights violations and the preparation of human rights reports, this Report adopts the **principle of "Do No Harm"** as a fundamental principle guiding the collection, analysis, and publication of information. This principle requires taking every necessary precaution to avoid exposing individuals, communities, witnesses, or information sources to additional risks arising from the documentation process or the publication of information. Accordingly, sensitive information, particularly information relating to serious human rights violations, persons deprived of their liberty, and individuals belonging to groups at heightened risk, was handled with the utmost care. The Report also avoids including any information that could directly or indirectly reveal the identity of victims, witnesses, or whistleblowers unless their explicit consent was obtained after a careful assessment of the potential risks involved.

The Report also adheres to the **principle of source protection**, a core professional standard in monitoring and documenting human rights violations. Measures adopted for this purpose included safeguarding the confidentiality of information by withholding the identity of sources where necessary, using generalized descriptions, or omitting specific details that could reveal the identity of the individuals concerned. The reliability of information obtained from different sources was also carefully assessed, while cross-verification was undertaken whenever possible without exposing sources to additional risks. This approach seeks to strike an appropriate balance between the requirements of accuracy and transparency in reporting and the obligation to protect those who provide information concerning human rights violations.

The information-gathering process also adhered to the principle of **free, prior, and informed consent**, particularly where information was based on personal testimonies or witness statements. This involved ensuring that individuals provided information voluntarily and with a clear understanding of the purpose for which the information would be used, the nature of the Report, the identity of the institution preparing it, and the possibility that the information might be published in the Report or used in advocacy activities or international reporting. Participants were also informed of the options available to them, including the right to request anonymity or withdraw their consent to the use of their information at any stage of the Report's preparation. In cases involving persons in vulnerable situations, such as children, persons deprived of their liberty, or victims of violence, additional safeguards were implemented to ensure respect for their dignity and psychological well-being, in accordance with the ethical principles governing human rights work.

Based on this integrated analysis of the available data, the Report identifies the principal trends and key challenges affecting the human rights system in Lebanon during 2025, while highlighting positive legislative and institutional developments alongside the legal and institutional gaps that may hinder the effective protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

In light of this analysis, the Report sets out a series of conclusions concerning patterns of human rights violations and shortcomings in the implementation of Lebanon's international obligations. It also presents practical recommendations to strengthen the protection of human rights in Lebanon by developing the legislative and institutional framework, reinforcing accountability mechanisms, and improving the implementation of international human rights standards in a manner consistent with the national context.

Chapter One: Human Rights Violations and Violations of International Humanitarian Law in Lebanon during 2025

I. Civil and Political Rights

In January 2025, the Lebanese Parliament elected former Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General Joseph Aoun, as President of the Republic. Judge Nawaf Salam was subsequently designated to form a new Government and assumed the office of Prime Minister. Both leaders declared their commitment to launching a "new phase" for Lebanon, centered on judicial and economic reform and the strengthening of public institutions.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), including the Committee for the **Prevention of Torture**, called on the new Government to make addressing Lebanon's human rights crisis a fundamental national priority and to work to break the cycle of violations, strengthen the rule of law, and restore public confidence in State institutions. The NHRC emphasized that the next phase requires adopting a comprehensive reform agenda focused on strengthening national human rights institutions, implementing effective measures to prevent torture, safeguarding freedom of expression, and promoting economic and social rights.

The NHRC also presented the new Government with a set of human rights priorities, including strengthening the implementation of the recommendations issued by the international human rights treaty bodies; protecting freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly; ensuring the rights of migrants and refugees; facilitating the return of internally displaced persons; combating gender-based violence and discrimination; promoting economic and social rights; and taking gradual steps toward the abolition of the death penalty.¹

¹ National Human Rights Commission: The New Government Must Prioritize Human Rights and the Prevention of Torture," 14 January 2025. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/en/archives/5279>

Freedom of Opinion and Expression

Throughout 2025, criminal defamation provisions continued to be used to prosecute journalists and activists in Lebanon, particularly those publishing investigative reports on financial corruption and mismanagement in the public and banking sectors.

In **February 2025**, journalist **Omar Harkous** was summoned for questioning in connection with his journalistic work for the independent platform *Naqd*. During the same period, journalists from the newspaper *Al Hurra* were also summoned before the Public Prosecutor's Office. These actions drew widespread criticism from human rights organizations, which argued that such practices constitute indirect media censorship.

On **20 February 2025**, Lebanese journalist **Dima Sadek** was subjected to a campaign of incitement and threats through WhatsApp messages and telephone calls. The threats included accusations of treason and explicit threats in response to political views she had expressed on her account on the social media platform *X*, prompting her to delete the disputed post.

An incident involving violence against journalists during field reporting was also recorded. On **19 March 2025**, journalist **Lina Ismail**, a correspondent for *An-Nahar* newspaper in Baalbek, was physically and verbally assaulted while covering the entry of the Lebanese Armed Forces into the border town of **Hawsh Al Sayyid Ali**. Individuals forcibly confiscated her mobile phone and prevented her from continuing her journalistic work.

On **8 September 2025**, Lebanese television presenter **Walid Abboud** received a written threat left outside his residence containing threats of abduction, torture, and assassination. The incident raised serious concerns regarding the safety and security of journalists and media professionals in Lebanon and underscored the need to provide them with effective protection.

Freedom of Opinion and Expression

In **April 2025**, several journalists were summoned for questioning, including **Hazem El Amin**, Editor-in-Chief of the *Daraj* media platform, and journalist **Jana Barakat**, in connection with criminal defamation complaints arising from investigative reports concerning alleged financial misconduct in the banking sector. Journalists from the *Daraj* and *Megaphone* platforms were also summoned, along with **Diana Menhem**, Executive Director of the civil society organization *Kulluna Irada*, following criminal complaints accusing these media outlets and the organization of publishing information allegedly intended to "undermine confidence in the national economy" or "damage the State's financial standing."

Some of these complaints were filed by the Chairman of the Board of one of Lebanon's major banks in response to media reports examining the banking sector's performance during the financial crisis that began in 2019. Groups of lawyers also filed complaints against the media outlets and the civil society organization, alleging offenses such as incitement to sectarian strife, weakening national sentiment, undermining the prestige of the State, and encouraging depositors to withdraw their funds from banks. This pattern reflects the increasing reliance on criminal defamation provisions and alleged financial offenses to pursue legal action against critical speech and investigative journalism, raising serious concerns about the impact of these practices on freedom of expression and independent journalism in Lebanon.

Throughout **2025**, public debate continued over Lebanon's proposed new **Media Law**, amid warnings from human rights and media organizations that certain proposed amendments could restrict, rather than strengthen, freedom of expression. Fourteen Lebanese and international human rights organizations called on the Lebanese Parliament to ensure that the proposed legislation complies with international human rights standards. They stressed the need to decriminalize defamation, insult, and contempt offenses, including those relating to criticism of public officials; prohibit pre-trial detention in cases involving peaceful expression; and remove restrictive requirements governing the establishment of media outlets.

The organizations also expressed concern over proposed amendments that could reintroduce pre-trial detention and impose additional restrictions on media organizations, including prohibiting media coverage of disputes under judicial consideration and requiring prior licensing for online media outlets. They warned that these amendments could expand media censorship and suppress criticism of public authorities, and called on Parliament to adopt a Media Law that strengthens the protection of freedom of expression and freedom of the press while ensuring transparency throughout the legislative process.

On **28 March 2025**, **Judge Abir Safa**, the Single Criminal Judge in Beirut, issued a judgment dismissing all charges against activist **Khodr Anwar** in the case commonly referred to as the "**Foreign Ministry Graffiti**" case. The charges stemmed from his writing protest slogans on a wall belonging to the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on **20 October 2023**, in objection to the reception of a representative of a State supporting the Israeli military operations in Gaza.

In its ruling, the Court held that the acts attributed to the defendant did not constitute the offenses of rioting, vandalism, or criminal defamation. It found that the slogans were written in the context of peaceful protest and constituted an expression of political and humanitarian dissent, without the requisite criminal intent to establish the alleged offenses.

This case is particularly significant from a human rights perspective, as it reaffirms the protection of **freedom of expression** and the **right to peaceful protest**. It also highlights the risks of using detention and criminal prosecution in response to political protest, particularly given that the activist was detained for one week before being released.²

On **12 September 2025**, the **Permanent Military Court in Beirut** acquitted comedian **Noor Hajjar** and producer **Danny Abou Jaoudeh** of the charge of damaging the

² The Legal Agenda, "Judgment in the 'Foreign Ministry Graffiti' Case: Protesting Genocide Is Not a Crime," by Ali Swaidan, 5 April 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/IgKLCne>

reputation of the military institution. The case arose from a satirical video depicting the difficult economic conditions faced by some members of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

The Court held that the video constituted a work of satirical comedy and did not contain insulting or derogatory statements capable of constituting the offense of contempt under **Article 157 of the Code of Military Justice**. The ruling found that the content fell within the scope of protected artistic expression rather than criminal conduct.

This case is particularly significant in light of the ongoing debate over prosecuting comedians and artists for their satirical works. It represents an important judicial acknowledgment of the need to distinguish between artistic or satirical criticism, which is protected under the right to freedom of expression, and conduct that may amount to criminal defamation or contempt under the law. At the same time, the prosecution of civilians before military courts continues to raise significant human rights concerns regarding the guarantees of a fair trial and the principle that the jurisdiction of military courts should be limited to military personnel.³

The case concerning the protection of the **Mediterranean monk seal cave** in **Amchit** took a significant turn during **2025**, as peaceful environmental activism became the subject of criminal proceedings. On **17 December 2025**, journalist and environmental activist **Saadeh Saadeh**⁴ was summoned for questioning by the Criminal Investigation Department at the Palace of Justice in Beirut following a complaint alleging criminal defamation and threats.

The summons came after Saadeh had led a public campaign to protect the cave, which serves as a rare habitat for the endangered **Mediterranean monk seal**. As part of the campaign, he undertook a **ten-day hunger strike**, calling for the suspension of construction works on the property above the site until an **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** had been conducted.

³ Lynn Ayoub, "Acquittal for Comedian Noor Hajjar: The 'Toters' Joke Does Not Harm the Reputation of the Army," *The Legal Agenda*, 10 December 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/P8LiVjq>

⁴ Megaphone, "Criminal Investigation Department Summons the Monk Seal Cave Activists," 17 December 2025, available at: <https://youtube.com/shorts/iZ3dHDGzTlk>

During the investigation, Saadeh denied all allegations brought against him. He was subsequently released upon signing a written undertaking not to contact or approach the complainant.

The case sparked widespread debate over the use of criminal defamation proceedings to exert pressure on environmental defenders. Civil society and environmental organizations emphasized that protecting natural resources and endangered habitats constitutes a matter of public interest and that individuals advocating for their protection should not be subjected to criminal prosecution or judicial intimidation.

The **interim judicial order** issued on **10 December 2025**, prohibiting education activist **Haroun Farhat** from publishing material concerning officials of the Ministry of Education, constitutes a troubling example of the expanding use of summary proceedings to impose **prior restraints on freedom of expression**.

The decision is particularly concerning because, according to the legal analysis published in relation to the case, it was issued **without adequate reasoning, without allowing the respondent to exercise the right of defense**, and in broad and absolute terms prohibiting any future publication. Such an approach is inconsistent with the principle prohibiting **prior censorship** of publication and with the principle of **proportionality** governing restrictions on fundamental rights.

The implications of the decision are further heightened by the fact that the case concerns allegations of corruption within a public sector institution, placing it squarely within the scope of the **right to accountability** and the **public's right to access information**.

Accordingly, this case reflects a judicial trend that poses a threat to freedom of expression, particularly where judicial measures are used to deter whistleblowers and activists rather than to protect them.⁵

⁵ Rana Saghie, "Judicial Decision Barring an Education Activist from Publishing: Five Reasons Revealing the Risks to Freedom of Expression," *The Legal Agenda*, 16 December 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/ITVvs4M>

The decision taken against tobacco farmer **Ahmad Ismail**, suspending or freezing his tobacco cultivation license, as well as the licenses of other farmers cultivating land under his guarantee, raises serious concerns regarding the protection of **freedom of expression** and the legal safeguards that should govern administrative decisions affecting individuals' livelihoods.

According to the available information, the measure was adopted following statements made by the farmer alleging corruption within the **Régie Libanaise des Tabacs et Tombacs (Lebanese Tobacco and Tobacco Monopoly Administration)**. This raises concerns that the action may have been a punitive measure taken in retaliation for exercising the right to freedom of expression, as guaranteed under **Article 13 of the Lebanese Constitution** and **Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**.

Questions have also been raised about the legality of the decision, particularly the authority competent to issue it, in light of the legal framework governing the granting of tobacco cultivation licenses and the limited circumstances under which such licenses may be suspended or revoked.

The seriousness of the measure is further heightened by the direct link between the cultivation license and the farmer's **right to work** and **means of livelihood**. Consequently, any decision of this nature should be subject to strict judicial scrutiny to ensure that it does not become a means of restricting fundamental rights or an instrument of administrative retaliation.⁶

On **30 June 2025**, a legal controversy arose in Lebanon after the Criminal Investigation Department summoned journalists **Beshara Charbel** and **Karen Abd Al Nour** over a newspaper article on financial appointments. The two journalists refused to appear before the judicial police, maintaining that, under the **Publications Law**, jurisdiction over

⁶ Manateq.net, "Investigative Video: Interview with Tobacco Farmer Ahmad Ismail on the Situation of Tobacco Farmers in South Lebanon and Allegations of Bribery within the Lebanese Tobacco and Tobacco Monopoly Administration", available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1Gg2tGDMj8>

publication-related offenses lies exclusively with the **Publications Court**. The summons also prompted objections from media organizations and journalists' associations, which argued that it violated due process, particularly because the journalists were notified orally outside official working hours and were not informed of the reasons for the summons. The incident once again raised concerns about respect for the legal safeguards protecting freedom of expression and journalistic practice in Lebanon.

On **4 July 2025**, debate resumed in Lebanon regarding the authority of the Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate journalists following a series of summonses issued to several media professionals, including **Karen Abd Al Nour** and **Beshara Charbel** of *Al Hurra* newspaper, as well as **Anthony Barakat** and **Talin Nahra** of the *Naqd* platform, in connection with published journalistic content. These summonses drew criticism from journalists and media organizations, which argued that prosecutions relating to publication offenses should remain within the exclusive jurisdiction of the **Publications Court**, as provided by the **Publications Law**, and that requiring journalists to appear before security agencies or public prosecutors is inconsistent with the legal framework governing publication-related offenses. Media organizations further warned that the repeated use of such measures could have a chilling effect on **freedom of expression** and **press freedom** in Lebanon.⁷

On **23 July 2025**, a new case further underscored the ongoing legal debate in Lebanon over which authority can investigate journalists in publication-related cases. Sports journalist **Ibrahim Abou Chahine** asserted his right not to appear before the **Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Rights Bureau** for questioning over social media posts alleging corruption in the sports sector, following a complaint filed by **Michel Abi Ramia**.

Supported by his legal counsel and several media organizations, Abou Chahine maintained that, pursuant to the **Publications Law**, the **Publications Court** has exclusive jurisdiction over publication-related offenses, rather than security agencies or the Public Prosecutor's Office.

⁷ The Legal Agenda, "New Summonses Renew the Debate over the Authority of Public Prosecutors to Investigate Journalists," 4 July 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/ZnBgfoZ>

The matter ultimately concluded with the Public Prosecutor's Office withdrawing the summons and referring the complaint to the **Publications Court**, a development widely regarded as an important affirmation of the principle of protecting **press freedom** and the independence of journalistic work.

This case forms part of a broader pattern of summonses issued to journalists in Lebanon in recent years, renewing calls for strict adherence to the legal framework governing publication-related offenses and for ensuring that criminal investigations or **pre-trial detention** are not used as instruments of pressure against journalists or as means of restricting **freedom of expression**.⁸

On **25 September 2025**, journalist **Joelle Abdel Aal** was summoned to appear before the **Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Rights Bureau** for questioning in connection with a criminal defamation complaint arising from an investigative report on the **kafala (sponsorship) system**. The summons drew widespread criticism from media and human rights organizations, which argued that it contravened the safeguards enshrined in the **Publications Law**, particularly **Articles 28 and 29 of Legislative Decree No. 104/1977**, which confer exclusive jurisdiction over publication-related offenses on the Investigating Judge and the **Publications Court**. During the proceedings, Abdel Aal exercised her **right to remain silent**. She refused to sign any undertaking, a position widely regarded as a defense of the legal guarantees protecting press freedom and a rejection of the practice of subjecting journalists to questioning by security agencies outside the jurisdiction of the competent judicial authorities.

The summoning of **William Noun**, one of the leading representatives of the families of the victims of the **Beirut Port explosion**, for questioning before the Criminal Investigation Department on **18 August 2025** also sparked broad human rights debate concerning the scope of **freedom of expression** and the right of victims and their families to express their views on matters of public interest. Noun appeared for questioning and

⁸ The Legal Agenda, Lore Ayoub, "The Battle for Media Freedoms Continues: Sports Journalism Also Upholds the Publications Law," 23 July 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/f3t0aCL>

was subsequently released on his own recognizance, with no further measures taken against him.

The Right to Liberty and the Prohibition of Enforced Disappearance

The case of poet and political dissident Abdul Rahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi highlights the growing risks associated with regional security cooperation in the pursuit of political opponents and the serious human rights violations that may result from such cooperation. Al-Qaradawi was arrested in Lebanon on 28 December 2024 pursuant to a circulation notice issued by the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, before Lebanese authorities deported him to the United Arab Emirates on 8 January 2025 over allegations related to expressing political views on social media.

Since then, his fate and place of detention have remained unknown, with no regular communication with his family or lawyer, placing him in a situation that may amount to enforced disappearance under international law. The case also raises serious concerns regarding a potential violation of the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits transferring an individual to a state where they may face a risk of torture or inhuman treatment. The case further reflects a growing pattern of transnational repression, whereby mechanisms of interstate security cooperation are used to restrict freedom of expression and pursue political opponents beyond their countries' borders. Several United Nations experts and human rights organizations have called ⁹ for the immediate disclosure of al-Qaradawi's place of detention, guarantees for his safety, and his release, while stressing the need to uphold international fair trial standards and protect freedom of opinion and expression.

On 24 November 2025, several Special Rapporteurs and experts from the Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council addressed a communication to

⁹ Amnesty International, "Egypt: 200 Days Since the Enforced Disappearance of Abdul Rahman Yusuf: His Whereabouts Must Be Disclosed Immediately, His Safety Guaranteed, and He Must Be Released Immediately," Document No. MDE 12/0195/2025, 12 August 2025, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/documents/mde12/0195/2025/ar>

the Lebanese government concerning al-Qaradawi's case. The experts expressed concern over a potential violation of the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in the Convention against Torture, which prohibits states from transferring any person to a country where they may be at risk of torture or cruel treatment. They requested that the Lebanese government provide information on the extradition procedures and the safeguards put in place to protect his rights, as well as the measures it intends to take to follow up on his situation, ensure his physical and psychological safety, and safeguard his fundamental rights. Under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Lebanon acceded on 3 November 1972: "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedures as are established by law." Article 9 also establishes a fundamental safeguard against arbitrary detention: the right of anyone deprived of their liberty to bring proceedings before a court without delay to challenge the lawfulness of their detention, with the court empowered to order their release if the detention is unlawful. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has clarified that this right applies to all forms of detention, including detention in connection with criminal proceedings, military or security detention, and detention for counter-terrorism purposes.¹⁰

The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance of 2006 provides that: "No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification for enforced disappearance."

The year 2025 witnessed several incidents involving detention, abduction, or unlawful deprivation of liberty. On 19 March 2025, the Lebanese Army Intelligence Directorate succeeded in freeing two Syrian nationals who an armed gang in the Jamaliyeh–Baalbek area had abducted, following a security operation and intelligence surveillance.

¹⁰ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 35 (2014) on Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Liberty and Security of Person), para. 40.

In another incident, on 25 March 2025, the Lebanese Army Command announced the rescue of a Syrian minor who had been abducted in the town of Hawr Taala–Baalbek, with a ransom demanded in exchange for his release. The operation resulted in the arrest of the abductor’s wife and the seizure of a military-grade weapon and narcotics. At the same time, investigations continued to apprehend the other individuals involved.

On 27 March 2025, the Army Command also announced the arrest of 56 Syrian nationals on the outskirts of Aarsal–Baalbek for entering Lebanese territory irregularly, as part of operations to combat cross-border infiltration and smuggling.

On 10 April 2025, the Lebanese Army Command announced that a patrol from the Intelligence Directorate had succeeded in freeing a Syrian national who had been abducted from the town of Ain in the Baalbek District for ransom. The rescue followed a security operation in the al-Qasr–Hermel area along the Lebanese-Syrian border.

On 24 May 2025, the Lebanese Army Command announced that the Syrian authorities had handed over the individual identified as (A.N.), one of the suspects allegedly involved in the abduction and killing of Lebanese Forces Party coordinator Pascal Sleiman on 7 April 2024. The suspect was handed over to the Lebanese Army Intelligence Directorate to continue the judicial investigation.

Prohibition of Torture and Punishment of Perpetrators

Seven years after the serious violations suffered by theater actor Ziad Itani following the fabrication of charges against him in 2017 alleging collaboration with the Israeli enemy, the Lebanese Council of State issued a ruling on 5 December 2024 holding the Lebanese state liable for the harm he sustained as a result of serious administrative failings and ordering the government to pay him compensation of LBP 480 million.

The ruling was based on the failure and negligence of public authorities to take the necessary measures to prevent him from being subjected to torture, as well as their failure to safeguard the presumption of innocence and the confidentiality of the

investigation, and to initiate disciplinary and judicial investigations and proceedings against those responsible for the violations committed against him.

This ruling is particularly significant¹¹ as it establishes the principle of state responsibility for failing to fulfill its obligations to protect individuals while in detention and reaffirms Lebanon's obligations under the Convention against Torture and Law No. 65/2017. However, despite its judicial significance, the case highlights persistent shortcomings in mechanisms for accountability and the prevention of torture, underscoring the need to strengthen the legal and institutional safeguards necessary to prevent the recurrence of such violations in the future.

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, considered the ruling a landmark judicial development in the context of efforts to combat torture and curb impunity in Lebanon. While the ruling represents a positive step toward establishing the principle of state responsibility and providing redress to victims, it also highlights the urgent need to strengthen the implementation of Law No. 65/2017 on the criminalization of torture and to ensure independent and effective investigations into all allegations of torture, thereby contributing to a culture of accountability and preventing the recurrence of such violations in places of detention¹². Amnesty International described the ruling as “a rare victory for justice” that should pave the way toward ending the longstanding impunity for torture in Lebanon.¹³

On 6 February 2025, the Seventh Chamber of Lebanon's Criminal Court of Cassation issued a significant ruling invalidating the preliminary investigation in a criminal case

¹¹ The Legal Agenda – Judicial Observatory, “A Landmark Judicial Decision in the Itani Case: Shut Down the ‘Black Room’,” 10 March 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/Abj9GNa>

¹² National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (Lebanon), “Council of State Decision in the Ziad Itani Case: An Important Step Towards Accountability for Torture,” 9 March 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/4804>

¹³ Amnesty International, “Lebanon: Landmark Council of State Ruling Must Mark a Turning Point in Efforts to End Impunity for Torture,” 2 March 2025, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/latest/news/2025/03/lebanon-landmark-shura-council-decision-must-mark-a-turning-point-in-ending-impunity-for-torture/>

due to non-compliance with Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure concerning safeguards for the rights of the defense. The Court held that failure to inform the suspect of his fundamental rights—particularly his right to contact a person of his choice and to seek the assistance of a lawyer before the commencement of questioning—as well as failure to record compliance with this requirement in the investigation report, constituted a fundamental violation rendering the entire report null and void, rather than merely the statement recorded therein. The Court further held that all subsequent proceedings connected to that report were likewise invalid.

This ruling is particularly significant because it was issued by Lebanon’s highest criminal judicial authority, thereby establishing a clear judicial approach requiring judicial police officers and public prosecution offices to comply strictly with the safeguards set out in Article 47, as amended by Law No. 191/2020. It further affirms that compliance with these safeguards is an essential condition for the validity of preliminary investigations and for protecting the rights of the defense from the very outset of detention or questioning of suspects.¹⁴

Right of Access to Justice

In 2025, more than five years after the Beirut port explosion of 4 August 2020—which killed over 200 people, injured thousands, and devastated large parts of the capital—the pursuit of justice and truth for the victims and their families continued to face significant challenges. Nevertheless, the judicial investigation saw a notable development during the year, when the judicial investigator in the case, Judge Tarek Bitar, resumed proceedings after a prolonged period of obstruction.

On 16 January 2025, Judge Bitar summoned ten employees and security officials in connection with the case. He also held questioning sessions with other Lebanese

¹⁴ The Legal Agenda, Ali Sweidan, “Court of Cassation Establishes the Principle of Invalidating Investigations for Violations of Article 47,” 16 July 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/tWZCUZp>

officials during the following months.¹⁵ In March 2025, the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation revoked a previous decision prohibiting the security services and the Public Prosecution from cooperating or corresponding with Judge Bitar, thereby allowing institutional communication concerning the investigation to resume.

Some of the officials summoned for questioning complied and appeared before the judicial investigator for the first time in years. Others, however, continued to refuse to appear, perpetuating the challenges to completing the investigation and uncovering the full circumstances surrounding the explosion.

The Court of Cassation's decision of 20 March 2025 to transfer the investigation into the assassination of writer and political activist Lokman Slim represents a significant judicial development in the case. The Court transferred the proceedings from Beirut's Acting First Investigating Judge to another judge, finding that the proper administration of justice required the investigation to be completed in accordance with due process. The case had previously been provisionally closed before essential steps were completed, including receipt of the requested international expert opinion and submission of the Public Prosecution's observations. The decision underscores the need to respect procedural safeguards in criminal investigations to ensure effective justice, protect litigants' rights, and reduce the risk of impunity in serious cases—particularly political assassinations, which remain among the foremost challenges facing the justice system in Lebanon.¹⁶

On 13 August 2025, the Tleil explosion case returned to public attention on the fourth anniversary of the disaster, which killed 36 people and injured more than 80. The pursuit of justice remained stalled because the Judicial Council had lacked a complete bench since February 2024. This disruption was particularly significant because the trial had reached an advanced stage before being suspended: the Council had questioned all

¹⁵ National News Agency (Lebanon), "Bitar Again Charges Three Port Employees and Seven Senior Officers from the Army, General Security, and Customs," 16 January 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/hXMMZ1v>

¹⁶ Ali Sweidan, "Court of Cassation Decision Transfers the Investigation File in the Lokman Slim Assassination Case: An Objective Condemnation of Violations of Investigative Procedures," *The Legal Agenda*, 9 May 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/GQu8bKY>

eight defendants and suspects and heard several witnesses, making the subsequent delay even more distressing for the victims' families and those injured.

This situation prompted the families to relocate their annual vigil from Akkar to the Beirut Palace of Justice to draw attention to their case and renew pressure to complete the necessary judicial appointments. The case starkly illustrates how vacancies within judicial bodies undermine victims' right to justice and an effective remedy, particularly when administrative or institutional paralysis brings proceedings in a case of such magnitude and gravity to a standstill.¹⁷

On 7 October 2025, amendments were adopted to the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Lawyers, particularly Articles 38–41 governing lawyers' relations with the media. These amendments followed controversy over earlier provisions adopted in 2023 that restricted lawyers' participation in the media.

Although the Bar Association Council withdrew the requirement to obtain prior authorization before engaging with the media, it introduced new regulatory restrictions that raised legal concerns regarding their compatibility with the Law Regulating the Legal Profession and constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression. The principal concerns included lawyers' ability to participate in media discussions concerning cases pending before the courts. The amendments also imposed controls on lawyers' media appearances and use of digital platforms and reinforced the prohibition of conduct that could be considered professional publicity or advertising.¹⁸

On 16 June 2025, Margaret Satterthwaite, the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, and Irene Khan, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, sent a communication to the Lebanese government urging it to take the necessary measures to protect the independence of lawyers. They also called for the withdrawal of a circular issued by the Tripoli Bar Association on 6 May

¹⁷ The Legal Agenda, Laure Ayoub, "Fourth Anniversary of the Tleil Explosion: Justice Stalled Pending the Appointment of the Judicial Council's Members," 13 August 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/ZLNhE4Q>

¹⁸ The Legal Agenda, "2025 Amendments to the Code of Legal Ethics: Reversing One Serious Error While Introducing Another," 24 October 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/gSp1Kp4>

2025 prohibiting lawyers from “appearing in any form of media or on social media platforms before obtaining authorization from the President of the Bar Association, pursuant to Article 39 of the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Lawyers.” The circular further required lawyers to “respect the judiciary and judicial police and refrain from attacking them by any means, under penalty of professional and disciplinary liability.”

The communication followed a submission made in May 2025 by the Cedar Center for Legal Studies concerning escalating intimidation campaigns and disciplinary proceedings against lawyers Mohammad Sabloun and Khaled Al-Sabbagh in connection with their human rights work.

In the context of monitoring the structural challenges obstructing efforts to combat impunity in Lebanon, the Tripoli Bar Association initiated proceedings challenging the judges of its own disciplinary court under Article 751 of the Code of Civil Procedure. The proceedings sought to remove the Bar’s disciplinary court from hearing an appeal against a decision to strike a lawyer from the general roll. Given that the General Assembly of the Court of Cassation has lacked the required quorum since 2022, this measure allowed the proceedings to be suspended indefinitely. It thereby transformed an exceptional mechanism intended to address serious judicial misconduct into a tool for obstructing justice and shielding decisions from judicial review.

This practice raises serious concerns that such proceedings may be used to reinforce impunity and undermine the right of access to a court, particularly when initiated by institutions expected to play a central role in safeguarding judicial independence and upholding the rule of law.¹⁹

Judicial decisions dismissing proceedings against several officers accused of illicit enrichment and money laundering on statute-of-limitations grounds raise serious

¹⁹ Nizar Saghie, “Tripoli Bar Association Exploits Tools of Impunity Instead of Combating Them: Paralyzing the Bar’s Disciplinary Court through Article 751,” *The Legal Agenda – Judicial Observatory*, 7 February 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/83c9iIoffensesc>

concerns regarding efforts to combat corruption and strengthen accountability in Lebanon. In February 2025, Beirut's Acting First Investigating Judge issued decisions barring the prosecution of several officers holding the rank of brigadier general or above over allegations that they had accepted bribes to facilitate students' admission to the Military Academy. The decisions were based on the finding that illicit enrichment constituted a misdemeanor subject to a three-year limitation period under the former law.

This approach raises concerns that limitation periods may be used in practice as a legal mechanism to obstruct corruption-related prosecutions, even though the Illicit Enrichment Law, as amended in 2020, expressly provides that such offenses are not subject to any statute of limitations. Continued reliance on a restrictive interpretation of limitation rules risks undermining efforts to combat corruption and strengthen accountability while entrenching a climate of impunity for offenses involving abuse of authority and misappropriation of public funds.²⁰

The Court of Audit's report covering the years 2020–2024 reflected a notable shift toward strengthening its broader public role and ex post oversight through special reports addressing matters of public concern and vital sectors. This contrasted with a marked decline in the Court's performance of its core judicial function of auditing the accounts of public bodies, municipalities, and institutions subject to its oversight.²¹

The report highlights positive steps, including the resumption of work on final budget accounts and the expansion of proceedings against ministers for financial violations. Conversely, it reveals the near-total absence of judicial oversight over the accounts of more than 100 public bodies during the five years, as well as a significant decline in the number of final judicial decisions issued against public officials compared with previous

²⁰ The Legal Agenda – Judicial Observatory, “What Does It Mean to Bar the Prosecution of Officers for Illicit Enrichment on the Grounds that the Statute of Limitations Has Expired?”, 1 February 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/5J9s2JN>

²¹ Court of Audit of the Lebanese Republic, *Annual Report for the Years 2020–2024*, 2 July 2025, available on the Court of Audit's official website at: <https://www.coa.gov.lb/ar/reports/290>

years.²² Moreover, the lengthy delays in issuing periodic reports diminished their timeliness and oversight effectiveness. These findings reflect a structural dysfunction in the regular performance of the Court of Audit's mandate, whereby its public-facing role expanded at the expense of its core institutional responsibilities of accountability and systematic financial auditing.

Right to Life and Physical Integrity

The year 2025 marked a qualitative development in Lebanon's approach to the death penalty, as the debate shifted from a longstanding human rights issue to a clear and institutionalized legislative process. This was reflected in the introduction, on 25 September 2025, of a draft law seeking to abolish the death penalty entirely from the criminal justice system. This development arose within Lebanon's distinctive context: a de facto moratorium on executions has been in place since 2004, despite the death penalty remaining prescribed by law, creating a divergence between legislation and practice.²³

The bill submitted to Parliament²⁴ reflects an explicit move to abolish the death penalty wherever it appears in Lebanese legislation and replace it with the next most severe applicable penalties. It also provides that persons already sentenced to death may benefit from the new law, reflecting a reform-oriented approach intended to address existing cases rather than merely amend the law prospectively.

The bill's explanatory memorandum sets out several grounds for abolition, emphasizing the global trend toward ending the death penalty and Lebanon's particular circumstances, in which no execution has been carried out for more than two decades.

²² The Legal Agenda, "The Court of Audit's Five-Year Report (2020–2024): Expanding Its Social Role While Neglecting Institutional Mandates," 6 November 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/XLxlxdU>

²³ Lebanese Parliament, *Proposed Law to Abolish the Death Penalty in Lebanon, Accompanied by Its Explanatory Memorandum*, Beirut, 25 September 2023 (official document signed by several members of Parliament), copy on file with the Commission, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/5043>

²⁴ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, "Towards the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Lebanon" 21 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/160-68e7861070f43427971397.pdf>

This legislative process reached a decisive stage on 20 November 2025, when the Council of Ministers considered the bill and issued a detailed written opinion supporting the complete abolition of the death penalty—an unprecedented step by the executive branch. This position drew on two opinions issued by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Affairs, both of which affirmed that abolition would be consistent with Lebanon’s international obligations and with the evolution of criminal justice toward a reformatory, rehabilitation-based approach.

The letter Prime Minister Judge Nawaf Salam addressed to Parliament marked a pivotal moment in this process. It presented a comprehensive case for abolition, describing the issue as more than a mere legislative amendment and framing it instead as a civilizational choice reflecting the state’s commitment to protecting the right to life. The letter also stressed that retaining the death penalty in law, despite its non-enforcement for many years, perpetuates a legal inconsistency that should be addressed through its explicit and comprehensive abolition.

It further emphasized that abolition does not entail leniency toward serious crimes. Rather, it requires developing alternative criminal justice policies that address the root causes of crime, including poverty, marginalization, and broader social factors. It also affirmed that the most severe alternative penalty must ensure justice and protect society without resorting to an irreversible punishment.²⁵

In parallel, this process reflects a shift in Lebanon’s position within the international debate on the death penalty. In recent years, Lebanon has voted in favor of United Nations resolutions calling for a moratorium on executions, demonstrating its gradual alignment with the global trend toward abolition. Until 2025, however, this alignment remained confined to political and diplomatic practice and had not been translated into binding legislation.

²⁵ Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic, letter from the Prime Minister to the Speaker of Parliament concerning the bill to abolish the death penalty in Lebanon, including the Council of Ministers’ opinion supporting the bill and its annexes, Beirut, 20 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/The-Prime-Ministers-letter-to-the-House-of-Representatives-regarding-the-abolition-of-the-death-penalty.pdf>

Available information on the death penalty in Lebanon reveals an enduring structural contradiction between its retention in criminal legislation and the de facto suspension of executions for more than two decades. Since the last execution was carried out in 2004, Lebanon has maintained an undeclared moratorium, placing it in a transitional position between retentionist states and those moving toward abolition.

The report entitled *Distribution of Current Prisoners by Sentence Length, Category and Type of Offense*²⁶, issued by the Ministry of Justice's Directorate of Prisons and printed on 27 January 2026, indicates that 85 prisoners were under a death sentence as of the end of 2025.

Lebanon continues to retain the death penalty within its legislative framework. It is prescribed under the Penal Code and other legislation, including the Military Justice Code and certain special laws. According to the available data, the Penal Code prescribes the death penalty for 19 offenses, while the broader legal framework contains more than 41 statutory provisions permitting its imposition for approximately 20 offenses. These provisions are distributed across the Penal Code and the Military Justice Code, with a limited number contained in special legislation. These include one provision in Law No. 673 of 16 March 1998 concerning narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and chemical precursors, and two provisions in Law No. 64 of 12 August 1988 concerning the protection of the environment from pollution caused by hazardous waste and harmful substances.

Judicial trends over the past decade, however, reveal a marked decline in the number of death sentences imposed. The number fell from 28 in 2015 to only two in 2024, reflecting greater judicial restraint in resorting to this punishment. This trajectory, together with the available data for 2025, indicates that no new death sentences were

²⁶ Lebanese Ministry of Justice, Directorate of Prisons, *Report on the Distribution of Current Prisoners by Sentence Length, Category and Type of offense (Automated Prison Management System)*, containing statistical data and charts on the number and distribution of prisoners by sentence length, 27 January 2026, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Total-Number-of-Prisoners-under-death-sentence-Lebanon-2025.pdf>

imposed during that year, reinforcing the trend toward progressively limiting the use of the death penalty to the point of its near-total suspension in practice.

At the international level, Lebanon continues to engage partially with the global movement toward a moratorium on the death penalty. Since 2020, it has voted in favor of United Nations resolutions calling for a moratorium on executions and has partially accepted related recommendations through the Universal Periodic Review. This engagement nevertheless remains incomplete in the absence of a clear legislative measure abolishing the death penalty. With an abolition bill now introduced and under consideration at the highest levels, Lebanon appears to be approaching a decisive moment. Enacting the bill would move the country from a de facto moratorium to abolition in law, strengthen the coherence of its legal system, and affirm the right to life as a fundamental and non-derogable right.

Overall, 2025 may be regarded as a turning point in Lebanon's approach to the death penalty, as legislative and executive support converged with prevailing practice and international commitments to open the way for its definitive abolition. The challenge now lies in completing the process before Parliament and turning this momentum into an established legal rule that reflects Lebanon's legal development and its progress in protecting human rights.

Two bills introduced in the Lebanese Parliament in 2023 to increase the penalties for celebratory gunfire prompted debate over the limits of punitive approaches to protecting the rights to life and physical integrity. Although the bills responded to recurring casualties—including the death of the child Naya Hanna after a stray bullet struck her in August 2023—they focused primarily on increasing penalties and broadening the scope of criminalization, without relying on a clear evidence-based assessment of the effectiveness or implementation of the law in force since 2016.

This debate demonstrates that addressing indiscriminate gunfire requires more than harsher penalties. It also demands stronger law enforcement, the confiscation of unlicensed weapons, effective accountability, and preventive and awareness-raising

measures aimed at reducing the recurrence of these dangerous practices that threaten civilian lives.²⁷

Serious incidents affecting the rights to life and physical integrity were also recorded. On 28 January 2025, the body of a petrol station owner who had been killed after being subjected to torture was discovered in Mazraat Yachouh, Matn District. The victim was found bound inside the station's bathroom, with visible signs of torture. The security forces opened an investigation to determine the circumstances surrounding the crime.²⁸

The Internal Security Forces also documented a killing in Safra, where the body of a Lebanese national, born in 1964, was found on 21 January 2025 with a head injury caused by a blow. The suspect was arrested on 30 January 2025 after fleeing to Syria and confessed to committing the crime following a personal dispute.

On 4 February 2025, an Egyptian worker in his forties died following an altercation that escalated into a physical assault at a petrol station in the town of Feytroun, Keserwan, according to the National News Agency. The security forces opened an investigation into the incident.

On 1 September 2025, two people were killed and others injured during an armed clash inside the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in Sidon following a family dispute. Palestinian security forces subsequently intervened to contain the incident and handed the suspect over to Lebanese Army Intelligence. Several areas also witnessed shootings connected to personal disputes or local conflicts. These included the injury of a person during a land dispute in the Sir al-Dinniyeh area in late September 2025, as well as the stabbing of a Syrian national near a school in Zibdin, southern Lebanon, following an individual dispute.

²⁷ Ghida Frangieh, "Two Bills to Increase the Penalty for Firing into the Air: Is Legislation the Solution?", *The Legal Agenda*, 14 May 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/NjYsZBZ>

²⁸ Lebanese Center for Human Rights, *Human Rights Brief: 27 January–2 February 2025*, 4 February 2025, available at: [https://www.cldh-lebanon.org/HumanRightsBrie/513e7ced-1db1-40c5-9486-0c4b8a6f7f60_HR%20Brief%20\(January%2027%20to%20February%202\).pptx.pdf](https://www.cldh-lebanon.org/HumanRightsBrie/513e7ced-1db1-40c5-9486-0c4b8a6f7f60_HR%20Brief%20(January%2027%20to%20February%202).pptx.pdf)

Personal Status

In a notable judicial development in 2025, the Legal Affairs Department of the Lebanese Ministry of Justice, headed by Judge John Kazzi, affirmed the validity of a remote civil marriage concluded in 2022 between two Lebanese nationals before a public official in the US state of Utah. This position arose during consideration of whether to appeal the judgment issued on 22 May 2025 by Personal Status Judge Fatima Majed, which ordered the Directorate General of Personal Status to register the marriage²⁹. The judgment relied on Article 25 of Decision No. 60 L.R., which recognizes the validity of civil marriages concluded abroad, as well as constitutional principles derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly equality, freedom of belief, and the right to marry and found a family.

The Legal Affairs Department's submission also emphasized its independence in assessing judicial decisions issued against the state, finding that the interests of justice required implementing the judgment rather than appealing it. This resulted in the registration of the marriage and opened the way for registering other civil marriages concluded remotely.

On 24 June 2025, the Second Chamber of the Beirut Court of First Instance issued a judgment annulling a civil marriage concluded in Lebanon between two Lebanese nationals who had removed their sectarian affiliation from the civil registry. The Court held that they nevertheless remained affiliated with their respective religious communities and that civil marriage in Lebanon remained unavailable in the absence of legislation governing civil personal status.

At the same time, the Court applied the doctrine of "putative marriage" to preserve the legal status of the child born of the marriage. It prioritized the child's best interests when determining custody. The judgment has renewed debate over the limits of freedom of belief, the right to civil

²⁹ "State Litigation Authority Concedes the Validity of Online Civil Marriage: Judge Qazzi Affirms His Independence in Defending the State," *The Legal Agenda*, 21 November 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/uunEWTe>

marriage in Lebanon, and the judiciary's role in protecting fundamental rights amid legislative inaction.³⁰

In 2025, Lebanon enacted a new personal status law for the Sunni community, seeking to consolidate family-related provisions into a single legal text. These rules had previously been dispersed across several sources, principally the 1917 Ottoman Family Law, Hanafi jurisprudence, and decisions issued by the Higher Islamic Sharia Council.

The law constitutes the first comprehensive codification of Sunni personal status matters in a systematic written statute. It is expected to clarify the applicable legal framework and facilitate the work of Sharia judges by providing a unified text on which to base their judgments.

The law introduced amendments to several family-law matters, including raising the age of custody for girls to 14, regulating parental visitation rights, and restricting certain practices involving pressure on wives in divorce and custody proceedings.

Concerns were nevertheless raised about how the law was prepared. The process was largely non-participatory, with limited involvement of social stakeholders and civil society organizations in discussing its provisions and no broad public debate. This raises questions about law-making mechanisms within religious personal status systems and the extent to which they comply with standards of transparency and public participation.³¹

Freedom of Assembly and Association

The Council of Ministers' decision of 6 October 2025 to suspend the activities of the Risalat Association prompted legal debate over how Article 3 of the 1909 Law on Associations should be interpreted. The decision relied on an interpretation that grants the executive authority the power to dissolve associations by decree adopted by the Council of Ministers when their activities are considered unlawful or disruptive to public order. However, a legal analysis of the provision's history and legislative context

³⁰ Nizar Saghie and Lynn Ayoub, "Judgment Annuls a Civil Marriage Contracted on Lebanese Territory: 'Despite Removing Their Sectarian Registration, They Remain Affiliated with Their Respective Sects,'" *The Legal Agenda*, 12 July 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/GoYYDak>

³¹ The Legal Agenda, "A New Sunni Personal Status Law (1): Legislating a Missed Opportunity?", 13 November 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/Dvm8fgd>

indicates that its original purpose was to prohibit the establishment of associations pursuing unlawful objectives, rather than to confer broad administrative powers on the government to dissolve them. This expansive interpretation raises concerns about the widening of executive authority and the potential use of such powers in ways that infringe upon the constitutionally protected freedom of association.

On 9 April 2025, dozens of protesters in the town of Machghara in the Western Bekaa blocked the main road. They burned tires to protest prolonged electricity outages lasting several weeks, with no improvement in the supply schedule, according to the National News Agency. These protests reflected growing public discontent over the deterioration of essential services.

In July 2025, employees of the Mina Municipality in Tripoli declared an open-ended strike over delayed salary payments and organized sit-ins demanding improved living conditions. On 1 July 2025, the League of Public Administration Employees also declared a general strike across public administrations to protest the authorities' failure to address the substantial wage gap. On 6 October 2025, vegetable-stall vendors in Sidon held a sit-in outside the municipal building to protest a decision to remove their stalls under a plan to regulate popular markets, calling for alternative solutions that would preserve their livelihoods.

On 22 November 2025, Lebanon's Agroecology Coalition was launched. The initiative brings together environmental organizations, experts, and farmers to promote agroecology and food sovereignty as means of protecting the rights to food and a healthy environment. Its establishment came amid worsening economic and food crises that had made farmers increasingly vulnerable to the dominance of markets and agricultural corporations and weakened the capacity for sustainable local production. Participants stressed the need to reform agricultural policies to support local production and protect indigenous seed varieties and biodiversity. They also warned that certain draft laws regulating the seed trade could threaten the autonomy of local agricultural

production.³²

Right to Vote

The municipal and mukhtar elections held in Lebanon in 2025 marked a pivotal democratic milestone following years of repeated postponements. They were the first such elections since 2016. They took place after Parliament had repeatedly extended the mandates of municipal councils because of the political, economic, and security crises affecting the country.

The elections were held in an exceptionally complex national context characterized by an unprecedented economic collapse, declining trust in public institutions, and the continuing social and political repercussions of the 2019 crisis and the profound changes in Lebanese political life that followed. Regional and domestic security tensions also affected the overall electoral environment.

The 2025 municipal elections took place after repeated postponements beginning in 2022. They should have been held within the constitutionally prescribed timeframe, but the mandates of the municipal councils elected in 2016 were extended several times. These postponements raised widespread concerns about the erosion of Lebanon's democratic process, particularly at the local-government level, since municipal councils constitute a fundamental pillar of administrative decentralization and public participation in managing public affairs.

Civil society organizations—foremost among them the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE)—played a central role in monitoring the electoral process and documenting related irregularities and violations to promote transparency and accountability and safeguard electoral integrity.

³² Amani Al-Baini, "There Is Now Food for Everyone: Launch of a Coalition to Protect Agroecology," *The Legal Agenda*, 24 November 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/qUA5UE>

LADE's *2025 Municipal and Mukhtar Elections Monitoring Report* documented shortages of essential electoral materials, including voting booths and ballot boxes, as well as delays in opening some polling stations. It also identified disparities in the experience and competence of polling-station staff resulting from inadequate training, which led to procedural errors and legal irregularities in administering the voting process.

The report further documented instances in which polling-station officials permitted voters to cast their ballots using documents that did not comply with Ministry of Interior instructions, including expired passports and individual civil-status records. Such practices breached the legal procedures governing voting and revealed shortcomings in the practical application of electoral rules that could undermine public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.

The report also documented pressure and influence exerted on voters inside or near certain polling centers, including attempts to direct voters or affect their electoral choices. Observers recorded dozens of incidents involving pressure or intimidation, contrary to the principle of freedom of choice, which constitutes a fundamental basis of any electoral process.³³

Lebanon's municipal electoral process in May 2025 witnessed tensions and violations affecting journalists and candidates, including isolated confrontations and limited violence between supporters of competing electoral lists. Several incidents involving verbal altercations or clashes among voters and electoral representatives were documented, along with gatherings of partisan or armed individuals near certain polling centers. Such incidents risk undermining the conditions necessary for free participation in the electoral process.

On 12 May 2025, LBCI correspondent Nada Andraos Aziz sustained a gunshot wound to her leg while covering the municipal elections in Tripoli amid indiscriminate celebratory gunfire following the announcement of the results. A child was also injured by

³³ Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE), *2025 Municipal and Mukhtar Elections Monitoring Report*, available at: <https://vo.la/nmXOfhU>

celebratory gunfire in Akkar Governorate, prompting the Ministry of Interior to announce the arrest of 34 people in connection with these incidents.

The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) monitored the 2025 municipal and mukhtar elections from a gender perspective. The results revealed a substantial increase in the number of women elected to municipal councils compared with the previous elections. A total of 1,331 women won seats—nearly twice the number elected in 2016. This increase reflects gradual changes in women’s political participation at the local level and the growing role of civil initiatives and campaigns promoting women’s political empowerment.

Nevertheless, this numerical progress remains limited relative to the scale of the gender gap in political representation, as women continue to hold a modest share of municipal council seats compared with their proportion of Lebanon’s population. The report indicates that the barriers to women’s participation in municipal elections extend beyond the legal framework to encompass social, cultural, and economic factors.

Socially, some local communities still regard political activity as a traditionally male domain, limiting women’s opportunities to stand for election and secure the political and financial support needed to campaign. Local political structures based on patronage networks and traditional family or partisan relationships also tend to favor male candidates with greater social or political influence, making it difficult for women candidates to penetrate these networks.

The report further documented irregularities and violations that directly or indirectly affected women’s participation in the electoral process. These included social and political pressure against certain women candidates, as well as smear campaigns and discriminatory rhetoric targeting them. Such practices reflect the persistence of gender-based political violence in local political life and demonstrate that women’s electoral participation continues to be constrained by the absence of a safe and

inclusive political environment in which they can participate on an equal basis with men.³⁴

II. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Poverty levels in Lebanon have risen sharply over the past decade. The proportion of Lebanese people living below the poverty line increased from approximately 11 percent in 2012 to around 33 percent in 2022, reaching 44 percent in 2024, according to World Bank estimates. This increase reflects the severe deterioration in the country's economic and living conditions, resulting from the sharp economic contraction and the decline in households' real incomes. Subsequent security and economic developments have further exacerbated these trends, particularly in areas most affected by the conflict, where social vulnerability has increased and the living standards of many households have declined.

The economic inequality gap has widened considerably in recent years. The Gini coefficient, which measures inequality in income distribution, rose from 0.42 in 2019 to 0.61 in 2022, reflecting a significant increase in economic disparities among different segments of society. Income levels declined across most groups as a result of the economic contraction; however, the losses were more severe among people living in poverty, further deepening social and economic inequalities.³⁵

Lebanon is experiencing a clear deterioration in food security, with approximately 1.6 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity, a figure projected to rise to around 1.65 million in the subsequent period. Those affected include Lebanese nationals, refugees, and migrant workers. The number of areas experiencing severe

³⁴ Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE), *2025 Municipal and Mukhtar Elections Monitoring Report: A Gender Perspective*, 2025, available at: , <https://vo.la/vBJSZkT>

³⁵ World Bank, *Lebanon Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment: 2023–2024 Conflict*, 14 March 2025, available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/42951>

levels of food insecurity has also increased, with the number of districts classified in Phase 3 or above rising from seven to 12.

Many households face growing difficulty in meeting their basic needs, including food, clothing, and housing. Increasing numbers have been compelled to adopt severe coping strategies, such as selling property or productive assets to cover daily expenses. This reflects the deterioration of household living standards amid rising costs and declining income sources.

Livelihoods have been severely affected by disruptions to economic activity in many areas, particularly in sectors on which local communities depend, including agriculture, tourism, and small-scale commerce. Damage to economic infrastructure and disruption of local markets have deprived many households of their traditional sources of income, contributing to rising poverty and unemployment.

Social protection systems have become less capable of responding to the growing needs of people experiencing poverty. High inflation and the depreciation of the national currency have also reduced the real value of salaries, particularly those of public-sector employees, weakening households' purchasing power. These developments have increased the population's reliance on humanitarian assistance to meet essential needs.

The most vulnerable groups have been disproportionately affected by the economic crisis and conflict. These include women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, refugees, and migrant workers. They face additional obstacles in accessing essential services and restoring their sources of income, increasing their exposure to poverty and social marginalization.

Access to essential services—including healthcare, education, water, and electricity—has been severely disrupted. Damage to infrastructure and interruptions to public services have made these services increasingly difficult to obtain, exacerbating social deprivation, particularly in areas where infrastructure sustained extensive damage.

Internal displacement has placed additional economic pressure on households, as large numbers of people have moved into rented accommodation or stayed with host families. Higher living costs in safer areas have forced many households to reduce spending on essential services such as education and healthcare to meet their most immediate subsistence needs.

Estimates indicate that economic and social recovery will require substantial financial investment to rehabilitate economic infrastructure, support productive sectors, and create employment opportunities. There is also a pressing need to expand social protection programs and strengthen the capacity of public institutions to provide essential services, thereby reducing poverty and improving living conditions.

Economic Rights and Essential Public Services

On 26 July 2025, renewed controversy over the management of Lebanon's postal sector highlighted a protracted pattern of administrative failure and legal uncertainty surrounding the contracting of this public service, following more than five years of attempts to launch a new tender for its management. Despite the expiry of LibanPost's contract and its repeated extensions, the Ministry of Telecommunications failed to complete a transparent tendering process for the sector, despite repeated recommendations from the Court of Audit since 2021 calling for the service to be retendered within a short timeframe.

A series of irregularities marred the tenders launched in subsequent years. Most notably, a consortium comprising Merit Invest and Colis Privé France won the tender at one stage, before the Court of Audit refused to grant prior approval for the contract due to violations involving amendments to the tender specifications and the relaxation of qualification criteria in a manner considered tailored to the sole bidder. The process also lacked the financial and economic studies required to determine the State's revenues from the sector.

The Court of Audit further noted the short deadlines set for submitting bids and unjustified changes to the revenue-sharing mechanism, prompting it to call for a new tender based on transparent standards. As delays continued in preparing the necessary studies and launching the fourth tender, serious questions arose regarding the management of the process and the potential for substantial losses to the public treasury resulting from the continued operation of the sector outside a framework of fair competition and the transparency required in public procurement.³⁶

On 4 August 2025, legal and administrative controversy resurfaced in Lebanon over the proposed contract with Starlink to provide satellite internet services, following the inclusion of the matter on the Council of Ministers' agenda. Serious objections were raised that this approach could circumvent the principle of competition by favoring a contract with a specific company despite offers from other providers, including Eutelsat and Arabsat. This raised questions about compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment in selecting the most suitable bidder.

Concerns were also raised regarding digital sovereignty, particularly in light of reports that Lebanese communications data could be collected and stored outside Lebanese territory. This could raise legal and security issues related to data protection and national sovereignty over digital infrastructure.

Debate also emerged over whether the proposed contract should be subject to the Public Procurement Law. An advisory opinion reportedly concluded that it did not fall within the scope of conventional public contracts because it imposed no direct financial obligations on the State. This interpretation drew widespread criticism, given that the contract concerns a vital service of strategic importance and should therefore be subject to the highest standards of oversight, transparency and competition.³⁷

³⁶ The Legal Agenda, Elie El-Ferzli, "The 'Starlink' Deception Before the Council of Ministers Tomorrow: Who Will Save Digital Sovereignty and Public Funds?", 4 August 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/DZBp2VO>

³⁷ Elie El-Ferzli, "How Long Will the Postal Services Tender Drag On? Five Years of Manipulation and Delay," *The Legal Agenda*, 26 July 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/LoaGRTN>

Lebanon's energy sector witnessed an important legislative development with the enactment of Distributed Renewable Energy Production Law No. 318/2023, which established the first legal framework regulating electricity generation from renewable sources outside the traditional monopoly of Électricité du Liban.³⁸

The law permits individuals, companies, and municipalities to generate electricity through renewable energy systems and connect them to the public grid, subject to a specified generation limit for each system. It also regulates electricity exchange mechanisms and establishes a net-metering system that allows surplus electricity to be fed into the public grid.

The legislature made the law's implementation contingent upon activating the Electricity Regulatory Authority and establishing a specialized renewable energy directorate within Électricité du Liban.

The appointment of the Electricity Regulatory Authority in September 2025 constituted an essential step toward the law's practical implementation. The legislature entrusted the Authority with broad regulatory powers, including issuing implementing regulations, granting permits for renewable energy projects, regulating connections to the public grid, determining fees and tariffs, and establishing a national database and observatory for distributed renewable energy production.

The Authority's activation is expected to strengthen energy-sector governance and expand the use of renewable energy sources in Lebanon, provided that its administrative and financial independence is guaranteed and that it receives the human and technical resources necessary to perform its regulatory and oversight functions.

In 2025, Decree No. 1713 of 4 November 2025 was issued to designate the bodies considered most representative of the sectors comprising the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, in preparation for reconstituting the Council after its previous term expired. The decree implements amendments introduced by Law No. 288/2022 to

³⁸ "Distributed Renewable Energy Law: What Comes After the Appointment of the Electricity Regulatory Authority?" *The Legal Agenda*, 6 November 2025, available at: https://vo.la/UDb_expiredbeJ9

the law establishing the Economic and Social Council. These amendments broadened the Council's representation to include additional sectors, notably the environmental and civil society sectors, thereby strengthening their participation in dialogue concerning the state's economic, social, and environmental policies.³⁹

Combating Corruption and the Right of Access to Information

On 12 August 2025, the growing importance of the role assumed by the National Anti-Corruption Commission in protecting the right of access to information became evident through its decisions on complaints filed against public administrations, municipalities and entities managing public services. Published data showed that the Commission issued 32 decisions between July 2023 and March 2025, upholding 28 complaints—approximately 87 percent of all complaints on which it ruled—and, in most cases, ordering the respondent entities to disclose the requested information.

This proportion is particularly significant, as it reflects a clear tendency to consolidate the principle that information held by public bodies should be accessible and to narrowly interpret the exceptions to this right, particularly claims concerning confidentiality or the personal nature of information. The Commission's decisions covered ministries, central government departments, municipalities, and public institutions. They even extended to private companies managing public services, confirming a move toward broader transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs.

At the same time, these decisions showed that the principal problem lies not only in the refusal of certain public bodies to disclose information, but also in many failing to respond to requests at all or to appoint officials responsible for implementing the Access to Information Law. If supported by the necessary human and institutional resources, this development could firmly establish the right of access to information as a practical

³⁹ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, "Decree Designating the Most Representative Bodies in the Economic, Social and Environmental Council: A Step Toward Strengthening Civil-Society Representation Amid Legal Debate over the Council's Powers," 10 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/4837>

tool for combating corruption and strengthening public trust in the public administration.⁴⁰

On 3 June 2025, the General Directorate of State Security announced the arrest of several employees of the South Lebanon Water Establishment in the Bint Jbeil District. They were suspected of receiving unlawful payments in exchange for facilitating applications to exempt residents whose homes had been damaged during military operations in southern Lebanon from water fees. During questioning, the detained employees admitted receiving amounts exceeding the officially prescribed fees.

Right to Education

The Israeli military offensive against Lebanon caused widespread disruption to the country's education system, with significant consequences for the 2024–2025 academic year. Military operations and waves of displacement interrupted education on a large scale. Available data indicate that approximately 500,000 students were directly affected by displacement, school closures, or an inability to reach their schools. During the hostilities, around 69 percent of children remained out of school until the ceasefire was announced, severely disrupting the education of hundreds of thousands of students. This demonstrates the conflict's profound impact on the right to education and on the education system's capacity to ensure continuity during security and humanitarian emergencies.

Internal displacement further strained educational infrastructure, as large numbers of schools and other educational institutions were converted into shelters for displaced people. According to available data, approximately 769 educational facilities were used as temporary shelters, including 523 public schools, vocational education centers, and branches of the Lebanese University. Around 400 schools were also completely closed because of bombardment or direct damage to their buildings. Converting schools into

⁴⁰ Ali Sweidan, "Anti-Corruption Commission Decisions Safeguarding Access to Information: 87% of Complaints Against Public Administrations Upheld," *The Legal Agenda*, 12 August 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/nyebIJy>

shelters disrupted education for extended periods and reduced the system's capacity to accommodate students, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of displacement.

Displacement and insecurity also disrupted the work of thousands of teachers. Approximately 18,792 public-school teachers and 16,798 private-school teachers were reportedly affected. This undermined schools' operational capacity and complicated efforts to resume education following the ceasefire. These developments also widened disparities in access to education between different areas, particularly between those most heavily affected by the conflict and those that sustained less damage.

The widespread disruption of education may have long-term social consequences, particularly for children from the most vulnerable groups. The interruption of schooling also increases the risk of school dropout and the likelihood of children being subjected to economic exploitation or becoming involved in child labor.

Right to an Adequate Standard of Living

From the onset of Lebanon's financial collapse in 2019 through October 2025, the Lebanese economy experienced unprecedented levels of inflation. The Consumer Price Index increased approximately 68-fold according to the Central Administration of Statistics⁴¹ and approximately 65-fold, according to the index published by the Consultation and Research Institute. Despite relying on different sources, the two indices therefore produced broadly consistent overall findings.

Over the same period, the exchange rate of the US dollar against the Lebanese pound increased approximately 59-fold, reflecting the scale of the monetary deterioration suffered by the national currency.

These developments directly affected living standards, particularly among groups dependent on fixed nominal incomes. Estimates indicate that these groups account for between 55 and 60 percent of Lebanon's workforce and include wage earners, salaried

⁴¹ Consultation and Research Institute, "Price Index Outpaces the Collapse of the Exchange Rate in Lebanon," *The Legal Agenda*, 11 December 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/9d6jiE3>

employees, teachers, daily workers in the public and private sectors, and members of the military and security services. In addition to losing most of their bank savings as a result of the financial crisis, these groups lost between 70 and 75 percent of their purchasing power during the first three years following the economic collapse.

Although some may recently have recovered approximately 40 to 50 percent of their previous income levels, the impact of this relative improvement remains limited amid the severe deterioration of public services. The decline of essential services—including electricity, water, medicines, healthcare, education, sanitation, and transportation—has imposed additional financial burdens on households, which have been compelled to finance an increasing share of these services from their own incomes, whose value continues to be eroded by inflation. The crisis is further aggravated by the substantial decline in the value of end-of-service benefits and retirement pensions across the various social security funds, increasing social vulnerability and exposing broad segments of society to mounting economic and living challenges.

The draft Law on Financial Regularization and the Recovery of Deposits has drawn widespread criticism because it does not address the financial gap within an accountability framework. Instead, it effectively seeks to reduce the burden of losses borne by banks at the expense of depositors' rights. The draft law partially or selectively legitimizes certain irregular transactions while disregarding other, more serious operations, including transfers abroad and the repayment of US dollar-denominated loans at artificially low exchange rates. It also subjects the recovery of deposits to financial ceilings and lengthy repayment periods that risk depriving the right of its practical substance.⁴²

Several indicators of deteriorating essential services emerged across Lebanon in 2025. On 29 July 2025, the municipality of Al-Qaa in the Baalbek District declared a water emergency because of severe shortages, declining groundwater levels, and interrupted supplies from the Labweh spring due to encroachments and water theft. This situation

⁴² Toufic Chamoun, "Observations on the Draft Financial Gap Law: Financial Regularity Is Impossible in the Absence of the 'Rule of Law'," *The Legal Agenda*, 19 December 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/7AsMgeU>

highlights the growing challenges of managing water resources amid climate change and deteriorating infrastructure.

Waste accumulation also caused localized environmental crises. On 2 July 2025, a major fire broke out at a landfill in the town of Bshannin, Zgharta District, causing residents to suffer breathing difficulties from exposure to smoke and toxic gases.⁴³

Right to Housing

In 2025, the right to housing in Lebanon continued to deteriorate amid the absence of a comprehensive national housing policy and the ongoing impact of the economic and financial collapse on individuals' and families' ability to access adequate housing. Legal analyses indicate that Lebanon's housing sector is governed largely by market forces and real-estate interests, with no effective state intervention to regulate the sector or guarantee housing for the most vulnerable groups. This has aggravated the housing affordability crisis, particularly among young people and middle- and low-income groups.

Among the principal challenges during the year were continuing legislative and judicial disputes concerning tenancy laws, particularly debates about amendments to the laws governing old leases and non-residential leases. These debates were accompanied by social concerns about potential evictions and the possibility that long-standing tenants could lose the right to remain in their homes because of higher rents or the expiry of statutory extension periods. Parliamentary debates and decisions involving the Constitutional Council showed the persistence of legislative instability in this area, reflecting the fragility of Lebanon's housing legal framework.

The economic crisis also continued to undermine households' access to housing finance in 2025. The banking crisis and the suspension of subsidized housing-loan programs reduced opportunities for home ownership, particularly among young people. Studies

⁴³ Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH), *Human Rights Developments in a Week*, weekly briefings on human rights developments in Lebanon from June to August 2025, available at: <https://www.cldh-lebanon.org/Publication/Weekly>

have indicated that the absence of effective support measures—including subsidized loans, tax exemptions, and social housing Programs—has widened the housing gap and increased reliance on an unregulated rental market.

Decision No. 468, issued by the Council of State on 12 August 2025, annulled Decree No. 12835 of 12 January 2024, which had returned the Non-Residential Tenancy Law to Parliament. The decision constituted a highly significant judicial and constitutional development because it directly addressed the limits of the powers of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers when exercising the functions of the President of the Republic on an acting basis during a presidential vacancy.

The decision's importance lies not only in its annulment of the decree returning the law to Parliament. It also characterized the Prime Minister's refusal to sign the decree promulgating the law and to publish it in the Official Gazette as a flagrant violation of the Constitution, particularly Articles 56 and 57. Such conduct, the Council found, risked undermining the constitutional balance between the legislative and executive branches and obstructing the entry into force of laws in a manner not permitted under Lebanon's constitutional system.

Human rights analyses further indicate that the most vulnerable groups—including migrant workers, refugees, and low-income households—face growing risks of forced eviction or residence in inadequate housing because of rising rents, declining purchasing power, and insufficient social protection. The absence of integrated urban policies and the failure to incorporate the right to housing into public urban-planning frameworks have also exacerbated spatial and social inequalities in access to adequate housing.

Right to Health

In 2025, Lebanon's healthcare system continued to face structural challenges arising from the enduring consequences of the economic and financial crisis that began in 2019. These included a substantial decline in the state's capacity to finance the health sector and ensure equitable access to medical services. Currency depreciation and

rising healthcare and medicine costs undermined a large segment of the population's ability to obtain essential care, leading to growing reliance on individual initiatives and humanitarian organizations to fill gaps in the healthcare system. Legal analyses indicate that weak social protection and declining effective health coverage—particularly among people not covered by social security or public healthcare schemes—have deepened inequalities in access to healthcare.

Studies indicate that Lebanon's healthcare system was already characterized by institutional fragmentation, extensive privatization, and weak regulatory structures, leaving it poorly equipped to withstand successive crises. The study *Navigating Turbulence: An Analysis of Health-System Resilience in Lebanon amid Multiple Crises* found that the Lebanese healthcare system is highly fragmented and privatized. It reported that, by 2016, approximately 68 percent of primary healthcare centers were operated by civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, or charities, while approximately 80 percent of hospitals in Lebanon were privately owned.

The study further indicated that the economic collapse beginning in 2019 aggravated these structural deficiencies. Direct out-of-pocket health expenditure increased from approximately 33.1 percent in 2017 to more than 85 percent in 2022, while the effective coverage provided by the National Social Security Fund declined from approximately 85 percent to around 10 percent. According to the study, this model—based on privatization, outsourcing to private-sector and non-governmental actors, and growing reliance on humanitarian funding—further fragments the healthcare system and weakens the state's capacity to regulate the sector and ensure equitable and sustainable access to healthcare services.⁴⁴

The study *Medical Demography in Lebanon 2024: Identifying Gaps and Proposing Solutions for a Sustainable Health System*, published on 7 January 2025, reveals significant disparities in the distribution of physicians across medical specialties and geographical regions in Lebanon.

⁴⁴Doughman, Jana; Saab, Selim; and Bekdash, Joseph, "Medical Demography in Lebanon 2024: Identifying Gaps and Proposing Solutions for a Sustainable Healthcare System," 7 January 2025, (DOI): 10.1186/s12961-025-01382-0.

In 2023, approximately 15,059 physicians were registered with the Beirut and Tripoli Orders of Physicians. Of these, 10,344 were specialists (68.7 percent), while 4,715 were primary healthcare physicians (31.3 percent). The study further indicates that the rate of primary healthcare physicians trained through residency programs stood at approximately 7.11 per 100,000 inhabitants, substantially below recommended levels. By contrast, the rate of surgeons reached approximately 70 per 100,000 inhabitants, indicating an oversupply in certain specialties alongside shortages in essential fields.

The study also notes that most physicians are concentrated in Greater Beirut, leaving large parts of the country with inadequate healthcare personnel and services. It finds that these disparities have been aggravated by the economic crisis and the emigration of physicians since 2019, threatening the healthcare system's sustainability. It therefore calls for regulatory policies and incentives to redistribute medical personnel according to the population's needs.⁴⁵

According to the *Lebanon Crisis Risk Analysis 2025*, Lebanon faced increasing public-health risks in 2025 because of the deterioration of the healthcare system, large-scale displacement, damage to water and sanitation infrastructure, and declining vaccination rates. Available data indicate a heightened risk of infectious disease outbreaks, particularly in conflict-affected areas and overcrowded shelters.

A total of 2,086 cases of hepatitis A were recorded in 2024, with the possibility of a larger outbreak in 2025 because of deteriorating water and sanitation services and limited access to healthcare. Eighty-four measles cases were also recorded in 2024, following 351 cases in 2023. With vaccination coverage declining by approximately 40 percent, the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases spreading has increased. In addition, 295 cases of meningitis were recorded across several governorates in 2024, particularly in areas hosting large numbers of internally displaced people.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Data Friendly Space, in cooperation with Save the Children, *Lebanon Crisis Risk Analysis 2025*, risk analysis report, 5 December 2024, pp. 65–71, (DOI): 10.1186/s12913-024-12198-z.

⁴⁶ Data Friendly Space, in cooperation with Save the Children, *Lebanon Crisis Risk Analysis 2025*, risk analysis report, 5 December 2024, pp. 65–71, available at:

<https://www.datafriendlyspace.org/resources/lebanon-crisis-risk-analysis-2025>

These public-health risks were exacerbated by damage to water infrastructure. Thirty-six water facilities were damaged, affecting approximately 402,000 people and limiting access to safe drinking water. Around one million people in Lebanon require water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance, while another one million require food assistance, increasing the population's vulnerability to infectious diseases.

The conflict also resulted in the closure of 53 primary healthcare centers and eight hospitals, while other healthcare facilities continued to operate at reduced capacity. This placed the healthcare system under severe pressure and limited its ability to respond effectively to disease outbreaks.

Data contained in the *Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA) for Lebanon*, published in July 2025, indicate that Lebanon's healthcare system is experiencing acute pressure because of the conflict and the continuing consequences of the economic crisis. The report found that access to healthcare had become extremely limited: only four percent of households reported full access to health services, while 18 percent stated that they were often or always unable to obtain such services.

This was primarily attributable to the high cost of hospitalization and treatment, with medical fees identified as the principal barrier for 95 percent of households. Transportation costs also constituted an obstacle for approximately 23 percent of the population. The crisis was further aggravated by disruptions to medical supply chains caused by damage to roads and infrastructure, resulting in shortages of medicines, surgical supplies, and intensive-care beds in numerous hospitals.⁴⁷

Several incidents in 2025 raised concerns about public-health safety. On 13 October 2025, the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health suspended the operations of the Tannourine water-bottling company and ordered the withdrawal of its products from the market after bacterial contamination was detected in bottled-water samples, posing a health risk to consumers.

⁴⁷ World Health Organization, *Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA): Lebanon*, July 2025 update, pp. 1–3 and 21, available at: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/2021-dha-docs/phsa-lebanon_july2025.pdf

The case exposed serious concerns regarding the right to health and the effectiveness of health-monitoring and public-notification systems. Rather than being addressed as a public-health matter requiring transparency and accountability, it quickly developed into a political, media, and sectarian controversy. This was accompanied by denials of the contamination and challenges to the Ministry's procedures and test results, with considerable attention focused on the "leaking of the news" rather than on addressing the underlying health failure. The controversy illustrates the fragility of consumer protection in Lebanon and the dangers of subjecting public-health and safety issues to political and public-relations considerations. Such practices may endanger individuals' right to safe and potable water and undermine public confidence in official regulatory procedures.

Among the principal concerns during 2025 was the persistently high cost of hospitalization and medical care. Private hospitals continued to charge in US dollars or their equivalent despite the collapse in citizens' purchasing power. This increased the financial burden on patients and their families, placing numerous medical treatments—including surgical procedures and specialized examinations—beyond the reach of a large segment of the population. Human rights reports also documented continuing disparities in the relationship between private hospitals and public guarantor institutions, including the Ministry of Public Health and the National Social Security Fund. In some cases, these disparities affected patients' ability to obtain timely treatment.

The policy brief *Healthcare in Times of Crisis: Ensuring Access to Healthcare for Displaced People with Chronic Diseases* indicates that the 2024 conflict and the accompanying large-scale displacement continued to have direct consequences in 2025 for the healthcare system's capacity to meet essential needs. These findings are particularly alarming given that non-communicable diseases—including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer—accounted for approximately 91 percent of deaths in Lebanon before the conflict and require continuous medical monitoring and regular treatment.

Conditions of displacement—including increasing poverty, malnutrition, psychological distress, and difficulty accessing healthcare facilities—aggravated the health risks associated with these diseases during 2025. Field surveys found that 53 percent of respondents experienced difficulty obtaining medicines. Forty percent identified the rising cost of treatment and medication as a principal barrier to care. In comparison, another 40 percent reported that geographical obstacles and difficulties reaching healthcare centers prevented them from receiving necessary treatment.

These indicators demonstrate that the continuing economic crisis and armed conflict have widened inequalities in access to healthcare, particularly for internally displaced people and those without health coverage. As a result, 2025 constituted a critical period for the continuity of chronic-disease treatment in Lebanon and the sustainability of the healthcare system as a whole.⁴⁸

Data contained in the report *Emerging from Crisis: Lessons Learned from Lebanon's Health Emergency Response* illustrate the scale of the pressures placed on Lebanon's healthcare system by the recent war and its continuing consequences in 2025.

At the same time, widespread displacement increased the need for essential healthcare services. Approximately 500,000 people were targeted to receive humanitarian health services under the 2025 health response plan, while the estimated cost of the health response under the emergency humanitarian appeal amounted to approximately USD 46.5 million.

The data also indicate that access to healthcare became extremely limited. Only four percent of households reported full access to health services, while 18 percent stated that they were often or always unable to obtain such services.

⁴⁸Farhat, Bouchra, *Healthcare in Crisis: Ensuring Access to Healthcare for IDPs with Chronic Diseases*, Policy Brief, *Chronicles of Displacement* Series, Lebanon, 2025, pp. 2–4, available at: <https://chroniclesofdisplacement.usj.edu.lb/sites/chronicles/files/20wasinterrupted25-03/PB1.pdf>

The inability to afford hospitalization constituted a principal barrier for 95 percent of households, while transportation costs posed an additional obstacle for approximately 23 percent of the population.

These indicators demonstrate the severity of the crisis confronting Lebanon's healthcare system in 2025, as the consequences of the conflict intersected with the economic collapse and insufficient international funding, limiting healthcare institutions' capacity to respond to the population's growing needs.⁴⁹

Cultural Rights

In 2025, the Lebanese Parliament approved Lebanon's accession to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, providing a legal framework for strengthening cultural policies and supporting creativity and cultural diversity. Its implementation nevertheless faces several challenges, including the absence of a clear national mechanism for monitoring endangered forms of cultural expression, continuing legislative gaps in the laws governing the cultural and media sectors, and restrictions on freedom of expression and cultural creativity.

The lack of financial resources and incentives supporting the cultural sector also constitutes a major obstacle to achieving the Convention's objectives. Effective implementation will require comprehensive cultural policies encompassing legislative reform, stronger protection of freedom of expression, and the integration of culture into development and education policies.

On 12 February 2025, a group of Lebanese civil society organizations issued a joint appeal calling for the protection of cultural and heritage property damaged by Israeli attacks during the recent conflict. The appeal reported that the attacks affected border

⁴⁹ Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, *Emerging from Crisis: Health Sector Response and Lessons Learned from the 2024 War on Lebanon*, Beirut, 2025; and World Health Organization, *Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA): Lebanon*, July 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/NwDdKG5>.

villages, historic neighborhoods, and archaeological sites, including the city of Nabadieh and its historic market; religious and archaeological sites in Mhaibib, Blida, Shaqra, and Chamaa; and parts of the old city of Tyre. Sites included on national and world heritage lists were also damaged, including the Baalbek temple complex and the castles of Tebnine and Beaufort.

The organizations emphasized that this destruction affected not only physical structures but also the collective memory and cultural identity of local communities, particularly where entire neighborhoods and villages in several southern towns had been destroyed or booby-trapped with explosives. The initiative called for establishing a national coalition to document damage in accordance with international standards so the resulting evidence could be used in legal accountability proceedings.

It also called on the Lebanese authorities to protect heritage sites, prevent their demolition, ensure their inclusion under special protection regimes, and adopt reconstruction approaches that respect the cultural and architectural character of the affected areas.⁵⁰

At the legal level, Lebanon lacks a legislative framework guaranteeing persons with disabilities the right to access cultural heritage and archaeological sites. To date, no law imposes mandatory accessibility standards for museums and heritage sites, whether concerning physical infrastructure or accessible guidance tools such as audio guides, sign-language interpretation, easy-to-understand explanations, or tactile guides. This legislative gap continues to exclude a substantial segment of the population—particularly persons with disabilities and older persons—from full participation in cultural and tourism activities. Such exclusion is inconsistent with the principle of equal access to heritage as an integral component of fundamental cultural rights. In this context, a legal initiative has emerged to develop a national legislative

⁵⁰“Appeal to Protect Cultural Property following the Israeli Attack on Lebanon,” *The Legal Agenda*, 12 February 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/n07xqyB>.

framework enshrining the “right to heritage” and transforming it from a broad cultural concept into a legally enforceable right⁵¹. The legislative proposal currently under development seeks to incorporate inclusive-design standards and reasonable accommodation into the management of museums and archaeological sites. It would also establish mandatory accessibility requirements as part of the criteria for classifying cultural institutions, provide training for cultural-sector personnel, and ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in managing and interpreting heritage sites.

The proposal also seeks to address existing legal gaps and introduce legislative reforms ensuring fair and effective participation in cultural life, thereby advancing a rights-based and equitable approach to managing Lebanon’s cultural heritage.

On 31 May 2025, stand-up comedy performances in Tripoli and Sidon were canceled after dozens of people gathered outside the venues to protest their content, alleging that it was offensive to religion. The organizers stated that the protests followed the circulation of social media posts and videos containing misleading information about the performances, which fuelled calls for their cancellation.

Although the performances had received the necessary authorization from the competent authorities, the events were canceled to protect the safety of audiences and participants after tensions escalated outside the venues. These incidents highlight the challenges facing freedom of cultural and artistic expression in Lebanon, particularly amid incitement campaigns and social pressure that may result in the cancellation of cultural events despite having obtained the legally required permits.⁵²

On 14 August 2025, the Lebanese government reversed its decision to demolish the remaining Beirut port grain silos. Council of Ministers Decision No. 15/2025 repealed

⁵¹ “Silat for Culture” is a Lebanese non-profit cultural organization that seeks to create new and sustainable cultural opportunities for local communities and strengthen connections between individuals and their cultural heritage through cultural programs, creative initiatives and community engagement. Further information is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/184NVOLPph>.

⁵² The Legal Agenda, “Cultural Freedom of Expression Once Again at Stake in Tripoli: Why All This Outrage?”, Lamia Al-Saheli, 8 June 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/9pvxzZA>.

the provision of an earlier decision adopted in 2021 that had authorized their demolition. This reversal followed a parallel measure by the Minister of Culture to include the silos in the General Inventory of Historic Buildings, thereby granting them legal protection as part of Beirut's architectural heritage. The decision was regarded as a direct result of a sustained campaign led by the families of the Beirut port explosion victims in cooperation with human rights and professional organizations. They had called for the preservation of the silos as physical evidence of the 4 August 2020 catastrophe and as a memorial to its victims. Despite the importance of this measure in protecting the site, it does not relieve the authorities of their responsibility to adopt urgent technical measures to preserve the remaining damaged structures and prevent their collapse. Securing justice and accountability for the Beirut port explosion also remains the principal demand of the victims' families and Lebanese society as a whole.

Right to Work

On 30 September 2025, the Syndicate of Employees and Workers of Qadisha Electricity Company, the Association of Qadisha Electricity Retirees, and the Federation of Workers' and Employees' Trade Unions in North Lebanon submitted a representation to the International Labor Organization under Article 24 of the ILO Constitution. This provision allows workers' organizations to lodge a formal representation against a member state alleged to have failed to observe a convention it has ratified.

The representation concerned what the organizations considered Lebanon's failure to comply with its international obligations regarding the protection of wages and end-of-service benefits. The ILO found the representation formally receivable and decided to establish a tripartite committee to examine its substance. The allegations concerned Lebanon's failure to comply with several international Labor conventions, particularly the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95); the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); and the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131).

This development is particularly significant because the Article 24 procedure constitutes an international accountability mechanism available to trade unions when states fail to fulfil their obligations under international Labor conventions. Its importance is heightened by the sharp decline in the value of end-of-service benefits following the financial collapse and the erosion of wages' purchasing power.⁵³

Employees of the Mina Municipality and the public administration organized protests and strikes during June and July 2025 over inadequate salaries and the absence of government measures to address the cost-of-living crisis. These actions reflected the continuing economic pressure facing public-sector and municipal workers. On 8 September 2025, Mina Municipality workers in Tripoli held a second sit-in outside the headquarters of the Federation of Workers in North Lebanon to protest the non-payment of their salaries for six months and their exclusion from health coverage and other fundamental social rights.

Employees of international institutions operating in Lebanon also staged protests. These included a strike by employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) at Beddawi camp on 15 September 2025 over administrative decisions concerning education and school management.

The working conditions of Lebanese University instructors constituted a prominent example of violations of the right to just and favourable conditions of work. For more than a decade, they had been required to perform additional working hours without remuneration, despite judicial decisions affirming that they could not be compelled to work beyond the hours stipulated in their contracts.

In May 2025, the instructors continued their legal challenge against Decision No. 27, issued by the President of the Lebanese University on 29 January 2025. They considered the decision an attempt to circumvent an earlier Council of State ruling that

⁵³“International Labor Organization to Examine the ‘End-of-Service Benefits’ Case,” 3 December 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/uw3NooO>

the imposition of unpaid additional hours violated the principle of “no work without pay” and resulted in the administration’s unjust enrichment at their expense.

The case reflects a troubling pattern of non-compliance with judicial decisions and illustrates the precarious professional and social conditions of the instructors. Many lack fundamental employment protections, paid leave, and contractual stability, despite performing essential teaching, technical, and administrative functions within the university.⁵⁴

Lebanon’s Labor arbitration councils have faced a severe crisis that has rendered them almost entirely inoperative since 2023, undermining workers’ ability to access justice and secure their rights in Labor disputes.

Legal studies and investigations indicate that the crisis is not solely a product of current circumstances but results from the accumulation of longstanding structural problems. These include slow judicial proceedings, the councils’ low productivity in terms of the number of judgments issued, and delays in adjudicating cases caused by procedural practices and internal organizational deficiencies.

The continued paralysis of these councils, amid the absence of broad public debate, reflects a deeper crisis involving the declining effectiveness of Lebanon’s Labor-rights protection framework and the erosion of confidence in Labor justice institutions.⁵⁵

Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment

During the year, reports emerged of judicial proceedings against environmental activists connected to their work defending the environment and public health. These included the case of environmental activist Pierre Abi Chahine, who was summoned to appear before the Amioun Criminal Court over his advocacy concerning industrial pollution in

⁵⁴ The Legal Agenda, “Lebanese University Instructors Continue Their Legal Battle Against Contracts That Impose ‘Unpaid Work’ on Them,” Inas Sherri, 16 May 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/16uYEyz>

⁵⁵ “Why Does No One Care about the Paralysis of the Labor Arbitration Councils? An Attempt to Answer through *The Legal Agenda’s* Research,” *The Legal Agenda*, 6 November 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/IXqFSrA>

the Chekka area and his calls for cement companies to end the environmental and health harm caused to residents and the natural environment.

A summons issued by the Ministry of Justice required him to appear before the Court on 4 April 2025 to present his defense in proceedings brought against him by the Public Prosecution.⁵⁶

On 7 April 2025, Minister of Agriculture Nizar Hani issued a decision amending Decision No. 705/1 of 2012 concerning the regulation of tree cutting and forest exploitation. The amendment included the suspension of certain permits related to tree pruning and charcoal production as part of efforts to regulate the management of Lebanon's forest resources.

On 2 May 2025, the Lebanese Council of Ministers repealed Decision No. 56/2024, which the caretaker government headed by Najib Mikati had adopted on 4 December 2024. That decision had granted cement companies a two-year concession allowing them to continue operating quarries contrary to the applicable legal provisions. The repeal followed a challenge filed before the Council of State by the Federation of Koura Municipalities in cooperation with *The Legal Agenda*. It was regarded as an important shift toward bringing the quarrying and stone-crushing sector back under the rule of law. The decision represents an attempt to restore legal order to a sector long characterized by inadequate regulation and circumvention of environmental and administrative rules, with far-reaching environmental, economic, and social consequences.

On 7 June 2025, human rights and environmental concerns intensified over works being carried out in the Shawakir area adjacent to the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve. The Ministry of Defense and its affiliated contractor were accused of continuing construction, excavation, and the transportation of sand and fill despite several judicial decisions ordering the works to cease, as well as a decision issued by the Ministry of Culture.

⁵⁶ Bassam Al Kantar, post on X: "Condemnation – I strongly condemn the defamation lawsuit filed by the cement company in Chekka against environmental activist Pierre Abi Chahine," 18 March 2025, available at: <https://x.com/balkantar/status/1902076009060368427> (last accessed 14 March 2026).

According to available information, the works proceeded without completing essential legal requirements, particularly an environmental impact assessment, at a site of high environmental and archaeological sensitivity protected under national legislation and international treaties, including the Ramsar Convention. The case raises serious concerns regarding respect for the rule of law and the enforcement of judicial decisions. It also highlights the potential harm caused by the continued works to the right to a healthy environment and to the protection of public property and natural and archaeological sites.⁵⁷

On 30 June 2025, a Lebanese court dismissed the lawsuit brought by the National Cement Company against environmental activist Georges Al-Ainati over a social media post criticizing quarrying activities in the Koura region.

The Court found that his statements were made in defense of an environmental matter of public concern and did not demonstrate criminal intent. It affirmed that freedom of expression, as protected under Article 13 of the Lebanese Constitution, also encompasses critical commentary on matters of public interest.

The Court further held that Al-Ainati's statements expressed legitimate dissatisfaction with environmental degradation. The judgment therefore reinforces the role of freedom of expression in supporting environmental and community movements seeking to protect the environment and secure accountability for related violations.⁵⁸

On 23 October 2025, the Council of State issued a decision annulling a decree authorizing the occupation of public maritime property along the Zouk Mosbeh coastline.⁵⁹ The decision followed a legal challenge filed by two environmental

⁵⁷ Amani Al-Bouaini, "Ministry of defense Threatens the Tyre Nature Reserve and Its Beach: 'Hands Off the Judiciary' in Al-Shawakhir Too," *The Legal Agenda*, 7 June 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/Bqka4e2>

⁵⁸ The Legal Agenda, "George Al-Ainati Prevails over the Cement Dinosaurs: Freedom of Expression in Defense of the Environment," Rein Ibrahim, 3 July 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/PACBV08>

⁵⁹ Lebanese Council of State, decision of 23 October 2025 annulling the decree authorizing the occupation of the public maritime domain on the Zouk Mosbeh coast, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/The-opinion-of-the-Legislation-and-Consultation-Authority-at-the-Ministry-of-Justice-regarding-the-abolition-of-the-sponsorship-system-1.pdf>

organizations, Green Line and Nahnoo, in cooperation with *The Legal Agenda*. The decision is significant not only as the first judicial ruling to annul a decree authorizing the occupation of public maritime property, but also for recognizing—after several previous attempts—environmental organizations’ legal standing to challenge such decrees. It affirms the state's national responsibility to protect the environment and breaks with the practice of effectively shielding decrees authorizing the occupation of maritime property from judicial review. Debate also continued over implementing the Integrated Solid Waste Management Law. Legislative amendments proposed in 2025 addressed waste management financing and municipalities' powers in this field. These discussions revealed gaps in the existing legal framework, particularly in identifying sustainable funding sources for waste management and empowering municipalities to administer the sector more effectively within a framework of administrative decentralization. The research paper *Quarries Devour the Mountains: Manufacturing a System of Lawlessness* concludes that the disorder governing Lebanon’s quarrying and stone-crushing sector is not merely the result of administrative negligence. Rather, it is the product of a longstanding process through which lawlessness has been created and normalized politically and administratively. The paper explains how, since the end of the civil war, legal and regulatory frameworks have been circumvented through administrative extensions, exceptions, and settlements, allowing quarries to continue operating outside master plans and in environmentally sensitive areas. It further demonstrates how this situation has served the interests of powerful political and economic actors—particularly cement companies—at the expense of environmental protection, public resources, and the rights of local communities.⁶⁰

On 15 September 2025, the Lebanese government adopted a decision concerning amounts owed by quarry and stone-crushing operators. Although the decision included measures to repeat field surveys and update assessment schedules, it raised concerns that suspending previous collection orders without a clear deadline for completing the necessary corrections could weaken the accountability process.

⁶⁰ Nizar Saghih and Reine Ibrahim, “Quarries Devour the Mountains: Manufacturing a System of Lawlessness,” *The Legal Agenda*, 22 December 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/BCaSZhO>

The decision also relied primarily on a financial approach without sufficiently activating criminal and administrative accountability mechanisms against those responsible for violations. Further concerns arose from linking the granting or renewal of operating licenses to the payment of outstanding amounts. This could be interpreted as permitting quarry operations to continue in exchange for financial settlements.

Such an approach threatens the rights of affected residents and the right to a healthy environment. It also raises questions about the state's commitment to environmental deterrence and justice for affected local communities.⁶¹

Third: Rule of Law and Human Rights

Independence of the Judiciary

The Lebanese Parliament's adoption of the Law on the Organization of the Judiciary on 31 July 2025 constituted a legislative step towards reforming the judicial system. The law included several measures aimed at strengthening judicial independence, including broadening judges' participation in electing members of the High Judicial Council, enhancing certain aspects of judicial self-governance, and recognizing judges' rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

Nevertheless, assessments by human rights organizations indicated that the law still contained substantial shortcomings that could allow continued political interference in the judiciary.⁶² These included the executive branch's continuing role in appointing several members of the High Judicial Council and the broad powers granted to the

⁶¹ Nizar Saghie, "Observations on the Government Decision Concerning the 'Quarry Assessment': A Stick That Does Not Frighten the Offender and a Carrot That Frightens the Victim," *The Legal Agenda*, 22 September 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/hDA5GV7>

⁶² *The Legal Agenda*, "The Government's First Bill in the Process of Judicial Reform: Positive Aspects and Recommendations for Its Improvement," 5 May 2025, updated 6 May 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/i5FKq00> while important show

Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation, enabling this office to interfere in criminal proceedings by directing lower-ranking public prosecutors to suspend ongoing cases.

The mechanism established for judicial appointments could also impede the High Judicial Council's ability to overcome political deadlock affecting such appointments. These concerns show that legislative reform, while important, remains insufficient to guarantee the judiciary's full independence. The legislation must therefore be brought into line with international standards on judicial independence, particularly the recommendations of the Venice Commission and international bodies concerned with the rule of law.

On 5 September 2025, President Joseph Aoun asked Parliament to reconsider the Law on the Organization of the Judiciary, explaining that the text, as adopted, contained several formal, material and substantive flaws that could render some of its provisions inapplicable. He further stated that it contravened several legislative procedures, legal principles and international standards relating to judicial independence.⁶³ On 18 December 2025, Parliament adopted an amended version of the law. This version withdrew the authority previously granted to the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation to instruct members of the Public Prosecution to suspend ongoing prosecutions. However, the amendment did not address all concerns raised about the safeguards needed to strengthen judicial independence fully. In Decision No. 1 of 25 February 2026, the Constitutional Council annulled the Law on the Organization of the Judiciary in its entirety because it had been adopted "in breach of the essential procedural requirement to consult the High Judicial Council and, consequently, in violation of Article 20 of the Constitution."

After more than eight years of stagnation, Decree No. 823 of 5 August 2025 on judicial appointments was issued based on nominations submitted by the High Judicial Council.

⁶³ Presidency of the Lebanese Republic, "President Aoun Signs Decree No. 1105 Returning the Law on the Organization of the Judiciary to Parliament, Together with the Grounds for Its Reconsideration," 5 September 2025, available at: <https://www.presidency.gov.lb/posts/alreys-awn-wqa-almrswm-1105-algadhy-biaadh-alganwn-almtalq-btnzym-alghaa-aladly-walmtdhmn-alasbab-almwjbh-laaadth-ala-mjls-alnwab-2716810239f5217>

On 15 December 2025, the High Judicial Council announced that the judiciary, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, had begun taking steps to restore the regular functioning of the justice system after years of disruption and crises that had affected the work of courts and judicial departments. The Council stated that these steps included reconstituting the High Judicial Council and the General Assembly of the Court of Cassation, issuing the decree on judicial appointments and transfers after years of obstruction, and completing the formation of the Judicial Council.

It also noted that the judiciary had faced unprecedented challenges in recent years, including vacancies in several key judicial positions and deteriorating working conditions resulting from the economic crisis. These circumstances had led several judges to resign for financial, health, or professional reasons. At the same time, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to improving judicial working conditions and ensuring the continuity of the justice system in cooperation with the legislative and executive authorities.⁶⁴

Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons

Amid increasing attempts at irregular migration from Lebanon as a result of the worsening economic and social crises, the tragedy of migrant boats sinking in the Mediterranean has emerged as one of the most painful issues of recent years.

On 8 February 2025, human rights organizations and activists in Tripoli marked the International Day of Commemoration of the Missing and Deceased at Sea and at Borders, highlighting the case of the victims of an irregular migration boat that sank off the Lebanese coast on 23 April 2022. The boat was carrying 84 Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian nationals, including children and infants. Only a limited number survived, while dozens were killed or went missing. Survivors testified that a Lebanese Coast Guard vessel had collided with the boat. The fate of at least 39 people remains unknown.

⁶⁴ National News Agency, “High Judicial Council: Restoring the Regular Functioning of the Judiciary and Completing Judicial Appointments despite Challenges and Crises,” 15 December 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/bhFR39a>

The families of the victims and missing persons continue their efforts to seek truth and accountability. They have noted that the judicial investigations have yet to reach conclusive findings and that the case was transferred between different judicial authorities before being temporarily closed.

Lawyers and activists have also highlighted similar cases involving other migrant boats that sank in the region, emphasizing that the lack of accountability and delays in investigations compound the suffering of affected families and reflect broader challenges concerning the protection of the right to life and accountability for violations associated with irregular migration operations.⁶⁵

تAcademic and institutional initiatives aimed at supporting the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared are particularly important in confronting attempts at erasure and denial. On 8 April 2025, Saint Joseph University of Beirut organized a seminar entitled “The Missing Persons’ Cause and the Contested Memory of the War: What Role for the National Commission for the Forcibly Disappeared?” During the event, the university signed a cooperation agreement with the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared.

This initiative sought to support the Commission’s work through academic research, the provision of human and technical resources, information collection, and analysis of the historical contexts surrounding enforced disappearances. The seminar reaffirmed that the missing persons’ cause is not merely an administrative or technical matter, but one concerning the rights to truth, memory, and justice. It also emphasized that the sustained struggle of the families was the principal factor that led to the adoption of Law No. 105/2018 and the establishment of the Commission. The discussions further highlighted that the post-war General Amnesty Law contributed to closing the chapter on the conflict without truth-telling, accountability, or genuine reconciliation, leaving the

⁶⁵ “On the International Day of the Missing at Sea and at Borders: Families of the Victims of Tripoli’s Sunken Boats Struggle to Keep Their Loved Ones’ Cause Alive,” *The Legal Agenda*, 8 February 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/2q5SnaE>

missing persons' file as a continuing testament to the Lebanese state's failure to pursue a meaningful transitional justice process.

On 11 July 2025, the Lebanese Council of Ministers approved the appointment of the members of the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared, succeeding the previous Commission whose mandate had expired on 3 July of the same year. The appointments were made pursuant to Article 10 of Law No. 105/2018, which provides for the appointment of 10 members by a decree adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Council of Ministers for a non-renewable five-year term.

The new Commission comprised Judge Joseph Samaha, Reda Raad, Nada Kharrat, Ziad Ajaj, Samer Abdallah, Gabriel Mechalané, Marie-Reine Sfeir, Joseph Helit, Abir Haidar and Nivine Zarkout. However, the Minister of Information's announcement following the cabinet meeting named the Commission's president, causing legal confusion because Article 14 of the same law clearly stipulates that the president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer must be elected by and from among the members themselves, by secret ballot, after they have taken the oath of office.

A subsequent review of the official minutes of the Council of Ministers meeting showed that the government's decision was limited to appointing the members and did not name the president. This preserved the Commission's independence and left its members responsible for electing their president in accordance with the procedures established by law. Judge Joseph Samaha was subsequently elected President of the Commission.

Forty-three years after the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon was established on 24 November 1982, the issue of missing and forcibly disappeared persons remained an open wound in Lebanon's collective memory, amid the continuing absence of truth, accountability and redress. A seminar held at Saint Joseph University in November 2025 reaffirmed that the issue is not a private family matter but a national human rights concern linked to the rights to knowledge, memory and justice.

The seminar also highlighted the continuing psychological, social and economic consequences for families and the importance of fully implementing Law No. 105/2018 and enabling the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared to carry out its mandate effectively and independently. This includes opening files concerning mass graves and strengthening cooperation with relevant national and international bodies, thereby contributing to establishing the truth, preserving collective memory, and preventing the recurrence of violations.

Addressing the issue of missing and forcibly disappeared persons is an essential element of transitional justice in Lebanon. The right to know the fate of missing persons is a human and legal right recognized under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. This right imposes a positive obligation on the state to take the necessary measures to determine the fate and whereabouts of missing persons or locate their burial sites, and to enable their families to obtain the truth. The continuing uncertainty surrounding the fate of thousands of missing persons compounds their families' suffering and prevents the achievement of national reconciliation grounded in truth and redress.

On 12 September 2025, the Civil Forum for Supporting the Implementation of the Law on Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons was launched as a civil society initiative aimed at strengthening the implementation of Law No. 105/2018, which established the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared and enshrined families' right to know the fate of their loved ones. The Forum was established amid continuing challenges to the law's implementation, particularly limited financial and administrative resources and inadequate institutional support for the Commission's work.

The Forum seeks to provide a civil society framework to support the Commission, strengthen public accountability for the law's implementation, and advocate for the resources needed to enable the Commission to fulfill its mandate of determining the fate of missing persons and realizing the rights to truth and transitional justice in Lebanon.

Fourth: Discrimination against Groups in Situations of Heightened Vulnerability

Children's Rights

On 5 December 2024, an investigative judge in Mount Lebanon issued an indictment in a case involving the sexual exploitation of children, known in the media as the “TikTok gang” case. The judge found sufficient evidence to bring several serious charges against the accused, including rape, the sexual exploitation of a child, and incitement to suicide. The decision followed the death by suicide of a 15-year-old boy in early 2024 after he had allegedly been subjected to prolonged sexual abuse, blackmail and psychological pressure. According to the decision, the perpetrators allegedly drugged and sexually assaulted the child, recorded the assault, and then threatened to publish the recordings to force him to continue submitting to their demands. The judge considered that the sustained intimidation and psychological pressure inflicted on the child could constitute incitement to suicide under Article 553 of the Lebanese Penal Code. The case is noteworthy for its broader interpretation of this offense, recognizing that severe psychological coercion and exploitation may create conditions that drive victims to take their own lives. The decision may represent an important judicial development in addressing the sexual exploitation of children, online-facilitated abuse, and accountability for the harm caused by such exploitation.⁶⁶

A serious incident of sexual assault against a young girl was reported on 27 March 2025. The General Directorate of General Security arrested officer A.N., aged 49, after a video circulated showing him sexually assaulting a six-year-old girl while wearing his military

⁶⁶ “Exploitation Drives a Child to Suicide: A Landmark Indictment in the ‘TikTok Gang’ Case,” *The Legal Agenda*, 10 June 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/rSGxdTQ>

uniform. The footage reportedly showed him cornering the child, forcibly touching her body and attempting to kiss her. The case was subsequently referred, pursuant to a decision by Judge Fadi Malakoun, to the Public Prosecution in Mount Lebanon for a judicial investigation.⁶⁷

During March 2025, Lebanon witnessed a series of fatal fires that killed 11 children and three adults in several areas, including Akkar, Hermel and Tripoli. The incidents were linked to factors including the explosion of a gas tanker at an unlicensed station, fuel leakage from a petrol station, and an electrical short circuit caused by unsafe wiring. These incidents raised serious questions about public safety standards and official oversight of hazardous facilities. Concerns were also raised that some parties might resort to informal settlements or “reconciliation committees” instead of judicial proceedings, potentially obstructing the determination of legal responsibility and accountability. The incidents highlight continuing challenges in protecting the rights to life and public safety, particularly in marginalized areas affected by inadequate oversight and insufficient safety measures.⁶⁸

In a serious child-safeguarding incident, approximately 16 children aged between six and seven from Sacred Hearts School in Ain Najm were subjected to sexual harassment during a school trip to the VeréBleu park in Deychounieh on 20 May 2025. The school announced that it had opened a formal investigation into the incident and notified the Ministry of Education, while the Internal Security Forces arrested the suspect on 22 May 2025 and initiated legal proceedings against him.⁶⁹

Women’s Rights, Gender and Sexual Rights

⁶⁷ Megaphone, “General Security Arrested Ali Nassar, 49, after the Circulation of a Video Documenting His Assault on the Photographer...”, Facebook post, available at: <https://vo.la/fFkIKPK>

⁶⁸ Faten Allam and Sandy El Hayek, “Eleven Children and Three Adults Burned or Suffocated to Death in One Month in Lebanon,” *The Legal Agenda*, 3 April 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/39iRSRi>

⁶⁹ Rayan Souheil Abdel Nabi, “Outrage in Lebanon: Group Sexual Harassment of Children during a School Trip,” *Al Arabiya.net*, 24 May 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/A6WFd2N>

On 4 February 2025, several special procedure mandate holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council sent a communication to the Lebanese government concerning information indicating shortcomings in the provision of protection services for women and girls in Lebanon, particularly internally displaced and non-Lebanese women and girls, following the Israeli attacks that began in September 2024.

The experts expressed concern that many shelters were inadequately equipped to meet the needs of women and girls, particularly regarding privacy and healthcare services. Reports also indicated incidents of sexual harassment and domestic violence in some shelters, alongside inadequate protection and referral mechanisms for survivors. Some women, particularly migrant domestic workers and Syrian and Palestinian refugees, also faced discrimination in accessing assistance and shelter, as well as heightened risks of sexual violence and human trafficking.

The communication further highlighted deteriorating conditions for women held in prisons due to overcrowding and inadequate services, as well as the insufficient involvement of affected women in designing and implementing the humanitarian response. The experts called on the Lebanese authorities to protect women and girls, ensure their equal access to protection, healthcare, and shelter services, and guarantee their meaningful participation in humanitarian response and recovery efforts.

The continuing killings of women in Lebanon expose serious gaps in legal and judicial protection systems, particularly when such crimes are preceded by repeated complaints of violence and threats that fail to result in effective protection. These cases also raise concerns about women's safety when seeking judicial remedies and the media's responsibility to avoid reproducing narratives that justify gender-based violence. This is particularly significant when a woman is killed while attempting to leave an abusive relationship and seek legal protection.

On 26 December 2024, journalist Abir Rahhal was killed by her husband outside the entrance to the Shhim Sharia Court while she was attending proceedings related to her divorce petition. Her husband subsequently died by suicide.

According to available information, before she was killed, Rahhal had filed several complaints concerning domestic violence, threats, defamation and the abduction of her infant child. She had reportedly left the marital home several months earlier and sought to end the marriage through the courts.

From a human rights perspective, the case illustrates the heightened risks women face when attempting to leave abusive relationships and the need to strengthen preventive protection measures and ensure a rapid response to complaints of gender-based violence. It also raised additional concerns regarding the circulation of a video published by the perpetrator before his death that contained defamatory allegations against the victim. This highlighted the need for media outlets and digital platforms to comply with professional and human rights standards that prevent the justification of the crime and protect the dignity of the victim and the rights of her children.⁷⁰

On 13 February 2025, allegations of sexual harassment within the Lebanese judiciary emerged after a woman administrative judge filed a personal complaint against the President of the State Council, while the Lebanese Judges Association submitted a separate criminal report concerning the same case.

The case is particularly significant from the perspectives of human rights and judicial independence, not only because of the seriousness of the allegations but also because it reflects concerns about power relations and hierarchy within the judiciary and judges' ability to report internal abuses. It also highlighted the role of professional solidarity in supporting complainants and mitigating the risks of pressure or retaliation, while prompting a broader discussion about the judiciary's internal independence, equality among judges and accountability mechanisms within the judicial hierarchy.⁷¹

On 28 March 2024, a bill aimed at combating violence against women and amending several provisions of the Lebanese Penal Code and related legislation was submitted to

⁷⁰ Laure Ayoub, "Journalist Abir Rahhal Killed by Her Husband: When a Courthouse Entrance Became a Crime Scene," *The Legal Agenda*, 8 January 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/6lqReYh>

⁷¹ Nizar Saghie, "Harassment Case Targets the Head of the Judicial Hierarchy: What Does It Reveal about the State of the Judiciary and Its Transformations?", *The Legal Agenda*, 13 February 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/Di2ANc6>

the Lebanese Parliament. It addressed protection from domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual offenses, forced marriage, and child marriage.

The bill included positive elements, such as expanding protection and support services for women and criminalizing certain harmful practices. At the same time, however, it prompted human rights concerns regarding its broad punitive approach and the possibility that it could restrict women's autonomy or create legislative overlap with existing laws, particularly the Law on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence.

Concerns were also raised regarding some of the proposed definitions, particularly the definition of sexual harassment, which may be overly broad and thereby undermine legal clarity and the principle of legality. These discussions underscore the importance of adopting a comprehensive legislative approach that balances effective protection from violence with respect for women's autonomy and procedural rights.⁷²

During 2025, Lebanon witnessed an alarming rise in digital violence, particularly against women and girls, amid the expansion of digital spaces and the development of new technologies without adequate legislative and legal safeguards. Social media platforms, messaging applications, and online games have become spaces in which multiple forms of abuse are committed, including sexual and financial extortion, harassment, cyberstalking, the non-consensual sharing of images, and the use of deepfake technology and coordinated defamation campaigns to exclude women from public spaces or restrict their participation.

Available data indicate that women constitute the majority of victims of this form of violence, accounting for approximately 80% of reported cases of digital violence in Lebanon in recent years. Studies concerning political and media participation have also shown that online violence has become the most common form of abuse targeting

⁷² Lynn Ayoub, "A New Bill to Combat Violence against Women: When the Image of the 'Woman as Victim' Prevails," *The Legal Agenda*, 7 March 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/MvsDOBW>

women in public life, with most women candidates and journalists subjected to online defamation and threats.

At the same time, the competent authorities recorded an increase in complaints involving online extortion and harassment. Many victims, however, refrain from reporting such abuse because they fear social stigma or the repercussions that a complaint could have on their personal lives. This situation exposes a clear gap between the rapid evolution of digital offenses and the capacity of the legal and institutional system to address them. It has prompted calls for the adoption of a comprehensive legislative framework criminalizing all forms of digital violence and establishing effective mechanisms for protection, reporting, and legal and psychological support for victims. Such measures are essential to ensure a safer digital environment and safeguard the right to participate freely in public life.

From a legal perspective, Lebanon's legislative framework has not kept pace with the rapid development of offenses committed in digital spaces. Existing legislation does not include a comprehensive law specifically addressing digital violence. Instead, such conduct is addressed through fragmented provisions of the Penal Code and Law No. 81/2018 on Electronic Transactions and Personal Data, as well as provisions concerning defamation, threats,, and violations of privacy.

These provisions were primarily drafted to address conventional offenses. They were not designed to respond to emerging forms of internet- and social media-related violence, such as online sexual extortion, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, coordinated defamation campaigns, or the use of deepfake technology.

Implementing these provisions also faces practical challenges, including difficulties in obtaining and preserving evidence in digital cases, the cross-border nature of such offenses, victims' limited awareness of reporting mechanisms, and social pressures that deter many women and girls from seeking judicial remedies. In this context, recent legislative initiatives have sought to develop Lebanon's first comprehensive bill addressing digital violence against women and girls. The proposed legislation aims to

define these offenses clearly, criminalize their various forms, establish protection mechanisms for victims, determine the responsibilities of digital platforms, and strengthen investigative and judicial capacities.

However, this legislative process remains in its early stages. Comprehensive legal reform is urgently needed to balance the protection of freedom of expression with the need to combat digital violence and violations of privacy and human dignity. Such reform is essential to ensure a safe digital environment and strengthen victims' confidence in the justice system.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Enabling voters and candidates with disabilities to exercise their political rights independently and with dignity emerged as one of the most significant human rights challenges during the 2025 elections, ahead of the parliamentary elections scheduled for 2026, which were postponed for two years.

Despite the passage of 25 years since the adoption of Law No. 220/2000 on the rights of persons with disabilities, and despite Lebanon's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its entry into force following the adoption of Law No. 291 of 12 April 2022, which authorized the government to ratify the Convention and its Optional Protocol, Lebanon's electoral environment continues to present structural and procedural barriers that prevent the effective and equal exercise of the rights to vote and stand for election.

Field monitoring of the 2025 municipal and mukhtar elections found that many polling centers remained inaccessible. Obstacles included stairs and other architectural barriers, the absence of ramps and functioning lifts, and the continued location of numerous polling stations on upper floors. In practice, this compelled some voters with disabilities either to refrain from voting or to accept humiliating arrangements that undermined their dignity and independence, such as being carried up stairs, voting

outside the polling booth, or relying on the intervention of others in ways that compromised the secrecy of the ballot.

This issue has a broader human rights dimension because it requires not only removing physical barriers but also shifting from a welfare- and charity-based model to an approach grounded in rights and full citizenship. The right to political participation cannot be reduced to merely providing nominal access to the ballot box. It requires guaranteeing the conditions necessary to exercise that right freely, safely, secretly and independently. This also includes the right of persons with disabilities to stand for election and participate in public life without stigma, discrimination or exclusion.

The most recent electoral experience revealed persistent forms of discrimination, including the refusal to allow some personal assistants to accompany voters, cases of proxy voting, and incidents of ridicule and bullying. These are all indications that the problem extends beyond logistical shortcomings to the prevailing institutional and societal culture surrounding the treatment of persons with disabilities.

The 2026 parliamentary elections were considered a pivotal test of the Lebanese authorities' compliance with their legal, constitutional, and international obligations. This requires adopting a clear, binding implementation plan that includes, at a minimum, locating polling stations on ground floors, ensuring lifts are operational where available, removing architectural barriers to accessibility, and training polling staff and security personnel on rights-based standards for assisting voters with disabilities.

Accessible voting arrangements should also be provided, including Braille ballot papers, appropriate directional signage, and polling booths designed to ensure independence. The committee responsible for implementing Decree No. 2214/2009 should also be activated, while mechanisms for collecting and updating data should be improved to allow for a more accurate assessment of the needs of voters with disabilities. The relatively low proportion of persons holding disability cards does not justify the state's failure to take the measures required to guarantee the universal right to political participation. Any renewed failure in this area would further entrench marginalization

and exclusion and constitute an ongoing violation of the principles of equality and the right of persons with disabilities to full citizenship.

In 2020, the National Human Rights Commission issued an opinion on Law No. 171 of 8 May 2020, which sought to replace the term “disabled persons” wherever it appeared with the phrase “persons with additional needs.” At the time, the Commission considered that the law was inconsistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and called for terminology to be standardized in accordance with the Convention through the use of the phrase “persons with disabilities.” This is the internationally recognized term and reflects the shift towards a rights-based approach to disability.

Following the enactment of Law No. 291 of 12 April 2022, which authorized the government to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, full compliance with all provisions of the Convention, particularly its terminology and definitions, has become imperative.

The Commission also considers that full compliance with the Convention requires reviewing the administrative structure of the Ministry of Social Affairs to establish a specialized directorate for the rights of persons with disabilities, based on a rights-based approach rather than the traditional welfare-based model.

In the same context, the Commission considers it necessary to review the role and composition of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and to make this representative body fully independent of the Ministry. It further proposes exploring the possibility of integrating it into the National Human Rights Commission, specifically within the Standing Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities established under Article 18 of Decree No. 1762 of 7 November 2025, concerning the Internal Regulations of the National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

The Commission further considers that membership of this body should be limited to organizations of persons with disabilities themselves, rather than organizations that

provide services to them. This would ensure their effective participation in shaping national disability policies, in accordance with the principle of participation, which constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the Convention.

As part of efforts to strengthen cooperation with civil society organizations and international bodies advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, the Inclusive National Emergency Preparedness Plan for Persons with Disabilities was launched in 2025. The Emergency Task Force for Persons with Disabilities, a broad coalition of organizations of persons with disabilities, international medical and humanitarian organizations, and United Nations agencies, developed the plan.

Based on Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the plan seeks to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in emergency and disaster-response policies. Its measures include providing accessible shelters, healthcare and psychosocial support services, and establishing effective referral and coordination mechanisms with national authorities responsible for disaster management. The plan also aims to promote the equitable and inclusive distribution of humanitarian assistance, thereby reducing discrimination and exclusion during emergencies and humanitarian crises in Lebanon.⁷³

As part of efforts to strengthen the inclusion of disability issues in national crisis-management policies, the First National Conference to Develop an Inclusive Emergency Plan for Persons with Disabilities in Lebanon was held in Beirut in September 2025, with the participation of Lebanese ministries, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities.

The conference examined the gaps exposed by recent crises, particularly Israel's 2024 war on Lebanon, which revealed the clear marginalization of persons with disabilities in humanitarian response plans. Participants concluded that persons with disabilities must

⁷³ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, "Inclusive National Emergency Preparedness Plan for Persons with Disabilities," 15 September 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3462>

be included at every stage of emergency planning—from preparedness to response and recovery—through the development of inclusive policies that provide accessible shelters, strengthen data systems and institutional coordination, and ensure the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the preparation and implementation of national emergency plans.⁷⁴

Rights of Older Persons

In recent years, the international human rights system has undergone a significant shift in its approach to the rights of older persons. It has moved away from treating these rights as fragmented across general human rights treaties towards a growing effort to develop a specialized, legally binding international instrument comprehensively addressing the challenges associated with aging and age-based discrimination.

In this context, Human Rights Council Resolution 58/13, adopted in April 2025, established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons. The resolution marked a pivotal milestone in the international recognition of their rights by formally launching negotiations to draft a legally binding international instrument to protect and promote the rights of this population group.

This international process is particularly important given the demographic changes taking place worldwide, with the proportion of older persons increasing in many countries and generating growing challenges in areas such as social protection, healthcare, access to justice and participation in public life. Numerous international studies and reports have revealed persistent and significant gaps in the legal protection afforded to older persons, as well as widespread age-based discrimination, social exclusion and inadequate legal safeguards for their autonomy and dignity.

These international developments should inform the national debate on reforming social policies in Lebanon, particularly regarding the Ministry of Social Affairs' role in

⁷⁴ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, “Beirut Conference Places Disability Issues at the Heart of National Emergency Planning,” 17 September 2025, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/3508>

formulating and implementing policies concerning older persons. The existing institutional system continues to lack specialized administrative structures in this field. It does not include a comprehensive institutional body responsible for developing policies concerning older persons and monitoring their implementation.

Lebanon previously established a national body concerned with the affairs of older persons. However, the institutional framework within which this body operates still requires review and development to strengthen its role in shaping public policies on aging and coordinating national programs in social protection, healthcare, and the community participation of older persons.

The demographic and social changes taking place in Lebanon, together with the growing international movement towards adopting a specialized convention on the rights of older persons, require the Lebanese authorities to review the organizational structure of the ministry responsible for social policy. This review should enable aging-related issues to be incorporated into a comprehensive, rights-based, and development-oriented approach.

The incorporation of older persons' rights into national social policies should be guided by the principles of dignity, autonomy, non-discrimination and participation, which underpin current international initiatives to develop the new international instrument. The national role of institutions concerned with aging should also be strengthened, and these institutions should be integrated more effectively into the social policy framework. This would facilitate a shift from a limited welfare-based model towards a comprehensive rights-based approach that recognizes older persons as full rights holders and active participants in society.

Rights of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

Following the collapse of the Assad government in Syria on 8 December 2024, cross-border movements between Syria and Lebanon gradually increased. As of August

2025, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that more than 821,586 Syrians had crossed back into Syria from neighboring countries, including 272,135 who had traveled from or through Lebanon. However, these figures largely reflect temporary or tentative movements rather than confirmed permanent returns. Many people return to Syria for short periods to assess conditions in their areas of origin before deciding whether to return permanently. Following unlawful identity-based killings and violence by the Syrian government forces that assumed power in Damascus, nearly 100,000 Syrians fled to Lebanon, according to UNHCR. Most of these newly arrived asylum seekers are living in northern and north-eastern Lebanon.⁷⁵

According to UNHCR, as of September 2025, the registrations of more than 238,000 Syrians in Lebanon known to the agency had been “inactivated” following their confirmed or presumed return to Syria. These included more than 6,270 people who returned through UNHCR’s facilitated voluntary return program. Although more than 80% of Syrian refugees intend to return to Syria one day, only 18% plan to do so within the following year, with concerns over safety, housing, and livelihoods constituting the principal barriers.

In July, the Lebanese government issued the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP)⁷⁶, aimed at facilitating the return of Syrian refugees through fee waivers and cash grants designed to encourage registered refugees to return. The plan highlights the shared commitment of the Lebanese government, the United Nations, and their partners to coordinated and principled planning for returns, while addressing broader humanitarian and stabilization needs. It stipulates that “all returns must be safe and dignified and based on informed decisions by displaced Syrians.”

⁷⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “Lebanon Fact Sheet – August 2025,” August 2025, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/lebanon-factsheet-august-2025>

⁷⁶ Government of Lebanon and United Nations, *Lebanon Response Plan 2025*, strategic document, 28 August 2025, available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/118293>

Approximately 93% of Palestine refugees in Lebanon live in poverty, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and they continue to face restrictions on their rights to work and own property. According to UNRWA estimates published on 21 October 2022, the poverty rate among Palestine refugees in Lebanon stood at approximately 93%, while the poverty rate among the country's overall population exceeded 80%. An estimated 210,000 Palestine refugees reside in Lebanon, including approximately 30,000 Palestine refugees who arrived from Syria in recent years. Most live in overcrowded camps or impoverished residential gatherings outside them.

The worsening economic crisis since 2019, accompanied by a sharp collapse in the value of the national currency and an unprecedented rise in living costs, has deepened poverty and deprivation among this population. This is particularly acute given the longstanding legal restrictions imposed on Palestine refugees' right to work in many professions and to own property. These conditions have also contributed to increased attempts at irregular migration by sea, as harsh living conditions and growing despair have driven some refugees to risk their lives aboard unsafe boats, amid limited economic and social alternatives.

Against the backdrop of risks associated with precarious housing conditions in refugee settlements, a major fire broke out on 2 April 2025 at a Syrian refugee camp in the Shawakir area, east of the city of Tyre. According to local media reports, the fire destroyed all the tents in the camp, highlighting refugees' precarious living conditions and the absence of basic safety standards in their places of residence.

Rights of Migrant Workers

Lebanon's kafala system is one of the principal legal frameworks governing the employment of migrant domestic workers. However, it has been widely criticized for enabling a significant power imbalance between employers and workers. Under this system, workers' legal residency is tied to their employer, restricting their ability to leave or change employment without the employer's consent and exposing them to the risk of

losing their legal status, detention, or deportation if they leave their employment without authorization. Over the years, this situation has led to recurring patterns of abuse, including non-payment of wages, excessively long working hours without rest periods, passport confiscation, and various forms of physical, verbal, and sexual abuse.

An estimated quarter of a million migrant domestic workers in Lebanon come from countries in Africa and Southeast Asia. They are excluded from the protections afforded by the Lebanese Labor Code, including the minimum wage, limits on working hours, weekly rest and trade union protections. This legislative exclusion has entrenched precarious working conditions, leaving migrant domestic workers outside the legal protection framework enjoyed by other workers.

There have been growing calls to reform the legal framework governing domestic work, including adopting a standard employment contract that guarantees workers' fundamental rights and addresses the power imbalance in the employment relationship. Proposed reforms include enabling workers to terminate or change their employment contracts without losing their legal residency, guaranteeing their right to retain their personal documents, ensuring a minimum wage and regular rest periods, and establishing effective mechanisms for submitting complaints and investigating abuses. These measures form part of a broader process aimed at aligning national legislation with international human rights and Labor standards and strengthening protection for the most marginalized groups in the Labor market.

On 11 March 2025, a Lebanese investigative judge's decision to allow Meseret Hailu, an Ethiopian migrant domestic worker, to testify in a landmark slavery case set an important judicial precedent, strengthening the principle of access to justice. The judge rescheduled the hearing to allow the survivor to testify in person, having previously denied her participation in the preliminary investigation. This is the first case in Lebanon and the region to characterize the exploitation of a migrant domestic worker as slavery

and human trafficking.⁷⁷ On 11 November 2025, a Lebanese investigative judge's decision to dismiss the criminal complaint filed by Hailo represented a serious setback for accountability in cases involving the exploitation of migrant domestic workers. Despite the Public Prosecution's recommendation to proceed with the prosecution and refer the accused to the criminal court, the judge found the evidence insufficient, thereby terminating the proceedings against the employer and the recruitment agent accused of slavery and human trafficking. The worker had testified that her passport had been confiscated and that she had been subjected to violence and forced Labor for years without pay. The decision drew widespread criticism from human rights organizations, which viewed it as perpetuating the climate of impunity associated with Lebanon's kafala system.⁷⁸

Security investigations conducted in 2025 uncovered criminal networks linked to human trafficking and the falsification of official documents. On 27 November 2025, the security forces arrested a doctor suspected of involvement in an organized network engaged in the sale and trafficking of newborn babies by falsifying birth certificates and registration documents to conceal the children's identities.

Companies providing migrant domestic worker recruitment services have long been accused of subjecting workers to abuse, Labor rights violations, and human trafficking. The US Department of State's 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report classified Lebanon as Tier 2, meaning that the government does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, although it is making some efforts to improve its response.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Legal Action Worldwide, "In Remarkable Turnaround, Judge Gives Migrant Worker the Opportunity to Present Her Case in Landmark Slavery Case in Lebanon," press release, 11 March 2025, available at: <https://legalactionworldwide.org/accountability-rule-of-law/press-release-in-remarkable-turnaround-judge-gives-migrant-worker-the-opportunity-to-present-her-case-in-landmark-slavery-case-in-lebanon>

⁷⁸ Legal Action Worldwide, "Lebanese Judge Dismisses Slavery Case, Blocking Path to Justice for Migrant Worker," press release, 12 November 2025, available at: <https://legalactionworldwide.org/accountability-rule-of-law/lebanese-judge-dismisses-slavery-case-blocking-path-to-justice-for-migrant-worker>

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of State, "2025 Trafficking in Persons Report: Lebanon," Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2025-trafficking-in-persons-report/lebanon>

The report states that the political and economic crises and the war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2024 limited the state's capacity to develop and implement effective anti-trafficking policies. Nevertheless, the authorities took some limited steps, including adopting standardized procedures for identifying victims, establishing an interministerial working group, and organizing training sessions in cooperation with international organizations.

However, the report highlights several shortcomings, including the absence of a comprehensive national action plan, inadequate collection of official data on investigations and prosecutions, and the lack of any convictions for human trafficking offenses during the reporting period. It also notes that the number of trafficking investigations fell to its lowest level in 10 years and that no convictions related to domestic servitude were recorded, despite its prevalence in Lebanon.

Regarding protection, the report observes that the state made limited efforts to identify and support victims, with only a small number identified relative to the scale of the problem. It also notes that some potential victims continued to be detained. At the same time, their legal status was being determined, and that the state provided neither shelters nor direct services for adult victims, relying heavily on non-governmental organizations to assist.

The report further emphasizes that the employer-based visa system, commonly known as the kafala system, exacerbates the risk of exploitation by restricting migrant workers' freedom and increasing their vulnerability to forced labor and other abuses—particularly migrant domestic workers and Syrian refugees. This underscores the need for legal and institutional reforms to strengthen prevention, accountability, and victim protection.

On December 12, 2024, several members of Parliament submitted a proposed law seeking to amend and supplement certain provisions of the Labor Law of September 23, 1946, and the Law Regulating Entry into, Stay in, and Exit from Lebanon of July 10, 1962. The proposal sought to address legislative gaps that have excluded domestic workers, particularly migrant domestic workers, from the protections afforded by the

Labor Law. It aims to bring paid domestic work within the scope of the Labor Law's fundamental protections, including minimum rights relating to working conditions, wages, working hours, and mechanisms for legal protection. It also seeks to revise certain provisions governing the residency status of foreign workers to mitigate the consequences of the kafala (sponsorship) system.

On April 24, 2025, the Legislation and Consultations Commission issued an opinion on the proposed law, finding no need to amend the Labor Law to eliminate the exclusion of paid domestic work from its scope. The Commission considered adopting the standard unified contract for domestic workers a sufficient framework for regulating the relationship between domestic workers and employers and addressing any violations arising from that relationship.

The Commission further considered that several rights proposed in the draft law, such as domestic workers' freedom of movement outside the workplace or their right to reside independently, could expose workers to potential risks or impose liabilities on employers and were incompatible with the nature of domestic work. It also objected to certain proposed mechanisms for strengthening protection, including granting workers temporary residency permits to seek another employer and expanding the Ministry of Labor's role in receiving complaints and investigating working conditions inside private homes. The Commission considered that such measures could conflict with the rules governing the residency of foreign nationals or with existing legal and procedural frameworks. Accordingly, the Commission concluded that the existing regulatory frameworks, particularly the standard unified contract, should remain in place rather than adopting new legislation regulating domestic work or amending the laws currently in force. *The Legal Agenda* subsequently submitted a request to the Minister of Justice to refer the matter to the Higher Consultative Commission for reconsideration and reformulation of the opinion in a manner consistent with Lebanon's constitutional and international human rights obligations and that strengthens the State's role in protecting

domestic workers and safeguarding their dignity, particularly in light of continuing criticism of the kafala system and the systematic abuses associated with it.⁸⁰

In 2025, Lebanon launched Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the identification, assistance, and protection of victims of trafficking in persons. The Ministry of Social Affairs led the initiative in cooperation with the Ministries of Justice, Interior and Municipalities, and Labor, with the participation of several international partners and civil society organizations.

These procedures aim to standardize mechanisms for identifying and referring victims of trafficking and providing them with protection and assistance by strengthening coordination among government authorities, security agencies, and social institutions. In doing so, they seek to establish an integrated national approach grounded in international standards for combating trafficking in persons and protecting victims.⁸¹

Rights of LGBTIQ+ People

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people continued to face systemic discrimination in Lebanon. Article 534 of the Lebanese Penal Code punishes “any sexual intercourse contrary to the order of nature” with imprisonment for up to one year, despite a series of judicial rulings issued between 2007 and 2018 holding that consensual same-sex relations are not illegal.

⁸⁰ *The Legal Agenda*, “The Legal Agenda Calls on the Ministry of Justice to Review the ‘Racist Opinion’: The State Is Responsible for Protecting the Dignity of Domestic Workers,” December 16, 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/WbMRiie>

⁸¹ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, “Lebanon Launches Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification, Assistance, and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons,” October 29, 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3580>

Fifth: Violations of International Humanitarian Law

Violations of International Humanitarian Law

Despite the announcement of the Cessation of Hostilities and Related Commitments on Enhanced Security Arrangements⁸², issued on November 26, 2024, which aimed at the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the stabilization of the situation along the Blue Line, and notwithstanding the measures announced by the Government of Lebanon⁸³ to fulfill its obligations under Resolution 1701, as well as the continuing role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), near-daily Israeli strikes on Lebanon continued throughout 2025, resulting in the deaths of more than 330 people⁸⁴, according to figures announced by the Lebanese Minister of Public Health on November 22, 2025.

According to data documented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)⁸⁵, at least 127 civilians were killed in Lebanon between the entry into force of the ceasefire and November 24, 2025. An airstrike on the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon, which killed at least 13 civilians, including eight children, also raised serious concerns regarding violations of the

⁸² United Nations Security Council, *Letter dated 29 November 2024 from the Permanent Representatives of France and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/2024/870, December 2, 2024. Available at: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/870>

⁸³ Minutes of Lebanese Council of Ministers Session No. 88, Decision No. 1 of 2024, held at the Grand Serail on November 27, 2024, concerning the reaffirmation of the Lebanese Government's commitment to implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) and all related obligations, particularly those concerning the enhanced deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces and security forces south of the Litani River in accordance with the security arrangements associated with the announcement of the cessation of hostilities. Available at: <https://vo.la/4XhJotX>

⁸⁴ National News Agency (NNA), "Nassereddine Inaugurates the Martyr Ali Allam Medical Center in Baalbek," November 22, 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/8OaCmMv>

⁸⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), statement by spokesperson Thameen Al-Kheetan, "Lebanon: Sweeping Israeli Displacement Orders Cause Further Misery for Civilians," press briefing, Geneva, November 25, 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/ar/press-briefing-notes/2025/11/increasing-israeli-attacks-killing-civilians-lebanon>

principles of international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of distinction and proportionality in the conduct of hostilities.

OHCHR also documented extensive damage to civilian infrastructure, including homes, roads, and industrial facilities, which adversely affected reconstruction efforts and the ability of displaced persons to return to their areas of origin in southern Lebanon. Estimates indicate that more than 64,000 people remain internally displaced, amid continuing security restrictions, destruction of property, and emerging obstacles preventing access to agricultural land and residential areas.

In this context, OHCHR stressed the need for prompt and independent investigations into all attacks that may constitute violations of international humanitarian law and for those responsible to be held accountable. It emphasized that protecting civilians and ensuring respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law remain legal obligations incumbent upon all parties, and that achieving a lasting cessation of hostilities is essential to safeguarding civilians' rights and safety.

During the cessation of hostilities in southern Lebanon, Israeli violations continued at a high rate, including direct attacks on villages and civilians, as well as widespread destruction of infrastructure and property in violation of the Geneva Conventions⁸⁶. This pattern of conduct raises serious concerns about compliance with international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of civilian protection and proportionality, and the prohibition of unjustified destruction of property. The continuation of such

⁸⁶ The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocol relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II). International humanitarian law applicable to non-international armed conflicts requires parties to the conflict to treat persons deprived of their liberty humanely in all circumstances and prohibits violence to life and person in all its forms, cruel treatment and torture, and outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment. The prohibition of enforced disappearance has become part of customary international law applicable in both international and non-international armed conflicts. This encompasses the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of liberty, the prohibition of torture and other forms of cruel or inhuman treatment, and the prohibition of killing.

attacks during the ceasefire also poses additional risks to residents' right to return safely to their villages and homes.

On January 26, 2025, The Legal Agenda documented 855 direct attacks against border villages and their residents during the 60 days stipulated in the cessation-of-hostilities agreement, including 358 attacks in the final 20 days alone. According to this documentation, the attacks carried out during the ceasefire period resulted in the deaths of 43 people, including women, children, paramedics, and public officials. They also included 47 ground incursions, artillery shelling, gunfire operations, and abductions, in addition to 282 incidents involving demolitions and bulldozing and 33 incidents of deliberate arson targeting homes. The data indicate that these acts were not limited to preventing residents from returning to their communities, but also targeted homes, residential and government buildings, agricultural land, religious facilities, and infrastructure, suggesting a pattern of widespread and systematic destruction during a period in which hostilities were supposed to have ceased, and military forces were expected to withdraw.⁸⁷

Field reporting in southern Lebanon in late January 2025 witnessed a serious escalation in attacks against journalists and camera crews while they were carrying out their professional duties, resulting in significant harm to their physical safety and equipment. These incidents reveal a troubling pattern of attacks against media workers covering the return of residents to border areas, in clear violation of press freedom and journalists' right to report safely.

On January 27, 2025, an LBCI crew was physically assaulted by a group of young men in the Deir Mimas area and along the Khardali road. Cameraman Tony Kerlos was injured and taken to hospital, while Lara al-Hashem and Robert Ghosn sustained bruises. Cameras and live-broadcast vehicles were also damaged. Independent photojournalist

⁸⁷ Hussein Shaaban, "The 60-Day Deadline Has Expired: *The Legal Agenda* Documents 855 Direct Attacks Against Villages and Their Residents During the Ceasefire," *The Legal Agenda*, January 26, 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/FFWWSRI>

Hassan Fnaysh was also shot in the leg on January 27, 2025, while covering the return of residents to the border town of Houla.

In another incident on January 26, 2025, an NBN crew came under fire from the Israeli army while covering the return of residents to the town of Mays al-Jabal. Journalist Hussein Khalil was also injured while covering the return of residents to Maroun al-Ras. On February 16, 2025, media crews covering the return of residents to the border town of Houla were attacked. Among them were *Al-Akhbar* correspondent Amal Khalil and independent journalist Mohammad Zanati, who was injured in the knee while attempting to take cover from gunfire.

Months after the announcement of the cessation of hostilities, Israel continued to wage a parallel campaign against anything that could facilitate residents' return to these villages. It bombed dozens of prefabricated structures brought in by residents for housing or to provide essential services.

On April 23, 2025, Human Rights Watch⁸⁸ documented two Israeli airstrikes targeting the town of Younine in the Bekaa Valley in September and November 2024, which killed 33 civilians, including 15 children, with no indications of military targets found at either strike site. The report also noted the use of MK-80 series guided munitions equipped with US-made guidance systems and the absence of any prior warnings to residents before the attacks were carried out. Human Rights Watch concluded that these incidents may constitute indiscriminate attacks against civilians and could therefore amount to war crimes under international humanitarian law. It called for independent and effective investigations to ensure accountability and hold those responsible for the violations to account, as well as for victims and their families to have access to justice and reparations.

On August 6, 2025, Human Rights Watch documented serious violations affecting the right to education during Israeli military operations in southern Lebanon. It reported that

⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch, "*Lebanon: Two Indiscriminate Israeli Attacks on Civilians*," April 23, 2025, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2025/04/23/lebanon-israeli-strikes-civilians-apparent-war-crimes>.

Israeli forces occupied several public schools during the hostilities between September and November 2024 and used some of them as military barracks. According to the report's findings, Israeli forces also deliberately vandalized, looted, and destroyed school property at several locations, particularly in Naqoura and Yarine.

The report indicated that these acts, including the seizure of educational facilities and the deliberate destruction of their contents, may amount to war crimes, given their direct impact in depriving children of their right to education. These violations occurred in a context in which access to education had already declined sharply as a result of the conflict, displacement, and the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure in southern Lebanon.⁸⁹

On September 16, 2025, Hussein Shaaban, a journalist with The Legal Agenda, and his assistant were attacked with an explosive projectile dropped from an Israeli drone, which detonated just meters away from them while they were carrying out a journalistic assignment in a devastated residential neighborhood on the northeastern edge of the border village of al-Zalloutiyeh, Tyre District.

On December 2, 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, issued a statement warning of new evidence indicating the possible use by Israeli forces of internationally prohibited cluster munitions in southern Lebanon during the ongoing armed conflict. The statement cited an international journalistic investigation that revealed photographs of munition remnants found in areas south of the Litani River. These remnants were analyzed by independent munitions experts, who assessed that they were likely from modern types of cluster shells and rockets. The Commission emphasized that such weapons are inherently wide-area-effect weapons whose dispersal cannot be adequately controlled, thereby posing an enduring threat to civilians, particularly because a proportion of their submunitions may remain unexploded in agricultural land and residential areas for many

⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch, *"Lebanon: Israeli Forces Occupied, Vandalized Schools; Apparent War Crimes Put Right to Education at Risk,"* August 6, 2025, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2025/08/06/lebanon-israeli-forces-occupied-vandalized-schools>.

years after the end of military operations. The Commission also called for prompt and independent investigations at the sites where these munitions were found, the acceleration of efforts to clear unexploded ordnance, and the safeguarding of compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law concerning the protection of civilians.⁹⁰

The year 2025 ended without the Lebanese authorities taking concrete steps to ensure that Israeli violations committed on Lebanese territory could be investigated and prosecuted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). In light of the serious violations of international humanitarian law committed during Israeli military operations on Lebanese territory, the National Human Rights Commission emphasizes the need to adopt an integrated legal and institutional approach that ensures the documentation of these violations and accountability for their perpetrators. In this context, the Commission recommends that the Lebanese authorities strengthen national mechanisms for documenting international crimes committed against Lebanon and the Lebanese people by establishing a unified database of violations and collecting evidence in accordance with the standards established under international humanitarian law and international criminal law, in cooperation with specialized international bodies. It also calls for the activation of international accountability mechanisms, including advocating for the establishment of an independent international fact-finding mechanism by the Human Rights Council and making evidence available to States that apply the principle of universal jurisdiction for the investigation of international crimes.

The Commission further urges the Lebanese Government to examine the legal avenues available for referring these crimes to the International Criminal Court, including by lodging a declaration accepting the Court's jurisdiction pursuant to Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute. It also calls for continued diplomatic and legal action before the United Nations to seek accountability for Israel and compensation for the damage resulting from the attacks. In this regard, the Commission notes that 2025 ended without

⁹⁰ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, "National Human Rights Commission Warns: New Evidence Indicates Israel's Use of Prohibited Cluster Munitions in Lebanon," December 2, 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3737>

concrete steps to ensure these crimes could be investigated by the International Criminal Court, despite the Lebanese Government announcing in 2024 its intention to grant the Court temporary jurisdiction dating back to October 2023, before subsequently reversing that decision.

The Commission also notes that the Ministry of Justice's mandate in October 2025 to assess the legal options available following the Israeli attacks on journalists presents an opportunity to incorporate international crimes and violations of the laws of war into the national legal framework. This would enable the Lebanese judicial authorities to initiate effective investigations while also advancing Lebanon's accession to the Rome Statute and its acceptance of the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction with retroactive effect.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, stated in his preliminary report issued at the conclusion of his visit to Lebanon, conducted from September 29 to October 10, 2025 at the invitation of the Lebanese Government, that he was deeply concerned about serious violations of the right to life linked to Israeli attacks, particularly in light of the absence of effective criminal investigations into numerous killings of civilians, journalists, and healthcare workers. The Special Rapporteur noted that, in a number of these cases, the official response was limited to preparing "information reports" by the security services that set out the basic facts, without initiating formal criminal investigations under the supervision of the competent public prosecutor. As a result, evidence is not systematically collected in accordance with established criminal investigation standards, while the information available remains internal or confidential and inaccessible to victims' families or survivors.⁹¹

⁹¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "Lebanon: UN Expert Calls for Stronger Victim-Centered Investigations to Ensure Accountability for Unlawful Killings," press release, October 10, 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/lebanon-un-expert-calls-stronger-victim-centered-investigations-ensure>

The Special Rapporteur stressed that leaving deaths related to the conflict or to military attacks without a thorough, independent, and impartial investigation undermines the State's duty to protect the right to life and ensure accountability. He emphasized that prompt criminal investigations are essential to establish the truth of what occurred, document and preserve evidence, and determine individual and institutional responsibility.

In this context, he called on the Lebanese public prosecution authorities to initiate criminal investigations as soon as possible under the Penal Code, in a manner that ensures the preservation of evidence and prevents its loss or tampering, while acknowledging the practical difficulties involved in accessing certain sites of attacks, particularly in the southern border areas.

He further stressed that such investigations should adopt a victim-centered approach, including recognizing families as direct victims, ensuring their effective participation in judicial proceedings, and providing them with the necessary information regarding the progress of investigations.

He also emphasized the importance of strengthening Lebanon's forensic capacity as an essential component of investigations into unlawful killings. He called for the development of the institutional framework for forensic medicine and the establishment of a national institute applying standardized procedures consistent with the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death. Such measures would strengthen the judiciary's ability to determine the causes and circumstances of death accurately, hold those responsible accountable, and safeguard the rights of victims and their families to truth, justice, and reparation.⁹²

Impact of the Israeli Attacks on the Enjoyment of Human Rights

⁹²United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, *Preliminary Observations at the Conclusion of His Visit to Lebanon (29 September–10 October 2025)*, 10 October 2025. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/executions/sr-sumex/statements/20250911-eom-lebanon-sr-summary-executions-en.pdf>

The Israeli attacks on Lebanon, which began in October 2023, occurred against the backdrop of a complex, multidimensional crisis that the country had been experiencing for years as a result of the economic collapse that began in 2019 and was exacerbated by political paralysis, weak governance, and the deterioration of public services. The cumulative impact of these crises weakened the state's capacity to respond to major shocks, with the war further aggravating already deteriorating social and economic conditions. The Lebanese economy contracted by approximately 38 percent between 2019 and 2024, while the national currency lost more than 98 percent of its value and inflation rose to unprecedented levels. Human development and governance indicators also deteriorated significantly amid declining public trust in state institutions and rising levels of poverty and inequality. Against this backdrop, the war placed additional pressure on the country, deepening economic and social imbalances and hindering an already fragile recovery process.

The war also resulted in significant loss of life in the health sector. Attacks on hospitals, healthcare centers, and ambulances killed 241 healthcare workers and injured a further 295. These figures reflect the substantial human cost of the conflict and the immense pressure it placed on Lebanon's healthcare system, which was already struggling with limited resources and shortages of medical supplies. These developments also increased the need for emergency healthcare services and psychosocial support programs, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, including children and women.

The economic losses resulting from the Israeli attacks on Lebanon are estimated at approximately US\$14 billion, according to the World Bank's *2025 Lebanon Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA)*⁹³, which assesses damages, economic losses, and recovery and reconstruction needs across ten sectors nationwide during the period from 8 October 2023 to 20 December 2024. The report found that damage to physical

⁹³ World Bank, "Lebanon's Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Estimated at US\$11 Billion," press release, 7 March 2025, based on the *2025 Lebanon Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA)*, which assesses damages, losses, and needs across ten sectors during the period from 8 October 2023 to 20 December 2024. Available at: <https://www.albankaldawli.org/ar/news/press-release/2025/03/07/lebanon-s-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-estimated-at-us-11-billion>

assets amounted to approximately US\$6.8 billion, while economic losses resulting from reduced productivity, foregone revenues, and operating costs amounted to approximately US\$7.2 billion. The report identifies the housing sector as the most severely affected, with damage estimated at approximately US\$4.6 billion. The commerce, industry, and tourism sectors were also significantly affected, with losses estimated at approximately US\$3.4 billion nationwide. Geographically, the report concludes that the governorates of Nabatieh and South Lebanon were the most severely affected, followed by Mount Lebanon Governorate, which includes Beirut's southern suburbs.

The report estimates Lebanon's reconstruction and recovery needs at approximately US\$11 billion. It indicates that the public sector will require between US\$3 billion and US\$5 billion in financing to cover part of these needs, including approximately US\$1 billion allocated to rehabilitating essential infrastructure sectors, particularly energy, municipal and public services, transport, water, sanitation, and irrigation. The private sector, meanwhile, is expected to bear a substantial share of the recovery process, with estimated investment needs ranging from US\$6 billion to US\$8 billion, most of which is expected to be directed toward the housing, commerce, industry, and tourism sectors.

More than 64,417 people remained displaced in Lebanon as of October 2025. Data issued by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicate that population movements in Lebanon continued to be monitored regularly to support humanitarian preparedness and response efforts. This monitoring is carried out in cooperation with the Disaster Risk Management Unit at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, with technical support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), with the aim of verifying and cross-check data between the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and household registration activities conducted by the Lebanese Red Cross.

According to the latest available data as of 3 October 2025, the number of internally displaced persons who had returned to their areas of origin reached 986,192, representing a slight increase of less than 1 percent compared with the 981,490

returnees recorded on 31 May 2025. Meanwhile, 64,417 internally displaced persons remained displaced outside their areas of origin.⁹⁴

Available information concerning families displaced from southern border villages indicates that their forced displacement has persisted for an extended period in the absence of conditions conducive to a safe and dignified return, raising a range of human rights concerns regarding the state's obligations toward persons affected by conflict. Despite the announcement of a ceasefire, several families remain unable to return to their villages due to the destruction of their homes, the razing of agricultural land, and the lack of essential infrastructure and public services.

At the same time, these families are living in shelters that, in many cases, lack the minimum conditions necessary for a dignified life, amid declining humanitarian assistance and the failure of many families to receive compensation for damage to their property, shelter allowances, or social assistance. This situation raises serious concerns that temporary displacement may evolve into a permanent state of social vulnerability, particularly given indications that some shelters may be closed without providing appropriate alternative housing.

Against this backdrop, there is an urgent need to adopt measures that ensure respect for the rights of displaced persons, including creating the conditions necessary for their safe and voluntary return to their villages once circumstances permit, or providing adequate alternative housing, fair compensation, and social and economic support programs that guarantee a minimum standard of dignified living until such return becomes possible.

At the macroeconomic level, the report concludes that the conflict led to a 7.1 percent contraction in Lebanon's real gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024, a significant decline compared with estimates suggesting the economy could have grown by approximately 0.9 percent in the absence of the conflict. By the end of 2024, Lebanon's cumulative decline in GDP since 2019 had reached approximately 40 percent, reflecting

⁹⁴International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Lebanon Mobility Snapshot – Round 88*, October 2025, available at: <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/lebanon-mobility-snapshot-round-88-october-2025>

the depth of the multidimensional economic crisis facing the country. This has further compounded the effects of the economic downturn and adversely affected prospects for recovery and economic growth over the medium and long term.⁹⁵

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According to the report entitled *The Socio-Economic Impacts of the 2024 War on Lebanon*, prepared by the United Nations Development Program(UNDP) and ESCWA in collaboration with UNICEF, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat)⁹⁶, the hostilities damaged more than 90,000 buildings, including homes, businesses, and public infrastructure. Of these, more than 23,400 buildings were completely destroyed. At least 59,577 housing units and 34 water facilities were damaged, affecting access to clean water for more than 400,000 people.

The economic impact was profound, with the Lebanese economy contracting by 38 percent between 2019 and 2024. Lebanon's Human Development Index fell back to its 2010 level, representing a 14-year setback due to the multidimensional crisis and the war. The report explains that a full recovery underpinned by structural reforms could

⁹⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Infrastructure Destruction Prevents Return; Reconstruction Should Prioritize Housing, Electricity, and Water," February 17, 2025, available at:

<https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2025/02/17/lebanon-infrastructure-estruction-blocks-returns>.

⁹⁶ ESCWA, the United Nations Development program(UNDP), et al., *The Socio-Economic Impacts of the 2024 War on Lebanon*. Available at: <https://www.unescwa.org/news/un-calls-urgent-recovery-prevent-prolonged-crisis-lebanon>

reverse this trajectory, with economic growth projected to reach 8.2 percent in 2026 and 7.1 percent in 2027. Nevertheless, even if the necessary reforms are implemented, gross domestic product (GDP) would remain 8.4 percent below its 2017 peak of USD 51.2 billion. The report recommends prioritizing key sectors with the potential to drive economic growth, particularly agriculture, construction, tourism, and industry.

The labor market and private sector also bore a significant share of the war's consequences, with private-sector employment opportunities declining by about 25 percent. In areas most heavily affected by military operations, job losses reached around 36 percent. Workers who retained their jobs also experienced a substantial decline in income, with average wages falling by approximately 15 percent nationwide. Data indicate that women were more severely affected by job losses than men. These developments reduced household purchasing power and contributed to rising poverty rates and increased reliance on humanitarian assistance. Displacement and disrupted economic activity also contributed to the breakdown of local employment networks, causing many workers to lose their jobs or traditional sources of livelihood and raising the risk of long-term consequences for the labor market and the national economy.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the Lebanese economy and account for approximately 90 percent of businesses, were severely affected by the war. More than half of these enterprises sustained direct physical damage to their premises and equipment. Estimates indicate that around 15 percent of businesses closed permanently, while a significant proportion temporarily suspended operations because of destruction, workforce losses, or supply chain disruptions. In addition, 29 percent of businesses reported that all of their employees had either left or were no longer available for work following the war.

Beyond physical damage, SMEs faced significant challenges in accessing financing, energy, and markets. Surveys indicate that 80 percent of businesses consider access to financing a top priority for resuming economic activity.

Several key economic sectors were adversely affected by the war, most notably agriculture, tourism, and industry. In the agricultural sector, thousands of hectares of farmland and forests were damaged as a result of shelling, fires, and the use of incendiary substances such as white phosphorus. Farmers were also forced to abandon large areas of land, resulting in substantial losses in agricultural production, with crop yields declining by more than 80 percent in some areas. The livestock sector likewise suffered significant losses due to animal deaths or the sale of livestock at low prices because of prevailing economic conditions. The tourism sector, one of the country's most important sources of national income, experienced a substantial decline in its contribution to the economy. The manufacturing sector was also severely affected, with many factories either ceasing operations or resuming production at limited capacity.

The war had a profound impact on the education sector, as widespread displacement led to hundreds of schools being converted into shelters for displaced persons. Data indicate that approximately 500,000 students experienced significant disruption to their education during the conflict, while 69 percent of children remained out of school during the period of hostilities. Hundreds of schools were also closed due to direct damage or their use as shelters. This situation raised considerable concern among families about their children's educational future, with 85 percent of parents expressing fears about the war's impact on their children's education. The disruption to schooling was also associated with increased risks of child labor and economic exploitation. This crisis coincided with a deterioration in children's food security, particularly in poorer areas such as the Bekaa and Baalbek-Hermel, where levels of food poverty among young children rose to alarming levels.

The report "The Socio-Economic Impacts of the 2024 War on Lebanon" indicates that sustainable recovery in Lebanon will require far-reaching economic and institutional reforms to rebuild trust in public institutions and strengthen the state's capacity to deliver services. Priorities include reforming the financial sector, strengthening governance and combating corruption, expanding social protection systems, and supporting key productive sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and industry. Estimates

suggest that the Lebanese economy could achieve growth of up to 8 percent if the required reforms are implemented. Nevertheless, projected gross domestic product in 2030 would remain below its pre-crisis 2017 level. The report emphasizes that recovery will require substantial investment and coordination among the government, the private sector, and international partners, as well as mobilizing financial resources from multiple sources to support reconstruction and restore economic and social stability in the country.

Lebanese Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons

During 2025, the National Human Rights Commission documented a series of incidents in which Lebanese citizens were abducted or detained by Israeli forces inside Lebanese territory or in border and maritime areas. Among the most prominent cases was the abduction of Lebanese fisherman Mohammad Ali Juhair at sea on 2 February 2025 while he was fishing off the Lebanese coast. Israeli forces subsequently took him into occupied territory.

Another documented incident involved the abduction of Lebanese citizen Hassan Ahmad Hammoud on 26 January 2025, after Israeli forces raided his home in the town of Taybeh in southern Lebanon. He was taken to an unknown location, and his house was reportedly set on fire following the abduction.

In the same context, a number of civilians working in agriculture or livestock herding in border areas were detained or abducted during Israeli incursions near the Blue Line. These included farmers in the vicinity of Wazzani and Marjayoun, as well as a shepherd near the town of Kfar Shouba who was taken away during an Israeli incursion while tending livestock on land close to the border. These incidents point to a recurring pattern of targeting civilians engaged in agricultural and pastoral activities in border areas.

Another prominent case was the disappearance of retired General Security Captain Ahmad Ali Shukr on 19 December 2025, after he was reportedly lured to a meeting in the Zahle area of the Bekaa, after which all contact with him ceased. Investigations and

available information indicate that he may have been abducted in an operation linked to Israeli intelligence, in connection with investigations concerning Israeli airman Ron Arad, who has been missing since the 1980s.

By contrast, on 11 March 2025, Israel released five Lebanese prisoners—four civilians and one Lebanese Army soldier: Hussein Shabib Qatish, Mohammad Najm, Hussein Abbas, Ahmad al-Sayyed, and Mohammad Shukr. They were handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross through the Ras al-Naqoura crossing before being transferred to Lebanon.

Taken together, these incidents indicate that abductions and detentions of Lebanese citizens continued to be reported throughout 2025 amid ongoing military tensions along Lebanon's southern border, whether through ground incursions into Lebanese territory or the interception of civilians in maritime and border areas. These incidents raise serious concerns regarding the safety of civilians living in border areas, as well as violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and fundamental rules of international law prohibiting the detention or forcible transfer of persons across borders outside any lawful framework.

The investigation into the cases of Lebanese prisoners and hostages held in Israeli detention reveals serious indications of multiple patterns of grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including torture; cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; the taking of civilians as hostages; and the denial of fundamental safeguards governing lawful detention. Documented testimonies indicate that a number of detainees were subjected to severe beatings, starvation, sleep deprivation, blindfolding, and prolonged restraint for hours or days, as well as threats, psychological coercion, and attempts to extract confessions through violence, including acts that may amount to sexual violence. The lack of transparency regarding the number and identities of detainees, together with the continued denial of access to them by the International Committee of the Red Cross, further undermines the minimum safeguards afforded to prisoners and detainees. These facts underscore the need for systematic documentation of such violations, accountability for their perpetrators, and the

activation of international mechanisms capable of protecting civilians and prisoners and ensuring that those responsible do not enjoy impunity.

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, issued a documentation report addressing a number of cases reported to it through family sources, first-hand testimonies, and corroborated information from national and international actors⁹⁷. The document sets out the facts relating to these cases as they were reported to the Commission, including the basic personal information of the individuals concerned and the reported dates and circumstances of their arrest or disappearance. Its purpose is to preserve a preliminary factual record of these cases amid the continuing lack of sufficient official information regarding the places of detention or legal status of a number of those concerned. This documentation initiative also forms part of broader efforts to uphold families' right to know the fate and whereabouts of their relatives and to support efforts to protect persons deprived of their liberty in accordance with relevant international standards.

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, affirms that security arrangements and ceasefire understandings cannot derogate from non-derogable obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The Commission expresses its grave concern over reports of the continued detention of Lebanese nationals by Israel, including allegations of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, incommunicado detention, ill-treatment and torture, and denial of fair trial guarantees. It is also deeply concerned by allegations that Lebanese detainees have been transferred from Lebanon to detention facilities inside Israel, in violation of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as by the continued lack of complete information regarding the fate and whereabouts of missing Lebanese persons.

⁹⁷ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (Lebanon), "Legal Document on the Status of Lebanese Prisoners, Detainees, and Missing Persons Held by Israel," publication issued by the Commission, December 2025. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/4814>

As part of its continued engagement on the issue of Lebanese detainees and missing persons, the National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, prepared a draft international resolution on the human rights situation of Lebanese detainees in Israel⁹⁸, to present it to the United Nations Human Rights Council under Item 2 of the agenda during one of its three regular sessions in 2026. The proposed draft resolution is grounded in international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against Torture. It refers to relevant international instruments, in particular former Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2003/8 and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006).

The draft resolution proposes condemning the continued detention of Lebanese nationals in Israel under circumstances alleged to involve arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, incommunicado detention, or ill-treatment. It calls for the immediate release of all persons arbitrarily detained and for the disclosure of the fate and whereabouts of missing persons. It further emphasizes Israel's obligation to comply with the Fourth Geneva Convention, particularly the prohibition on transferring protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying power, and to ensure humane treatment and full respect for fair trial guarantees.

In this context, the Commission recommends that the Lebanese Government consider endorsing the draft resolution and formally submitting it to the Human Rights Council for consideration and adoption. Such a step would contribute to strengthening international oversight of the situation of Lebanese detainees, ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and advancing international efforts to clarify the fate of missing persons and secure the release of those arbitrarily detained.

⁹⁸ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture (Lebanon), *Draft Resolution on the Human Rights Situation of Lebanese Detainees in Israel – Proposal for Submission to the Human Rights Council, Sixty-First Session (2026)*, internal document prepared by the Commission.

Chapter Two: Activities of the National Human Rights Commission, Including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, was established pursuant to **Decree No. 3267 of 19 June 2018** and **Decree No. 5147 of 5 July 2019**.

The Commission is mandated to protect and promote human rights in Lebanon in accordance with the standards outlined in the Lebanese Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international human rights treaties and conventions to which Lebanon is bound, and Lebanese legislation consistent with those standards. In addition, it is entrusted with the specific functions assigned to it under its establishing law.

In carrying out its mandate, the Commission is empowered to communicate independently with international and national bodies concerned with the promotion and protection of human rights.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Who Is the National Human Rights Commission, Including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture?"*, 16 July 2019, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/2538>

In 2025, the **Internal Bylaws**¹⁰⁰ and the **Financial Regulations**¹⁰¹ of the National Human Rights Commission, which include the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, were published in the Official Gazette pursuant to **Decrees Nos—1726 and 1727**, issued on **20 November 2025**.

The adoption of these two instruments marks a significant institutional milestone in the Commission's operationalization, enabling it to effectively carry out its mandate to protect and promote human rights. They establish the framework governing the Commission's administrative and financial operations, regulate its procedures for receiving complaints, and strengthen its capacity to conduct visits to places of detention.

The adoption of the **Internal Bylaws** and the **Financial Regulations** is consistent with the provisions of **Law No. 62/2016** and Lebanon's international obligations, particularly under the **Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT)**. It also reinforces the Commission's institutional independence and transparency in accordance with the **Paris Principles** governing National Human Rights Institutions.¹⁰²

The year 2025 also witnessed a further institutional milestone with the submission by the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, of the draft **Code of Ethics** Decree to the Ministry of Justice pursuant to Letter No. 44/25 of **4 December 2025**, in accordance with the provisions of **Law No. 62/2016**. The draft decree was subsequently referred to the **Council of State** for its advisory opinion before being submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. The proposed Code of Ethics aims to establish a clear framework governing professional and ethical conduct within the Commission. It sets out principles of integrity, independence, and the prevention of conflicts of interest; regulates the professional conduct of Commissioners, staff members, and other collaborators; strengthens safeguards relating to data protection and confidentiality; and introduces measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, while also regulating media relations and institutional cooperation. This draft forms part of the Commission's broader efforts to complete its

¹⁰⁰ Republic of Lebanon, **Decree No. 1762 of 7 November 2025 on the Internal Bylaws of the National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture**, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/internal-bylaw>

¹⁰¹ Republic of Lebanon, **Decree No. 1763 on the Financial Regulations of the National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture**, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/financial-bylaw>

¹⁰² National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Publication of the Internal Bylaws and the Financial Regulations of the National Human Rights Commission in the Official Gazette,"* 23 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3694>

institutional and regulatory framework and to strengthen standards of good governance and transparency, in accordance with the **Paris Principles** governing National Human Rights Institutions.¹⁰³

The Commission is entrusted with a broad range of responsibilities¹⁰⁴ relating to the monitoring and promotion of human rights in Lebanon. Its primary functions include monitoring Lebanon's compliance with international human rights standards and international humanitarian law, and preparing and publishing both thematic and periodic reports on these matters. The Commission also contributes independently to the reports that the Lebanese State is required to submit under its international human rights obligations.

In addition, the Commission provides opinions on matters referred to it by the competent authorities, as well as on initiatives relating to compliance with human rights standards. It is further empowered to express its independent views on legislation, decrees, administrative decisions, and draft public policies affecting the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Commission also receives complaints and reports concerning alleged human rights violations and contributes to their resolution through negotiation, mediation, or litigation, as appropriate.

Furthermore, the Commission works to promote a culture of human rights and to encourage the implementation and further development of human rights education programs.

¹⁰³ Republic of Lebanon, Draft Decree on the Code of Ethics of the National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/code-of-ethics>

¹⁰⁴ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, "Who Is the National Human Rights Commission, Including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture?", 16 July 2019, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/2538>

The National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, or any of its members designated for that purpose, is entrusted with a range of responsibilities related to monitoring the treatment and conditions of persons deprived of their liberty. In particular, it has the authority to conduct regular or unannounced visits, at any time, to any place of deprivation of liberty without prior notification or the authorization of any administrative, judicial, or other authority.

The National Preventive Mechanism is also empowered¹⁰⁵ to conduct private or group interviews with persons deprived of their liberty in complete confidentiality and without any form of supervision, with the assistance of an interpreter where necessary.

In addition, the Mechanism may interview any other person whom it considers capable of providing relevant information or assistance necessary to fulfill its mandate. It is entitled to unrestricted access to information, subject to the confidentiality requirements inherent in the exercise of its functions.

The National Preventive Mechanism is further authorized to receive complaints and requests for interviews from persons deprived of their liberty and, where necessary, to request or arrange for medical examinations or assessments.

Accordingly, the following section presents the principal activities of the National Human Rights Commission and the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture during 2025.

Independent Contributions to Reports Required of the Lebanese State

In the exercise of its independent mandate to monitor the Lebanese State's compliance with its international human rights obligations, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, published, on **12 January 2025**, a comprehensive review of Lebanon's reporting record before the United

¹⁰⁵ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Who Is the National Human Rights Commission, Including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture?"*, 16 July 2019, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2538>

Nations human rights treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

This review was an independent national monitoring and documentation exercise intended to highlight the extent of official delays and shortcomings in preparing periodic reports, implementing concluding observations and recommendations issued by international human rights mechanisms, and the continuing failure to establish effective cooperation with the relevant United Nations mechanisms.

Drawing on the applicable international reporting deadlines, the Commission noted that Lebanon had fallen overdue in appearing before four core United Nations treaty bodies: the **Committee against Torture** since **May 2021**, the **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** since **October 2021**, the **Human Rights Committee** since **April 2023**, and the **Committee on the Rights of the Child** since **June 2023**.

The Commission also highlighted Lebanon's continued failure to comply with 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**, noting that the State had yet to submit its **initial report**, which had been due since **8 December 2006**.

In addition, the Commission observed that the State had failed to submit the follow-up information requested by the **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)** within the prescribed deadline, particularly about the establishment and functioning of the National Human Rights Institution, the National Human Rights Action Plan, and birth registration.¹⁰⁶

The review went beyond merely documenting reporting delays. It also highlighted the structural nature of the problem, noting that Lebanon has repeatedly failed to implement the recommendations of the United Nations treaty bodies calling for the establishment of a **permanent National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up**

¹⁰⁶ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Review of Lebanon's Human Rights Record before the Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures: Delay and Procrastination,"* 12 January 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/1523>

(NMRF) equipped with adequate human and technical resources. Such a mechanism would coordinate reporting across government institutions and ensure regular consultation with the National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations.

The Commission considered that the absence of such an institutional framework has contributed to transforming Lebanon's international reporting obligations into irregular and fragmented exercises, subject to shifting political and administrative considerations, rather than treating them as an integral component of a coherent public policy based on the principle of the continuity of the State and its international obligations.¹⁰⁷

The Commission also examined Lebanon's cooperation with the **special procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council**, noting that although Lebanon has maintained a **standing invitation** to all special procedures mandate holders since **17 March 2011**, it has continued to delay facilitating a significant number of requested country visits.

The Commission observed that **thirteen Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups** had been awaiting visits to Lebanon for several years. These include the **Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances**, the **Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers**, the **Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression**, the **Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food**, the **Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association**, and the **Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls**.

The Commission concluded that these prolonged delays cannot be explained solely by logistical or technical constraints. Rather, they also reflect a selective political approach to engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms, whereby visits relating to issues considered less politically sensitive are at times facilitated, while visits concerning more complex or sensitive matters—such as judicial independence, enforced disappearance, or fundamental freedoms—continue to be postponed.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

The significance of this review lies not only in documenting the State's failure to fulfill its procedural obligations, but also in demonstrating the direct consequences of those failures for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Lebanon. Delays in engaging with international review mechanisms weaken accountability, impede the implementation of reform-oriented recommendations, and reduce opportunities to benefit from international technical assistance and expertise.

Accordingly, the Commission's initiative constitutes an important and independent contribution to addressing gaps in official follow-up. It serves as a reminder that compliance with Lebanon's international reporting and follow-up obligations is not merely a procedural or diplomatic matter, but an essential component of the State's responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights at the national level.

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, also submitted a written contribution to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in response to the call for submissions issued by the **Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group** established to explore the possibility of developing an **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

The call for submissions was issued pursuant to **Human Rights Council Resolution 56/5**, adopted on **10 July 2024**, which mandated consideration of a new Optional Protocol to strengthen the right to education, including early childhood education, free pre-primary education, and free secondary education. In its five-page submission, the Commission examined the legal and structural challenges preventing all children in Lebanon—particularly those belonging to the most vulnerable groups—from enjoying effective access to free pre-primary and secondary education. It also put forward a series of practical recommendations and possible implementation mechanisms to strengthen the realization of this right at the national level.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The Commission Submits Its Contribution to the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child,"* 1 April 2025, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/2810>

In exercising its mandate as an independent National Human Rights Institution, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, continued throughout 2025 to strengthen its engagement with the United Nations human rights system by submitting independent written contributions based on monitoring, documentation, and legal analysis.

In this context, on **14 July 2025**, the Commission submitted its report to the **United Nations Human Rights Council for Lebanon's Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**, which is scheduled to be considered during the **51st session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**, to be held in Geneva from **19 to 30 January 2026**.

The report was submitted at a critical moment for Lebanon, marked by the continuing economic collapse, deepening institutional paralysis, and erosion of the rule of law, as well as the grave consequences of the Israeli military offensive against Lebanon, which resulted in serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Rather than providing a comprehensive assessment of all recommendations addressed to Lebanon during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in 2021, the Commission deliberately focused on priority issues it considered to reflect the most urgent and serious structural deficiencies in Lebanon's national human rights protection system.

Accordingly, the report identified four principal priorities.

The first concerned the incomplete institutional establishment of the National Human Rights Commission and the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture. The report noted the continuing failure of the Lebanese authorities to adopt the implementing decrees necessary to render the Commission fully operational despite the passage of several years since its establishment, including the adoption of the **Internal Bylaws**, the **Financial Regulations**, the contractual framework, the decree governing members' remuneration, and the allocation of a permanent headquarters.

The second priority addressed torture, ill-treatment, and conditions of detention. The report highlighted persistent structural shortcomings in the investigation of allegations of torture, the continuing severe overcrowding in places of detention, the deteriorating conditions of detainees and prisoners, and the absence of adequate safeguards to ensure accountability and effective remedies.

The third priority focused on the rule of law and accountability. It identified significant deficiencies affecting the preparation of national reports and the implementation of international recommendations, Lebanon's continued delays in fulfilling its reporting obligations before several United Nations treaty bodies, and the absence of an updated and binding National Human Rights Action Plan.

The fourth section examined violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law committed during the Israeli military offensive against Lebanon. The report documented the heavy civilian casualties, attacks against civilians, journalists, and medical personnel, the unlawful use of white phosphorus, and the resulting large-scale displacement and serious violations affecting the rights of the most vulnerable groups.

In its concluding observations, the Commission emphasized that the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review should not be regarded merely as a procedural exercise involving the exchange of recommendations. Rather, it should constitute a genuine opportunity for the Lebanese State to rebuild its national human rights framework on clear institutional foundations, moving beyond a formalistic approach to compliance towards meaningful and sustainable reform.

To that end, the Commission called for the establishment of a permanent and effective **National Mechanism for the Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRF)** to coordinate the implementation of recommendations issued through the Universal Periodic Review and the United Nations treaty bodies. The Commission stressed that such a mechanism should operate across all levels of government and ensure regular,

meaningful participation by the National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations.

The Commission further emphasized that strengthening cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms, enabling the Commission to carry out its mandate independently and effectively, and adopting an approach grounded in accountability and transparency are all indispensable elements of any credible process aimed at improving Lebanon's human rights record.¹⁰⁹

As part of its cooperation with the United Nations Special Procedures and its broader engagement with the international human rights system, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, received the **United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Dr. Morris Tidball-Binz**, on **7 October 2025**, during his official visit to Lebanon, which took place from **29 September to 10 October 2025** at the invitation of the Lebanese Government.¹¹⁰

During his visit, the Special Rapporteur held an extensive technical meeting at the Commission's headquarters in Beirut with the Chairperson of the Commission, **Dr. Fadi Gerges**, and its members. The discussions focused on the legal and institutional framework for the protection of the right to life in Lebanon, as well as the practical challenges that impede effective and independent investigations into potentially unlawful deaths, including deaths occurring in custody, deaths resulting from the use of force, and deaths arising in the context of armed conflict.

The discussions also addressed ways to strengthen Lebanon's criminal investigation and forensic medicine systems in accordance with international standards, particularly the

¹⁰⁹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"National Human Rights Commission Report for the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Lebanon (2026)"*, 14 July 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3233>

¹¹⁰ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission in Lebanon Engages with a United Nations Expert on the Right to Life"*, 7 October 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3567>

Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016). This included enhancing forensic expertise, improving coordination among the competent judicial, security, and medical authorities, and ensuring the proper preservation of evidence and maintenance of the chain of custody in a professional and transparent manner.¹¹¹

Participants also discussed the importance of establishing an independent national forensic medicine institute and developing standardized procedures for the investigation of deaths, with a view to strengthening accountability and safeguarding the right of victims' families to know the truth and to obtain access to justice.

During the meeting, the Commission reaffirmed its full readiness to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and the relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms to strengthen Lebanon's capacity to investigate potentially unlawful deaths and to uphold the right to life as a fundamental and non-derogable human right.

The Commission further emphasized the importance of developing a comprehensive national system for monitoring, documenting, and investigating such cases, in accordance with Lebanon's obligations under international human rights law, while reinforcing the confidence of victims and their families in the country's justice institutions.

Providing Opinions on Legislation, Decrees, Decisions, Draft Instruments, and Public Policies

The National Human Rights Commission followed the public debate surrounding the draft law on the reconstruction of buildings damaged as a result of the Israeli military offensive against Lebanon. The Commission endorsed the analysis published by **Public**

¹¹¹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *Briefing Note Submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions on the Occasion of His Visit to Lebanon (29 September–10 October 2025)*, Reference No. 35/25, Beirut, 7 October 2025, available at: https://nhrc.lb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/NHRCCPT-35_25.pdf

Works Studio, which identified several human rights concerns related to the proposed legislation.

Among the issues highlighted were the limited scope of the draft law, which focuses primarily on the physical reconstruction of damaged buildings without adequately addressing the broader social and economic dimensions of recovery. The analysis also pointed to insufficient safeguards for tenants, the lack of clarity regarding the institutional framework for managing the reconstruction process, and the absence of effective mechanisms to prevent real estate speculation or mitigate the risk of the forced displacement of affected residents.¹¹²

Pursuant to its advisory mandate under **Article 15 of Law No. 62/2016**, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued a detailed opinion on the draft law proposing the replacement of pre-trial detention with electronic monitoring through the use of an electronic bracelet as an alternative to physical detention. The draft legislation was submitted to the Lebanese Parliament on **31 July 2025**.

The Commission issued its opinion in the context of the ongoing legislative debate on reforming Lebanon's criminal justice system by adopting alternatives to imprisonment to reduce overcrowding in places of detention while strengthening fair trial guarantees.

In assessing the proposed legislation, the Commission relied on **several relevant international standards, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), the United Nations Bangkok Rules on non-custodial measures, and the guidance in the revised Istanbul Protocol**. The Commission considered that introducing electronic monitoring could be an important reform measure, provided it is implemented within a legal framework that adequately safeguards the fundamental rights of the individuals concerned.

¹¹² National Human Rights Commission – Lebanon, *"A Critical Review of the Draft Law on the Reconstruction of Buildings Destroyed as a Result of the Israeli Military Offensive against Lebanon,"* 15 January 2025, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/2646>

In this regard, the Commission emphasized that the use of electronic monitoring should be subject to a reasoned judicial decision specifying its duration and conditions, and that the person concerned should enjoy the right to challenge and appeal the measure, in accordance with the fair trial guarantees enshrined in the Lebanese Constitution and the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**.

The Commission also stressed the importance of protecting the right to privacy and regulating the collection and processing of personal data in accordance with **Law No. 81/2018 on Electronic Transactions and Personal Data**. It called for adopting the necessary implementing decrees and establishing a clear institutional and technical framework governing the operation of the electronic monitoring system under effective judicial oversight.

The Commission concluded that, if accompanied by clear legal and human rights safeguards, the introduction of electronic monitoring could make a meaningful contribution to the modernization of Lebanon's criminal justice policy by promoting a reform-oriented approach that balances the protection of society with respect for human dignity.¹¹³

Pursuant to its advisory mandate under **Article 15 of Law No. 62/2016**, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued a legal opinion¹¹⁴ on the draft law regulating the trade in seeds, seedlings, and plant propagating materials.

¹¹³ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Issues Its Opinion on the Draft Law Proposing the Replacement of Pre-trial Detention with Electronic Monitoring,"* 5 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/3585>

¹¹⁴ For the National Human Rights Commission's detailed legal opinion on the **Draft Law Regulating the Trade in Seeds, Seedlings, and Plant Propagating Materials**, see: National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *Legal Opinion on the Draft Law Regulating the Trade in Seeds, Seedlings, and Plant Propagating Materials*, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Proposals-regarding-the-draft-law-regulating-the-trade-of-seeds-seedlings-and-propagation-materials-in-Lebanon.docx.pdf>

The Commission examined the draft legislation from a broader human rights perspective, concluding that its narrow technical and commercial approach failed to adequately address the human rights, social, and environmental dimensions associated with the **right to food**, the **rights of farmers**, **food sovereignty**, and the protection of **agricultural biodiversity**.

In formulating its opinion, the Commission relied on several relevant international legal instruments, including the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (2018)**, the **Convention on Biological Diversity**, and the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**.

The Commission considered that the draft law tends to promote an industrial model of agriculture that prioritizes the rights of commercial plant breeders at the expense of small-scale farmers, while failing to include explicit provisions safeguarding farmers' rights to save, use, exchange, and preserve their traditional seeds.

The Commission also warned of the proposed legislation's potential impact on national food security and local agricultural systems. It called for substantial amendments to recognize and protect Lebanon's national system of traditional seed varieties, strengthen safeguards for agricultural genetic resources against biopiracy and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and ensure the meaningful participation of farmers—particularly women and young people in rural areas—in agricultural governance processes.

The Commission concluded that adopting an approach grounded in **food sovereignty** and the **rights of peasants** is an essential prerequisite for advancing sustainable rural development and safeguarding Lebanon's agricultural biodiversity.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Issues Its Opinion on the Draft Law Regulating the Trade in Seeds, Seedlings, and Plant Propagating Materials,"* 5 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/3610>

Pursuant to its advisory mandate under **Article 15 of Law No. 62/2016**, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued a legal opinion on the draft law entitled "**The Right to Food and the Establishment of the National Food Systems Council**," submitted to the Lebanese Parliament by **MP Dr. Inaya Ezzeddine**.

The Commission considered that the proposed legislation represents an important foundational step towards transforming economic and social rights—particularly the right to adequate and sustainable food—from aspirational principles into legally enforceable obligations subject to monitoring and accountability. It further noted that the draft law is consistent with the Lebanese Constitution, Lebanon's international obligations, particularly under the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The Commission welcomed the proposal to establish a **National Food Systems Council** as an inclusive institutional framework bringing together the relevant ministries, independent bodies, and representatives of civil society, thereby strengthening coordination among agricultural, food, health, and environmental policies. It also welcomed the proposal to establish a **Permanent Committee on the Right to Food** within the National Human Rights Commission, noting that such a body would enhance independent oversight, transparency, and accountability in developing and implementing food policies. In its concluding recommendations, the Commission called for guaranteeing the Committee's financial and administrative independence, strengthening the participation of civil society and farmers in decision-making processes, harmonizing the legal definition of the right to food with international standards, and integrating food and environmental education into the national school curriculum.¹¹⁶

As part of its advisory mandate to provide opinions on public policies and related legislation, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued a **preliminary memorandum on 15**

¹¹⁶ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, "*The National Human Rights Commission Issues Its Opinion on the Draft Law on the Right to Food and the Establishment of the National Food Systems Council*," 6 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3616>

December 2025 on ensuring the participation of internally displaced persons in Lebanon's **2026 parliamentary elections**. The Commission emphasized that internal displacement must not constitute grounds for restricting citizens' political rights, noting that the right to participate in public affairs and to vote is guaranteed under **Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**. The memorandum also examined the challenges posed by Lebanon's geographically based electoral system in light of the large-scale internal displacement that the country has experienced since 2023. It proposed several practical measures to enable displaced voters to exercise their right to vote effectively, including the adoption of special electoral arrangements and the establishment of centralized polling centers, alongside strengthened monitoring and transparency mechanisms and the collection of accurate data on the situation of internally displaced persons.¹¹⁷

As part of its advisory mandate to provide opinions on draft legislation and public policies, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated—represented by its Commissioner for International Relations and Media, **Bassam Al Kantar**—in the consultative meeting convened by the Minister of Agriculture, **Dr. Nizar Hani**, to discuss the draft Seed Law.

During the meeting, the Commission presented several observations and recommendations to develop the draft into a comprehensive legislative framework governing the seeds, seedlings, and plant propagating materials sector, while ensuring an appropriate balance between regulating commercial activities and protecting agricultural genetic resources and traditional agricultural knowledge.

The Commission also emphasized the need to safeguard farmers' rights to save, exchange, and propagate traditional seed varieties, to preserve agricultural biodiversity, and to strengthen food sovereignty in Lebanon. In addition, it called for the adoption of

¹¹⁷ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Emphasizes the Need to Ensure the Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in the 2026 Parliamentary Elections,"* 15 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/4945>

transparent and equitable requirements governing the registration of plant varieties and the oversight mechanisms applicable to them.¹¹⁸

On **16 October 2025**, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued a legal opinion on the proposed law criminalizing bullying.

In its opinion, the Commission emphasized that addressing bullying requires a comprehensive legislative approach that extends beyond criminalization to include preventive, educational, and institutional measures aimed at strengthening protection, prevention, and access to effective remedies.

The Commission also stressed the importance of ensuring that the proposed legislation is consistent with Lebanon's international obligations, particularly the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, as well as other relevant international standards on protecting individuals from violence and harassment in educational, professional, and digital environments. The Commission considered that, in its current form, the proposed law contains several conceptual and legislative shortcomings, including the absence of clear provisions addressing **cyberbullying**, an insufficiently precise definition of the offense, and the failure to impose preventive obligations on educational institutions and employers. Accordingly, the Commission recommended that the draft law be substantially revised to enhance its protective effectiveness and to ensure its consistency with constitutional guarantees and international human rights standards.¹¹⁹

On **20 December 2025**, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued a **Position Paper on Human Rights, Digital Technologies, and the Lebanese Parliamentary Elections of May 2026**,

¹¹⁸ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, "*The National Human Rights Commission Participates in a Consultative Meeting on the Draft Seed Law*," 16 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3834>

¹¹⁹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, "*Legal Opinion of the National Human Rights Commission on the Proposed Law Criminalizing Bullying*," 16 October 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/5038>

prepared by the Commission's Commissioner for International Relations, Media, and Information Technology, **Bassam Al Kantar**. The paper examined the growing human rights implications of using digital platforms and artificial intelligence in the electoral process. It emphasized that, while digital transformation offers important opportunities to enhance democratic participation and improve access to information, it also presents significant risks to electoral integrity and the protection of fundamental rights, particularly **freedom of expression, the right to privacy, equality and non-discrimination, the right of access to information, and protection against disinformation, hate speech, and online gender-based violence**. The Commission called on the Lebanese State, the Supervisory Commission for Elections, the competent judicial and regulatory authorities, as well as technology companies and social media platforms, to adopt a human rights-based approach to governing the digital electoral environment. It stressed that such an approach should be grounded in the principles of the **rule of law, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, data protection, and cybersecurity**, thereby ensuring that digital technologies strengthen rather than undermine public trust and the fairness and integrity of the electoral process.¹²⁰

On **16 November 2025**, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued a legal opinion on the proposed amendments to the **Law Criminalizing Sexual Harassment and Providing for the Rehabilitation of Its Victims**. The Commission emphasized that the required legislative approach should not be limited to expanding the scope of criminalization and increasing penalties. Rather, it should adopt a comprehensive human rights-based approach that integrates prevention, protection, access to remedies, and accountability, while strengthening the position of victims and imposing clear responsibilities on employers and institutions to prevent, address, and respond to sexual harassment. The Commission also called for developing complaint and protection mechanisms beyond

¹²⁰ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Warns of the Risks Posed by Digital Technologies to the Integrity of the Lebanese Parliamentary Elections in May 2026,"* 20 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/4962>

the purely criminal justice framework, taking into account the specific circumstances of small enterprises in Lebanon. It further recommended strengthening the role of the Ministry of Labor in developing the necessary regulatory and policy guidance, and ensuring that national legislation is aligned with relevant international standards, particularly the **International Labor Organization (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)**.¹²¹

On **23 November 2025**, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued its opinion on the draft law proposing amendments to certain provisions of **Law No. 112/1993** establishing the Ministry of Social Affairs. The proposed amendments were primarily limited to changing the Ministry's name to the **Ministry of Social Development** and revising certain related administrative designations.

The Commission considered that, although the proposed change reflected a positive conceptual shift from a traditional social welfare approach towards a broader social development model, it remained limited from both a legislative and institutional perspective. In particular, it was not accompanied by comprehensive reform redefining the Ministry's mandate, organizational structure, and powers in light of the profound social and economic transformations Lebanon has experienced, especially following the successive crises that have affected the country since 2019.

The Commission further emphasized that any legislative reform in this field should be aligned with Lebanon's international obligations, particularly under the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, as well as with evolving international standards concerning the rights of older persons. It therefore called for a comprehensive modernization of the Ministry's institutional framework, the strengthening of its functions in the areas of social protection, the rights of persons with

¹²¹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *Legal Opinion of the National Human Rights Commission on the Proposed Amendments to the Law Criminalizing Sexual Harassment and Providing for the Rehabilitation of Its Victims*, 16 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/5028>

disabilities, children's rights, and the rights of older persons, and the establishment of an integrated national framework for social emergency response.¹²²

Receiving Complaints and Reports and Contributing to Their Resolution through Negotiation, Mediation, or Litigation

As part of its mandate to receive complaints and reports concerning human rights violations and to monitor the situations of individuals who may face risks affecting their dignity, personal safety, or legal guarantees, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, continues to examine and assess individual cases submitted to it within the scope of its statutory powers under the law.

These complaints cover a broad range of issues, including allegations of ill-treatment during arrest or detention, matters relating to detention procedures, threats or family-related disputes, extortion or harassment through digital means, as well as humanitarian and social situations requiring guidance or intervention with the competent authorities.

In this context, the Commission documents such cases, follows up with the relevant authorities, or refers them to the competent judicial or administrative bodies, with a view to ensuring respect for the rule of law and strengthening the protection of fundamental rights.

Data derived from the complaints and reports received by the Commission during 2025 indicate that a total of **83 cases** were recorded. Of these, **15 cases** were documented, while **9 complaints** met the admissibility requirements and were formally registered. These cases covered a broad spectrum of human rights violations and protection concerns.

¹²² National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *Legal Opinion of the National Human Rights Commission on the Draft Law Amending Certain Provisions of Law No. 112 (Establishing the Ministry of Social Affairs)*, 23 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/5033>

The largest category of cases related to arrest, detention, and judicial proceedings, including allegations of ill-treatment during arrest, detention pursuant to judicial warrants, prolonged pre-trial detention, and arrests at Beirut International Airport based on outstanding arrest warrants or mistaken identity arising from similarity of names.

Family-related cases and complaints involving threats and interpersonal violence also featured prominently, including allegations of death threats and serious family disputes. One case involved allegations of online harassment and extortion, reflecting the growing digital dimension of violations affecting privacy and human dignity. The data also included one case concerning allegations of possible sexual offenses committed outside Lebanon, as well as a humanitarian and social case involving a migrant worker who sought assistance due to the deterioration of his living conditions.

The data further indicate that approximately one-third of the cases involved foreign nationals or dual nationals, reflecting the cross-border nature of certain complaints, particularly those related to detention or legal disputes. Regarding the Commission's institutional response, its actions included following up with the competent authorities, requesting official information, referring complainants to the appropriate judicial or administrative mechanisms, and registering communications for further action where sufficient evidence or jurisdictional requirements were met.

These indicators demonstrate the Commission's growing role as a national mechanism for receiving complaints and monitoring human rights violations, as the range of cases continues to expand to include detention-related violations, humanitarian and social protection concerns, and digital rights violations. This trend underscores the need to strengthen legal protection mechanisms and institutional coordination to ensure an effective response to such cases.

On 24 May 2025, the Commission received a complaint from a Lebanese citizen who also holds Australian nationality and resides in Tripoli. The complaint alleged that he had been subjected to physical and verbal abuse during his arrest and interrogation by

security personnel in Tripoli and subsequently at the Information Branch's Cybercrime Unit in Baabda during 2023 and 2024.

According to the complaint, the complainant was subjected to ill-treatment, threats, and verbal humiliation, as well as the use of force while being escorted and handcuffed harshly, resulting in physical and psychological harm. The complaint also alleged that legal safeguards were not respected during the investigation, including the failure to notify the Australian Embassy despite his informing the officers that he held Australian nationality.

The complainant requested that the Commission examine the alleged violations and take the necessary action. The Commission subsequently contacted the relevant authorities and requested the relevant documentation. It was established that the case forming the subject of the complaint remains pending before the competent judicial authorities.

As part of its follow-up on complaints and reports received, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, addressed an official letter to the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation on **30 June 2025**, requesting information on the circumstances surrounding the detention of an individual who the Lebanese authorities had reportedly arrested upon his arrival at **Beirut–Rafic Hariri International Airport**.

This action followed the Commission's receipt of a complaint through its dedicated complaints hotline from a member of the detainee's family, requesting clarification of his whereabouts, the legal basis for his detention, and assurances that he would be allowed to communicate with his family and legal counsel. The competent authorities subsequently informed the Commission that the individual had been lawfully detained pursuant to a judicial arrest warrant.

On **1 October 2025**, the Commission received an email from an anonymous sender requesting the opening of an investigation concerning an individual holding both Lebanese and British nationality and residing in France. The request was based on

allegations of possible criminal offenses, including alleged sexual offenses and the possession or exploitation of digital material suspected of containing unlawful content.

The sender attached several documents and digital files, stating that these materials had previously been submitted to the French authorities. Given the nature of the allegations, the anonymous source of the communication, and the fact that the alleged acts were said to have occurred outside Lebanese territory, the Commission registered the correspondence in its records, noting that any further action would depend on the availability of substantiated information and the jurisdiction of the competent judicial authorities in Lebanon.

On **5 November 2025**, the Commission received an electronic communication containing information concerning alleged death threats and acts of vandalism targeting a Lebanese woman and members of her family. The information was contained in a message addressed to one of her relatives and copied to a number of human rights organizations and public institutions.

According to the communication, the allegations arose in the context of an escalating family dispute during which the woman accused certain family members of committing serious criminal offenses, including physical assault, unlawful detention, and attempted murder. These allegations were also contained in an audio recording attached to the message.

The Commission recorded the correspondence and the accompanying materials in its files. Given the nature of the family dispute and the fact that the allegations involved potential criminal offenses already circulating publicly, the Commission noted that assessing and determining such allegations falls within the jurisdiction of the competent judicial authorities should a formal complaint be filed or a judicial investigation be initiated.

On **23 November 2025**, the National Human Rights Commission received a complaint from a woman alleging that she had been subjected to online harassment and blackmail

through digital communication platforms. The complaint included messages and other communications that she considered abusive and harmful to her dignity and privacy.

Following a preliminary review of the complaint and the available information, the Commission advised the complainant of the legal remedies available to her, in particular the need to contact the Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Rights Bureau of the Internal Security Forces to initiate criminal proceedings and enable the competent authorities to investigate the alleged offenses.

The Commission also provided the complainant with the contact details of the relevant authorities and the available hotlines offering legal, psychological, and social support for victims of digital blackmail and online violence. She was further requested to provide the Commission with the reference number of the complaint once it had been formally registered with the competent security authority, so that the Commission could continue to follow up on the matter within the scope of its mandate.

On **23 November 2025**, the National Human Rights Commission received a complaint concerning the detention of a **54-year-old Egyptian national** who the General Security Directorate had held since **1 June 2025** following a complaint lodged by the company for which he had been employed.

The complaint raised several concerns regarding both the conditions of his detention and the legal procedures applied in his case. These included the prolonged duration of his pre-trial detention despite a court order granting his release on bail, which he could not afford. It also alleged shortcomings in his detention conditions, including lack of access to personal clothing and retention of his passport by his former employer. In addition, the complaint referred to his deteriorating health condition following illness and hospitalization.

The complainant further indicated that he had no relatives or support network in Lebanon and that the Embassy of Egypt had been informed of his situation. Within the scope of its mandate, the Commission followed up on the available information by

contacting the relevant authorities to verify the conditions of detention and to ensure respect for the detainee's legal safeguards and fundamental rights.

On **28 November 2025**, the Commission received an appeal for assistance from a migrant worker who had been residing in Lebanon for approximately ten years. He explained that his living conditions had deteriorated as a result of the economic crisis and that he had lost his employment after being injured in a motorcycle accident. As a consequence, he was unable to pay the rent for his accommodation and was facing eviction together with his wife.

After reviewing the request, the Commission referred the applicant to the competent organizations providing social assistance. He was supplied with a list of organizations offering food and medical assistance and social support, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), where applicable to his legal status, the migrant worker support services of the International Labor Organization (ILO), and several local organizations providing humanitarian assistance to migrant workers and other vulnerable persons, with a view to enabling him to obtain urgent assistance through the available mechanisms.

On **24 December 2025**, the National Human Rights Commission received a report concerning the detention of a **Syrian national** holding permanent residence in Germany, where he was employed, upon his arrival at **Beirut–Rafic Hariri International Airport** from Europe.

According to the report, he was initially detained at the airport due to suspected mistaken identity arising from similar names, after which communication with him ceased. The Commission followed up the matter with the relevant authorities, which confirmed that an **in absentia arrest warrant** had been issued against him and that the case was pending before the competent judicial authorities.

As part of its follow-up on individual complaints relating to fundamental rights and protection against threats to physical safety and a life in dignity, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture,

addressed a letter on **24 December 2025** to the Mayor of **Kfardebian**, with copies to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, the Governor of Mount Lebanon, and the District Commissioner of Keserwan.

The Commission called for urgent legal and technical measures to address the dangerous condition of a steep access road leading to a residential property after receiving a complaint that the hazardous road had caused repeated falls and resulting health and social consequences.

In its letter, the Commission emphasized that the municipality's responsibility in this regard derives from the **Municipalities Law**, particularly **Article 49**, as well as from the general principles of administrative law requiring public authorities to eliminate known and foreseeable dangers. It noted that any unjustified failure to act could jeopardize fundamental rights protected under both the Lebanese Constitution and international human rights law, foremost among them the rights to physical integrity and to live in dignity.

The Commission also requested that the municipality provide a written response detailing the measures already taken or planned, together with the expected timeframe for implementation, in line with the Commission's mandate to address complaints and promote the accountability of local authorities for discharging their legal obligations.

Promoting a Human Rights Culture and Advancing Human Rights Education Programs

As part of its efforts to promote awareness of international standards relating to the situation of women in places of detention, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, contributed to the dissemination of the findings of the global report "**Women in Prison: Insights from National Preventive Mechanisms**," launched by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) in Geneva on 12 December 2024, with contributions from National Preventive Mechanisms in 46 countries. The report highlights the structural challenges

and systemic discrimination faced by women in prisons, including the risk of ill-treatment, inadequate access to healthcare and gender-specific services, and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination affecting particular groups, such as foreign women, pregnant women, and women with mental health needs. The report also calls for structural reforms of criminal justice systems, particularly the wider use of alternatives to detention for non-violent offenses, improvements in physical and mental healthcare services, and enhanced professional training for prison personnel based on a gender-responsive approach. These recommendations are consistent with the **United Nations Bangkok Rules** and international standards for the prevention of torture and other forms of ill-treatment.¹²³

The National Human Rights Commission contributed to disseminating and analyzing the findings of the **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** for the period from October 2024 to March 2025. The analysis found that approximately **1.59 million people** in Lebanon—including Lebanese nationals, Syrian refugees, and Palestinian refugees—were experiencing **high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)**. The report further projected that this number could rise to approximately **1.65 million people** during the projection period, driven by the combined effects of armed conflict, displacement, economic deterioration, inflation, and declining humanitarian assistance. It underscored the urgent need for humanitarian interventions to safeguard the right to food and protect the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations.¹²⁴

The National Human Rights Commission also highlighted a report published by **UN Women** on the role of women in humanitarian response and the rebuilding of communities affected by the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon in late 2024.

¹²³ Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), *Women in Prison: A Global Analysis from National Preventive Mechanisms*, Geneva, 12 December 2024, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/2667>

¹²⁴ National Human Rights Commission – Lebanon, *"Analysis of Acute Food Insecurity in Lebanon According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for the Period from October 2024 to March 2025,"* available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/2652>

According to the report, more than **500,000 women and girls** were displaced. In contrast, women human rights defenders, community activists, and social workers played a pivotal role in providing psychosocial support and organizing relief initiatives to assist affected families. These initiatives also contributed to documenting cases of gender-based violence, strengthening community solidarity networks, and promoting women's economic empowerment, underscoring the importance of integrating a gender-responsive approach into post-conflict recovery efforts.¹²⁵

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in the First Agricultural Conference, held at the Islamic University of Lebanon – Khaldeh Campus on 27 September 2025 under the theme **"Justice and Food and Environmental Sovereignty: The Right to Food and Ecocide."** The conference brought together academics, experts, civil society organizations, and local bodies working on agriculture and food security. During the conference, the Commission's Commissioner for International Relations and Media, **Bassam Al Kantar**, delivered a presentation examining the relationship between the right to food and the right to a healthy environment as fundamental rights recognized under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. He also emphasized the important role of National Human Rights Institutions in monitoring public policies and promoting accountability on food security and the protection of environmental resources. In addition, he called for the development of a national legislative framework recognizing the right to food and for the stronger integration of food and environmental issues into Lebanon's national policies and human rights action plans.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ UN Women, *"Women of Lebanon at the Forefront: Rebuilding and Supporting One Another Amid the Ceasefire,"* 18 January 2025, republished on the website of the National Human Rights Commission – Lebanon, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2657>

¹²⁶ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"First Agricultural Conference at the Islamic University – Khaldeh: A Call for Justice, Food Sovereignty, and Environmental Protection,"* 27 September 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3528>

As part of its efforts to promote human rights education and foster a culture of human rights, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in a series of regional workshops organized by the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions in cooperation with the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Center for South-West Asia and the Arab Region. The workshops aimed to develop a practical guide on best practices for human rights education in primary, intermediate, and secondary schools across the Arab region. The Commission was represented at the workshops by its Secretary-General, Attorney Dr. Rana El Gemayel, who contributed by sharing the Commission's experience, participating in technical discussions, and helping draft the guide's content. The initiative seeks to strengthen the integration of human rights concepts into school curricula and to promote teaching methods grounded in the principles of human dignity, equality, and non-discrimination. The Commission also emphasized the importance of involving teachers, parents, and students in these efforts, including students with disabilities, to foster a lasting culture of human rights among future generations.¹²⁷

As part of its efforts to strengthen partnerships with local authorities and raise awareness of the role of National Human Rights Institutions, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in a public dialogue organized by the Municipality of Sidon on 18 December 2025. The event focused on introducing the Commission, its mandate, and its working methods. During the session, the Commission's Commissioner for International Relations and Media, **Bassam Al Kantar**, presented the legal basis for the Commission's establishment under Law No. 62/2016 and outlined its principal functions. These include monitoring Lebanon's compliance with international human rights standards, preparing reports, providing opinions on legislation and public policies, and receiving and examining complaints concerning human rights violations. He also highlighted the

¹²⁷ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, Contributes to the Development of a Regional Guide on Human Rights Education in Schools,"* 16 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3828>

role of the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture in protecting the rights of persons deprived of their liberty and improving conditions of detention, emphasizing the importance of cooperation between the Commission and local authorities in fostering a culture of human rights and strengthening public trust in state institutions.¹²⁸

Engagement with International Organizations

As part of its efforts to strengthen international cooperation and build institutional capacity, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, was featured in the report submitted pursuant to paragraph 13 of Human Rights Council Resolution 31/51. The report presented examples of good practices in supporting National Human Rights Institutions from August 2023 to July 2024. The report noted that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided the Commission with technical assistance and specialized training in human rights monitoring and investigations in places of detention. This support has strengthened the Commission's capacity—particularly that of the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture—to carry out its preventive and monitoring mandate in accordance with international standards. The report also highlighted the importance of the partnership between OHCHR and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in supporting National Human Rights Institutions, with particular emphasis on enhancing their independence, effectiveness, and cooperation with relevant international and regional human rights mechanisms.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The Municipality of Sidon Organizes a Dialogue Session on the Role, Mandate, and Functions of the National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture,"* 18 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/3877>

¹²⁹ National Human Rights Commission, *"Supporting National Human Rights Institutions and International Cooperation under Human Rights Council Resolution 31/51,"* 4 December 2024, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/2622>

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, also participated in a webinar organized by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) entitled "**Protecting People in Situations of Vulnerability: Challenges and Strategies for National Human Rights Institutions.**" The webinar provided a platform for National Human Rights Institutions to exchange experiences on strengthening torture prevention and implementing the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), particularly about the protection of persons in vulnerable situations in places of detention. During its intervention, the Commission emphasized the importance of empowering National Preventive Mechanisms within National Human Rights Institutions and called on GANHRI to support the Commission in overcoming the obstacles preventing it from obtaining international accreditation and fully exercising its mandate.¹³⁰

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, joined the global campaign launched by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) to highlight the role of National Human Rights Institutions in promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls. The campaign was organized with the participation of the four regional networks of National Human Rights Institutions. It featured the dissemination of awareness-raising content, case studies, and examples of good practices through social media platforms. This initiative formed part of the preparations for the 2025 GANHRI Annual Meeting and coincided with International Women's Day and the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, thereby reinforcing international cooperation in advancing gender equality and protecting the rights of women.¹³¹

¹³⁰ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, "*The Commission Participates in the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Webinar on Strengthening Torture Prevention*," 30 January 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/2675>

¹³¹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, "*The National Human Rights Commission Joins the GANHRI Global Campaign on the Rights of Women and Girls*," 11 February 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/2680>

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, published a reference document on **General Comment No. 1 (2024)** on Article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (CAT/OP/GC/1), adopted by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT). The General Comment aims to clarify the scope of the concept of *places of deprivation of liberty* set out in Article 4 of the Optional Protocol, encompassing any place under a State's jurisdiction or control where persons may be deprived of their liberty, whether in formal detention facilities or in other public or private settings. This initiative forms part of the Commission's efforts to promote awareness of the international standards governing the work of National Preventive Mechanisms and to provide a legal reference that assists relevant stakeholders in understanding and implementing the obligations arising under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.¹³²

It should be recalled that, on 25 May 2021, the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture in Lebanon submitted a written contribution to the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) concerning the interpretation of Article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT). The submission was made in the context of preparing a General Comment on the scope of places of deprivation of liberty subject to preventive visits and monitoring. The contribution emphasized the need to adopt a broad and purposive interpretation of the concept of deprivation of liberty, extending beyond prisons and traditional places of detention to include both public and private institutions in which persons may be unable to leave of their own free will, whether by order of, with the consent or acquiescence of, or at the instigation of a public authority. The submission also highlighted the legal and practical challenges Lebanon faces in aligning its legislation and practices with the requirements of the Optional Protocol, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It called for the National Preventive Mechanism to be fully enabled to carry out its mandate through a broader understanding of places of detention, along with the resources, institutional

¹³² Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), *General Comment No. 1 (2024) on Article 4 of the Optional Protocol (Places of Deprivation of Liberty)* (CAT/OP/GC/1), available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2687>

independence, and legal guarantees necessary for the effective exercise of its preventive functions. This contribution remains an important reference reflecting the Commission's early engagement in international discussions aimed at strengthening the prevention of torture and other forms of ill-treatment at both the national and international levels.¹³³

As part of its engagement with the international mechanisms of National Human Rights Institutions, the International Relations Department of the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, contributed to the preparation of a report submitted to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) on the challenges facing human rights defenders in Lebanon. The report examined the state of civic space amid the country's political and economic crises, highlighting the increasing pressures faced by journalists, environmental defenders, and human rights defenders, including judicial proceedings, intimidation, and harassment. The report also highlighted the institutional challenges facing the Commission, particularly the delay in adopting the implementing decrees required under Law No. 62/2016 concerning its internal rules of procedure and financial regulations, the determination of its members' remuneration, and the allocation of a permanent headquarters. It noted that these outstanding measures continue to limit the Commission's ability to fully discharge its mandate in accordance with international standards.¹³⁴

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, followed the proceedings of the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), held in Geneva from 10 to 12 March 2025. The meeting brought together National Human Rights Institutions,

¹³³ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Preventive Mechanism against Torture Contributes to the International Discussion on the Interpretation of Article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture,"* available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/4921>

¹³⁴ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Under Threat: Human Rights Oversight Bodies in Lebanon Face Growing Challenges,"* 21 March 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2718>

United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, and human rights experts. The meeting focused on strengthening the role of National Human Rights Institutions in protecting the rights of women and girls and advancing gender equality, while also providing a platform to exchange experiences and best practices in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The meeting also saw the election of a new leadership **for the Global Alliance, with Ms. Amina Bouayach elected Chairperson and Ms. Alyson Kilpatrick elected Secretary.** The National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon continues to participate in the work of the Global Alliance as an observer, pending the fulfillment of the requirements for "**A Status**" accreditation under the Paris Principles, particularly the adoption of the implementing decrees necessary to enable the Commission to carry out its mandate fully and effectively.¹³⁵

As part of its engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms and its contribution to international discussions on the impact of emerging technologies on the justice system, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, submitted a written contribution to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers in response to her call for submissions for her report on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems. The Commission's submission examined the potential risks of integrating artificial intelligence tools into Lebanon's judicial system in light of the structural challenges facing the judiciary, particularly limited resources, political interference, and delays in the administration of justice. The Commission also cautioned against using artificial intelligence technologies without a clear legal framework, noting the potential risks such technologies may pose to judicial independence, fair trial guarantees, and the protection of privacy, particularly regarding the use of facial recognition technologies and automated decision-making in criminal proceedings. The submission concluded with a set of recommendations aimed at regulating the use of artificial intelligence in a

¹³⁵National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, "*National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) Commit to Advancing Gender Equality at the GANHRI Annual Meeting*," 31 March 2025, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/2369>

manner consistent with international human rights standards, while ensuring meaningful human oversight, transparency, and accountability.¹³⁶

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, published an informational brief on the release of a new practical guide prepared by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Lebanon on implementing Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Law No. 191/2020). Article 47 is regarded as one of the most significant legal reforms aimed at strengthening fair trial guarantees and the rights of the defense during preliminary investigations. The guide, prepared by Attorney Lama El Amin and Attorney Farouk Al Moghraby, seeks to clarify the legal procedures governing the rights of persons deprived of their liberty from the moment of arrest. These include the right to contact and consult privately with a lawyer, the right to remain silent, the right to the assistance of an interpreter or a forensic physician, as well as an explanation of the legal safeguards governing the conduct of the judicial police during preliminary investigations.¹³⁷

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, through its Committee on Complaints by Child Victims of Violations of the Rights of the Child, launched a nationwide call inviting children in Lebanon to participate in the international initiative aimed at developing a new Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child addressing children's access to justice and effective remedies. The initiative sought to empower children to express their views and share their experiences regarding the challenges they face in accessing education and justice, in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child and the child's right to have their views respected, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Commission also called upon schools, civil society organizations, and partners working with children to support their meaningful participation in this

¹³⁶ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission in Lebanon Warns of the Risks of Using Artificial Intelligence in the Judicial System,"* 7 April 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2840>

¹³⁷ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture; Friedrich Ebert Foundation – Lebanon Office, *Practical Guide to the Implementation of Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure*, 31 May 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3049>

international process and to ensure that their voices are heard in the ongoing discussions at the United Nations.¹³⁸

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, issued a national statement entitled **"Children's Voices at the Heart of Protecting Their Rights: Lebanon's Children Send a Message to the World."** The statement was based on messages and contributions the Commission received from children across different regions of Lebanon as part of the international initiative to develop a new Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, focusing on access to justice and effective remedies. The statement reflected the children's priorities and aspirations, particularly regarding the right to education, protection from violence, and ensuring children's meaningful participation in decisions affecting their lives. The Commission also called for these voices to be brought to the international discussions scheduled to take place in Geneva, thereby strengthening recognition of children as active partners in the protection of their rights and in the development of policies that affect them.¹³⁹

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, published an informational brief on the release of a new policy paper issued by the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF), entitled *"National Action on International Issues: The Roles of National Human Rights Institutions in Relation to Cases and Situations Involving Extraterritorial Human Rights Violations."* The policy paper provides practical guidance on how National Human Rights Institutions can play an effective role in addressing cross-border and extraterritorial human rights violations through investigating alleged violations, conducting national studies, advising public authorities, strengthening international cooperation, and promoting human rights awareness. The publication of the Arabic

¹³⁸ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"We Want to Hear from You: Children's Voices at the Heart of Protecting Children's Rights,"* 4 June 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/3061>

¹³⁹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Children's Voices at the Heart of Protecting Their Rights: Children of Lebanon Address an Appeal to the World,"* 17 June 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/3179>

translation of the policy paper forms part of the Commission's efforts to support regional cooperation and to enable National Human Rights Institutions in West Asia to benefit from specialized knowledge resources in addressing human rights issues with an international dimension.¹⁴⁰

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, published an informational brief on the report issued by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) concerning the role of National Human Rights Institutions in the establishment and strengthening of National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRFs), which constitute one of the key pillars for aligning international human rights obligations with national policies. The report reviews the experiences of 58 National Human Rights Institutions from different regions, highlighting the importance of cooperation between National Human Rights Institutions and National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up in promoting the implementation of international recommendations issued by the United Nations Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies, and in ensuring that international human rights obligations are translated into practical national policies and measures.¹⁴¹

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in the regional workshop on **Strengthening Children's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa**, organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Amman from 9 to 11 September 2025.

¹⁴⁰ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture; Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF), *"National Action on International Issues: The Roles of National Human Rights Institutions in Addressing Issues and Cases Involving Human Rights Violations Beyond Territorial Borders,"* 2 July 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/3203>

¹⁴¹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture; Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), *"National Human Rights Institutions: The Quiet Force Behind Global Human Rights Commitments – The Role and Experience of National Human Rights Institutions in Establishing and Strengthening National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up,"* 3 July 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/3216>

During the workshop, the Commission's Commissioner for International Relations, **Bassam Al Kantar**, delivered a presentation highlighting the Commission's experience in promoting and advocating for children's rights. He emphasized the importance of expanding the role of National Human Rights Institutions beyond addressing individual complaints to include influencing public policy and governance. His presentation also outlined several initiatives undertaken by the Commission to strengthen the protection of children's rights, including the development of child-friendly complaints mechanisms and procedures, as well as linking the monitoring of children's rights to national action plans and relevant international reporting processes.¹⁴²

In November 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, formally submitted its application for international accreditation to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). This step was taken to strengthen international recognition of the Commission's independence and its compliance with the Paris Principles. The application followed a series of technical and diplomatic meetings in Geneva between the Commission's Commissioner for International Relations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other United Nations entities. These discussions focused on the technical and procedural requirements for the accreditation process, as well as on ways to support the Commission's participation in the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Obtaining "A Status" accreditation represents a major milestone in the Commission's institutional development. It would enable the Commission to participate independently in Human Rights Council sessions, deliver official statements and interventions, and contribute directly to relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms. The submission of the application also forms part of the Commission's broader institutional efforts to complete its regulatory and administrative framework and to strengthen its resources and

¹⁴² National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon Showcases Its Leadership in Children's Rights at a Regional Workshop in Amman,"* 10 September 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3377>

institutional capacities, thereby ensuring its full ability to fulfill its mandate to protect and promote human rights and prevent torture in Lebanon.¹⁴³

In November 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, held a meeting with the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, **Ms. Kaja Ollongren**, during her official visit to Lebanon, which aimed to assess the human rights situation and strengthen cooperation with the country's national human rights institutions. During the meeting, the Commission presented the key findings and recommendations of its reports, particularly about conditions in places of detention, the prevention of torture, and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms and access to justice. The Commission also underscored the importance of continued international cooperation to support Lebanon in fulfilling its human rights obligations and to reinforce the role of independent national institutions.¹⁴⁴

On 28 November 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, received the European Union Election Exploration Mission at its headquarters in Beirut as part of the Mission's assessment of the feasibility of deploying a full European Union Election Observation Mission for Lebanon's parliamentary elections scheduled for 2026. The meeting covered the political context, the electoral environment, and the requirements for conducting transparent and inclusive elections, as well as the extent to which recommendations from previous European Union Election Observation Missions had been implemented. During the meeting, the Commission presented a human rights-based approach to election observation covering all stages of the electoral process. The Commissioner for International Relations also presented a concept paper proposing a methodological framework for monitoring the human rights dimensions of the electoral process and for strengthening technical and operational cooperation with the European Union Mission.

¹⁴³ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Officially Submits Its Application for Accreditation to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)"*, 17 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/3641>

¹⁴⁴ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Discusses Priorities for Cooperation in Lebanon with the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights"*, 20 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/3673>

Both parties emphasized the importance of continued coordination to help ensure an electoral environment that respects fundamental freedoms, guarantees equal participation, and promotes transparency and accountability throughout the forthcoming electoral cycle.¹⁴⁵

Engagement with Governmental, Parliamentary, Professional, and Civil Society Stakeholders

Throughout 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, continued its active participation in the **Justice Forum**, an initiative aimed at reforming the justice sector and strengthening the rule of law in Lebanon. The Forum was launched in 2024 at the initiative of the Ministry of Justice, with participation from the judicial and legislative authorities and support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the European Union.

The Forum serves as a national platform bringing together the principal stakeholders in the justice sector, including the executive, legislative, and judicial authorities, the Beirut and Tripoli Bar Associations, academia, and civil society organizations. Its objective is to develop a national roadmap for justice sector reform.

Discussions focused on several structural challenges facing Lebanon's judicial system, particularly the need to strengthen judicial independence, enhance the effectiveness of judicial institutions, and improve access to justice. Participants also highlighted the importance of modernizing legislation and ensuring courts have the financial and human resources needed to perform their functions effectively.

The Forum represents an important institutional step toward developing a participatory approach to judicial reform, aimed at reinforcing public confidence in the justice system and advancing the broader process of institutional reform in Lebanon.

¹⁴⁵ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"European Union Election Exploration Mission Meets with the National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, in Beirut,"* 28 November 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3709>

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in a training course organized by the Human Rights Institute of the Beirut Bar Association, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), on the theme: *"Children in Contact with the Law during Investigation and Detention: Reality, Challenges, and the Role of the Lawyer."* The training addressed the legal standards and procedural safeguards that must be respected when dealing with children during investigation and detention, as well as alternatives to deprivation of liberty. In this context, the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Fadi Gerges, presented the Commission's role in monitoring the situation of children deprived of their liberty and identifying potential human rights violations in places of detention. He stressed the importance of adopting legal alternatives that reduce the detention of children, in accordance with international standards on the rights of the child.¹⁴⁶

To strengthen the Commission's independence and enable it to carry out its statutory mandate, the Commission's budget was approved pursuant to Decree No. 56 of 11 March 2025, which provided for the adoption and implementation of the 2025 State Budget. The budget was published in the Official Gazette, Supplement to Issue No. 11, dated 13 March 2025. The total appropriation allocated to the Commission amounted to **LBP 33,515,000,000** (thirty-three billion five hundred and fifteen million Lebanese pounds). The inclusion of this budget is based on the legal framework governing the Commission's work, in particular Law No. 62/2016 establishing the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, as well as the regulatory decisions issued by the Ministry of Finance classifying the

¹⁴⁶ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Children in Contact with the Law during Investigation and Detention: Reality, Challenges, and the Role of the Lawyer,"* 12 February 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2683>

Commission under the chapter of independent national bodies in the State's general budget.¹⁴⁷

On 4 April 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, addressed a letter to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers concerning correspondence issued by the Civil Service Board requesting information on salaries, allowances, and wages in public institutions and state-funded bodies. In its letter, the Commission clarified that its inclusion among the bodies affiliated with the Presidency of the Council of Ministers had no legal basis. It emphasized that its legal status guarantees its full independence as a national institution established under Law No. 62/2016, as amended, in accordance with the Paris Principles relating to National Human Rights Institutions. The Commission further noted that its annual budget is allocated under the section of the State's general budget dedicated to independent national bodies. It stressed that the Commission's effective functioning requires the completion of the implementing decrees provided for under the law, particularly those concerning the determination of the remuneration of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and members of the Commission. The Commission emphasized that adopting these decrees is essential to ensuring the institution's regular functioning and enabling it to fulfill its statutory mandate to protect and promote human rights.

On 29 July 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, organized a national consultative meeting in Beirut with civil society organizations, in partnership with the National Human Rights Committee of the State of Qatar and with the support of the General Secretariat of the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions. The meeting brought together representatives of 57 human rights, social, and civil society organizations and associations to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation between the Commission and civil society in protecting and promoting human rights. Discussions focused on several

¹⁴⁷ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Budget of the National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, for the Fiscal Year 2025,"* 5 April 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2824>

key thematic areas, including the rights of persons with disabilities, civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, gender equality and women's rights, and the rights of the child. The meeting concluded with the issuance of a joint petition by the participating civil society organizations calling for the prompt adoption of the implementing decrees necessary to operationalize the Commission, safeguard its independence, and enable it to carry out its mandate in accordance with the Paris Principles.¹⁴⁸

On 28 July 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, addressed a letter to the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs calling for the adoption of a national position in support of the formal inclusion of National Human Rights Institutions that are compliant with the Paris Principles in the work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), within the framework of the ongoing negotiations on the review of the Commission's working methods. The Commission noted that such inclusion would strengthen the participation of National Human Rights Institutions in international efforts to promote gender equality and the rights of women, in line with the position advocated by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and United Nations General Assembly Resolution 78/204.¹⁴⁹

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in the inaugural meeting of the Working Group on Integrating Anti-Corruption Efforts and Promoting Equality, hosted by the Ministry of State for Administrative Development on 9 September 2025. The meeting brought together representatives of government institutions, legal experts, and civil society

¹⁴⁸ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"National Consultative Meeting in Beirut to Strengthen Cooperation between the National Human Rights Commission and Civil Society in the Field of Human Rights,"* 30 July 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3277>

¹⁴⁹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Calls for the Formal Inclusion of National Human Rights Institutions in the Work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women,"* 28 July 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3267>

organizations. During the meeting, the Commission's Treasurer and Chair of the Working Group, **Mr. Ali Youssef**, presented an approach linking anti-corruption efforts with the promotion of equality and social inclusion. He emphasized the need to address the structural causes of corruption and to strengthen the participation of marginalized groups in the development and monitoring of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. The discussions also explored ways to develop more inclusive policies aligned with international standards, particularly the United Nations Convention against Corruption.¹⁵⁰

On 14 August 2025, a coalition of Lebanese civil society organizations, led by organizations of persons with disabilities, submitted a petition to the Lebanese Government calling for the immediate operationalization of the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, and for the safeguarding of its independence in accordance with the Paris Principles. The signatory organizations stressed the importance of completing the adoption of the outstanding implementing decrees and ensuring the Commission has adequate financial resources to fulfill its mandate to protect and promote human rights and prevent violations. The petition also underscored the need to protect the Commission, its members, and those cooperating with it from any form of pressure or retaliatory action, while strengthening regular consultation with civil society organizations, particularly those working with groups that are most vulnerable to human rights violations.¹⁵¹

As part of the preparations for Lebanon's fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in the broad national consultations held in Beirut on 12 September 2025. The consultations were organized in cooperation with the

¹⁵⁰ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Integrating Equality into Anti-Corruption Efforts: A Turning Point in Lebanon's Reform Agenda,"* 14 September 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3411>

¹⁵¹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and Civil Society Call for the Immediate Operationalization and Guarantee of the Independence of the National Human Rights Commission in Lebanon,"* 14 August 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3362>

Government of Lebanon and the Regional Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with the participation of the National Mechanism for Reporting, Follow-up and Implementation (NMRF), national institutions, and civil society organizations. During the consultations, the Commission presented its independent contribution to the Universal Periodic Review process before the United Nations Human Rights Council, highlighting the institutional and financial challenges it faces, as well as several priority issues. These included the Commission's independence in accordance with the Paris Principles; conditions in places of detention and the prevention of torture; the promotion of accountability and the rule of law; and violations associated with military operations in Lebanon during 2023 and 2024. The Commission also emphasized the importance of adopting a participatory approach that includes civil society in monitoring the implementation of international recommendations and strengthening the national human rights protection system in Lebanon.¹⁵²

Bassam Al Kantar, Commissioner for International Relations and Media at the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in the inaugural episode of the *Grand Serail Dialogues* program, launched by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in cooperation with Télé Liban on 21 October 2025. During his intervention, he outlined the Commission's role in visiting places of detention and monitoring detainees' conditions, emphasizing the importance of Lebanon's compliance with its international obligations, particularly under the Convention against Torture and the principle of non-refoulement. He also stressed the need to address prison overcrowding and expedite judicial proceedings to reduce prolonged pre-trial detention. In addition, he welcomed the adoption of the

¹⁵²National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, "*National Consultations with Civil Society Organizations in the Context of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)*," 15 September 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3447>

Commission's internal rules and financial regulations, describing them as a fundamental step toward strengthening its institutional independence.¹⁵³

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in the official ceremony marking the launch of Lebanon's National Human Rights Action Plan 2026–2030, held at the Parliament on 12 December 2025. The event brought together representatives of the legislative, executive, and judicial authorities, the United Nations, and civil society organizations.

In his address, the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Fadi Gerges, emphasized that the National Action Plan represents a national commitment to placing human rights at the heart of public policy. He stressed that its success ultimately depends on effective implementation, regular review, and enabling the Commission to fully discharge its mandate through the completion of the necessary implementing decrees and the guarantee of its independence and adequate resources, in accordance with Law No. 62/2016 and the Paris Principles.¹⁵⁴

The National Human Rights Commission actively participated in the process of updating the National Human Rights Action Plan for the period 2026–2030, in cooperation with governmental institutions, Parliament, and civil society organizations. The Commission emphasized that the effective implementation of the National Action Plan requires the adoption of a number of fundamental standards to ensure its effectiveness. These include the formal legislative adoption of the Plan to give it binding legal force; alignment with Lebanon's international human rights obligations to ensure effective access to remedies; addressing actual and potential human rights violations through realistic, time-bound measures; and adopting a participatory and transparent approach

¹⁵³ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Participation of the National Human Rights Commission in the First Session of the Serial Dialogues Program,"* 21 October 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3541>

¹⁵⁴ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Welcomes the Launch of Lebanon's National Human Rights Plan 2026–2030 by the Parliament,"* 12 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3765>

involving State institutions, national bodies, civil society organizations, and international partners. The Commission also stressed the importance of establishing mechanisms for periodic review and continuous updating to ensure that the Plan remains responsive and adaptable to evolving circumstances. In addition, the Commission proposed an annual national conference on 10 December each year to review the state of human rights in Lebanon based on its annual report. Such a conference, it noted, would strengthen regular accountability and foster a participatory approach, drawing inspiration from the Universal Periodic Review mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council.¹⁵⁵

As part of its institutional engagement with the constitutional and parliamentary authorities, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, presented its proposed 2026 budget to the Parliamentary Committee on Finance and Budget. During the session, the Commission's Treasurer and Commissioner for Complaints, Mr. Ali Youssef, stressed the need to approve the budget in full, as submitted in the proposed draft. She emphasized that the proposed appropriations represent the minimum level of funding required to enable the Commission to carry out its mandate effectively and independently, in light of the national and international responsibilities entrusted to it. The Commission also raised the need to complete the legal requirements necessary for the full operationalization of its work, particularly the issuance of the decree establishing the remuneration of its members, in accordance with the provisions of its founding law and internationally recognized standards of institutional independence. The Commission noted that this is essential to enable it to discharge its oversight and national mandate fully. Several members of the Parliamentary Committee expressed their understanding of the Commission's requests, and a preliminary consensus was reached to increase the

¹⁵⁵ Parliament of Lebanon, *National Human Rights Plan in Lebanon 2026–2030*, December 2025, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/3811>

Commission's budget in line with the submitted proposal, with the matter to be considered within the allocation of the budgetary reserve.¹⁵⁶

As part of institutional engagement with parliamentary bodies and efforts to strengthen accountability for implementing legislation governing the Commission's work, a press conference was held on 17 December 2025 at the headquarters of the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture. During the conference, Member of Parliament Georges Okais announced that he had submitted a parliamentary question to the Government regarding the reasons for the delay in issuing the decree establishing the remuneration of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and members of the Commission, as provided for in Article 30 of Law No. 62/2016. The Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Fadi Gerges, welcomed this parliamentary initiative, emphasizing the importance of completing the necessary implementing decrees to enable the Commission to operate effectively and to safeguard its financial and administrative independence in accordance with the Paris Principles and Lebanon's international obligations. The initiative also highlighted the impact of the continued delay in issuing the remuneration decree, noting that it undermines the Commission's ability to carry out its mandate, including receiving complaints, monitoring conditions in places of detention, and promoting the protection of human dignity.¹⁵⁷

On 22 December 2025, the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in a technical consultative meeting organized by the National Commission for Lebanese Women to discuss the establishment of a comprehensive national platform on violence against women and girls, within the framework of the National Gender Equality Observatory. The Commission was represented at the meeting by its Secretary-General, Attorney Dr. Rana

¹⁵⁶ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"The National Human Rights Commission Presents Its 2026 Budget to the Parliamentary Finance and Budget Committee and Calls for Its Full Approval without Reductions,"* 17 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3849>

¹⁵⁷ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"MP Georges Okais Announces a Parliamentary Question to the Government on the Implementing Decrees of the National Human Rights Commission from its Official Headquarters,"* 17 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3861>

El Gemayel. Discussions focused on developing a national digital platform to consolidate information, data, programs, and services related to the prevention of and response to gender-based violence. The platform would encompass referral mechanisms, shelters, hotlines, legal, health, psychological, and social services, as well as training and awareness-raising resources. During the meeting, the Commission emphasized the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach that addresses the needs of women and girls subjected to violence without any form of discrimination. It also stressed the need to integrate the requirements of persons with disabilities and to ensure accessibility of information and services, thereby strengthening national coordination and supporting efforts to prevent violence while enhancing protection and access to justice for victims.¹⁵⁸

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, participated in the work of the Working Group on Integrating Anti-Corruption Efforts and Promoting Equality, which held its fifth meeting at the Ministry of State for Administrative Development on 22 December 2025. The meeting aimed to approve the final version of the strategic recommendations and the implementation action plan in preparation for their submission to the Technical Committee assisting the Ministerial Anti-Corruption Committee.

Mr. Ali Youssef, Treasurer of the National Human Rights Commission, chaired the meeting in his capacity as Chair of the Working Group. Participants reviewed a package of recommendations linking anti-corruption policies with the promotion of equality, inclusion, and social justice. These recommendations covered developing the legal and institutional framework, empowering marginalized groups, and strengthening digital transparency and data production.

The discussions also emphasized the importance of integrating gender equality and the rights of persons with disabilities into public policies, as well as strengthening the role of

¹⁵⁸ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Participation of the National Human Rights Commission in a Consultative Meeting on the Establishment of a National Platform on Violence against Women and Girls,"* 22 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3929>

oversight institutions—including the National Human Rights Commission and the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture—in promoting accountability and good governance.¹⁵⁹

Statements and Speeches

On 14 January 2025, the National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, issued a statement calling on Lebanon's newly formed government to place **human rights and the prevention of torture** at the forefront of its policy agenda. The Commission highlighted **ongoing challenges in implementing the Anti-Torture Law, severe prison overcrowding, the lack of accountability for human rights violations, and the need to strengthen the Commission's independence and institutional capacity to discharge its mandate effectively.**

The statement also outlined a **seven-point priority agenda**, which included implementing the recommendations of the United Nations treaty bodies, protecting the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, strengthening economic and social rights, combating gender-based violence, and taking concrete steps toward the abolition of the death penalty. According to the Commission, these measures are essential to restoring the rule of law and rebuilding public confidence in Lebanon's institutions.¹⁶⁰

In **July 2025**, the release of Lebanese national **Georges Ibrahim Abdallah** after more than four decades of detention in France emerged as a significant issue concerning the **right to liberty and fair trial guarantees**. The **French Court of Appeal** ordered his release, subject to his deportation to Lebanon, despite the fact that he had been eligible for

¹⁵⁹ National Human Rights Commission, including the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, *"Working Group on Integrating Anti-Corruption Efforts and Promoting Equality Finalize even though Recommendations and Action Plan,"* 22 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3949>

¹⁶⁰ National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Statement by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on Lebanon*, 18 January 2025. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2660>

parole since **1999**. Throughout the intervening years, his repeated applications for release had been consistently rejected.

The case highlights the human rights concerns that arise when detention extends far beyond the periods generally considered proportionate within criminal justice systems. It has prompted broader discussions regarding the proportionality of punishment, the excessive duration of detention, and the need to ensure that parole mechanisms operate effectively and in accordance with the principles of justice and the rule of law.

In this context, the **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, welcomed the decision ordering Abdallah's release and called upon the Lebanese authorities to take the necessary diplomatic and logistical measures to ensure his safe return to Lebanon following his release.¹⁶¹

The **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, published data from the **International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)**, documenting developments in internal displacement in Lebanon resulting from the escalation of cross-border hostilities since **October 2024**.

According to the report, approximately **113,578 internally displaced persons (IDPs)** had been recorded by **mid-January 2025**, with the highest concentrations in the districts of **Sidon (Saida), Nabatieh, Tyre, Aley, and Metn**. The data further indicated that **35%** of internally displaced persons were **under the age of 18**, while **adult women** accounted for an additional **35%** of the displaced population.

¹⁶¹ National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, *“French Court of Appeal Orders the Release of Georges Ibrahim Abdallah After 41 Years of Imprisonment,”* 17 July 2025. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3260>

The report underscores the importance of maintaining accurate and up-to-date displacement data to support humanitarian response planning and to ensure the effective protection of the rights of internally displaced persons.¹⁶²

On the occasion of **International Women's Day**, observed on **8 March 2025**, the **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, issued a statement calling for strengthened protection and empowerment of women in Lebanon amid the country's deepening economic and social crises.

In its statement, the Commission emphasized the need for comprehensive legislative and institutional reforms to ensure **gender equality**, including amending discriminatory laws, improving women's access to justice, and strengthening measures to combat **gender-based violence**. It also stressed the importance of increasing women's participation in political and public life, **protecting migrant domestic workers**, and **improving conditions for rural women and refugee women**.

The Commission concluded by urging the Lebanese State to adopt urgent legislative and administrative measures to guarantee that all women and girls can fully enjoy their human rights without discrimination.¹⁶³

The **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, issued a statement congratulating **Amina Bouayach**, President of the **National Human Rights Council of the Kingdom of Morocco**, on her unanimous election as **Chairperson of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)** during the meeting held at the **Palace of Nations in Geneva** on **11 March 2025**.

¹⁶² National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM): Mobility Snapshot Report – Round 72*, January 2025. Available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/2664>

¹⁶³ National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, “*National Human Rights Commission Calls for the Protection and Empowerment of Lebanese Women on International Women's Day*,” 8 March 2025. Available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/2704>

In its statement, the Commission emphasized the significance of this election in strengthening international cooperation among national human rights institutions. It also reaffirmed its commitment to pursuing **"A Status" accreditation** in accordance with the **Paris Principles**, notwithstanding the delays caused by the failure to adopt the implementing decrees governing the Commission's work.

The Commission further stressed that obtaining **A Status accreditation** remains an institutional priority, as it would strengthen its engagement with **United Nations human rights mechanisms** and enhance its ability to contribute more effectively to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Lebanon.¹⁶⁴

The **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, called on the Lebanese authorities to fully implement **Law No. 174 of 29 August 2011** on the reduction of smoking and the regulation of the manufacture, packaging, and advertising of tobacco products, and to update the law in line with Lebanon's international obligations.

The Commission noted that Lebanon continues to record one of the highest smoking prevalence rates in the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** region, despite the enactment of the law more than a decade ago. The statement also referred to a recent study on the economic benefits of investing in tobacco control, which found that implementing the core policies set out in the relevant international framework could prevent substantial economic losses and save thousands of lives in Lebanon over the coming years.

The Commission further urged the prompt adoption of the law's implementing decrees, the strengthening of fiscal and preventive tobacco control policies, and protecting public health policymaking from interference by the tobacco industry. It emphasized that these

¹⁶⁴ **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, *"National Human Rights Commission Congratulates Ms. Amina Bouayach on Her Election as Chairperson of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and Reaffirms Its Commitment to Obtaining 'A Status' Accreditation,"* 12 March 2025. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2712>

measures are essential to safeguarding public health and reducing the health and economic burdens associated with tobacco consumption.¹⁶⁵

On 22 May 2025, the National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, launched its 2024 Annual Report, providing a comprehensive assessment of the human rights situation in Lebanon amid the continuing economic and social collapse and the expansion of the Israeli military offensive against Lebanon.

The report examines the state of **economic, social, and cultural rights; civil and political rights; the rule of law and judicial independence;** and conditions in prisons and places of detention. It also addresses the situation of the most vulnerable groups, including women, children, refugees, and migrant workers.

In addition, the report devotes a dedicated section to documenting violations of international humanitarian law and assessing the impact of the armed conflict on the enjoyment of human rights. It concludes with a series of findings and recommendations addressed to the Lebanese authorities and the international community, calling for strengthened protection, enhanced accountability, and comprehensive institutional reform in Lebanon.¹⁶⁶

The National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, prepared an independent thematic report entitled "Challenges to the Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights During the Israeli War on Lebanon," published on 22 May 2025.

¹⁶⁵ National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, *"Twenty Years Since Lebanon's Accession to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: The National Human Rights Commission Calls for the Effective Implementation and Updating of the Law,"* 16 April 2025. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/2854>

¹⁶⁶ National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, *Annual Report of the National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, 2024,* 22 May 2025. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3016>

The report examines serious violations of **human rights** and **international humanitarian law** committed during the Israeli military offensive against Lebanon. It also documents the impact of the conflict on the most vulnerable groups. It assesses the response of the Lebanese State to the humanitarian and social challenges arising from the war.

The report concludes with a set of recommendations addressed to both the Lebanese authorities and the international community, aimed at strengthening accountability, enhancing the protection of human rights, and improving responses to the humanitarian consequences of the conflict.¹⁶⁷

On the occasion of **Menstrual Hygiene Day**, the **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, published an awareness-raising article entitled "**28 May: Menstrual Hygiene Day—Towards Greater Equity and Closing the Gaps.**"

The publication emphasized that managing menstruation with dignity and safety is not merely a public health issue, but also a matter of **equality, social justice, and the rights to health, education, and human dignity**. It highlighted the challenges faced by women and girls in Lebanon—particularly those living in the most vulnerable communities—including the rising cost of menstrual hygiene products, limited access to clean water, and the persistence of social stigma surrounding menstruation.¹⁶⁸

The **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, participated in the **extraordinary General Assembly meeting of the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions**, convened in **September 2025** to examine the consequences of the Israeli attack on the **State of Qatar** and the serious violations associated with it.

¹⁶⁷National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, 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*, 22 May 2025. Available at: <https://nhrcnb.org/archives/3018>

¹⁶⁸National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, "*28 May: Menstrual Hygiene Day—Towards Greater Equity and Closing the Gaps*," 28 May 2025. Available at: <https://nhrcnb.org/archives/3021>

In his address to the meeting, the President of the Commission, **Dr. Fadi Gerges**, said the attack sent a grave warning to the international community and raised fundamental questions about respect for **international law**, the **Charter of the United Nations**, and the principles governing the maintenance of **international peace and security**. He further stressed the need for the international community to take effective action to ensure accountability for those responsible for the violations and to prevent impunity.

Dr. Gerges also called for enhanced cooperation and coordination among national human rights institutions across the region to document violations and pursue them before the relevant international human rights and accountability mechanisms.¹⁶⁹

On the occasion of the **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**, observed on **3 December 2025**, the **National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, issued a statement calling for the **full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** and its **Optional Protocol**.

The Commission emphasized that Lebanon's ratification of the Convention represents an important step toward aligning national legislation with international human rights standards. It noted, however, that persons with disabilities in Lebanon continue to face significant barriers in the areas of **education, employment, healthcare, and access to public buildings and essential services**.

The Commission further stressed the need to adopt public policies founded on the principles of **equality and non-discrimination**, to strengthen the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the development of national policies and Programs, to ensure effective protection against violence and abuse, and to improve opportunities for their social and economic inclusion.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, “Gerges: The Attack on the State of Qatar Is a Wake-Up Call for the International Community and a Reminder That International Legitimacy Is Not Selective,” 17 September 2025. Available at: <https://nhrcilb.org/archives/3518>

¹⁷⁰ National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, “The National Human Rights Commission Calls for the Full Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Chapter Three: Activities of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture

This section is presented as part of the **Annual Report of the National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, pursuant to **Article 15(d) of Law No. 62 of 27 October 2016**, which requires the preparation of an annual report setting out the Commission's and the Committee's program of work, activities undertaken, and the challenges encountered in the exercise of their respective mandates. The report is submitted to the competent constitutional authorities and published in accordance with the law, while ensuring that it contains no information capable of revealing the identity of victims or witnesses without their consent.

During **2025**, the **National Committee for the Prevention of Torture** operated under complex institutional and logistical conditions that affected the implementation of its mandate. Several organizational and administrative factors constrained its work, including delays in completing the Committee's composition, the persistence of vacancies within its institutional structure, and limited human and administrative resources to support its activities. Throughout the reporting period, the position of **forensic physician** remained vacant despite the essential role of this expertise in investigating allegations of torture and ill-treatment and documenting their consequences in accordance with international medico-legal standards.

Disabilities on the Occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities – 3 December,” 3 December 2025.
Available at: <https://nhrcib.org/archives/3747>

As an important organizational measure, on **11 July 2025** the Committee adopted a simplified mechanism for receiving complaints concerning torture and ill-treatment. It appointed **Rida Azar** as the **Commissioner for Complaints** relating to such cases. The Committee also sought to strengthen its technical capacity by engaging experts in specialized fields, including medicine, forensic medicine, law, psychology, civil engineering, and nutrition. In this context, it continued to establish a network of experts and external collaborators, while preparing specialized training for multidisciplinary visiting teams on international standards and methodologies for inspecting places of deprivation of liberty. The Committee also worked to secure the logistical resources necessary to implement a regular program of detention visits. In parallel, it prepared its **2026 Annual Program of Work**, comprising a range of activities aimed at strengthening torture prevention mechanisms and improving detention conditions in Lebanon, in accordance with the mandate established under **Law No. 62/2016** and the **Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT)**.

The Committee's findings reveal a clear overreliance on **pretrial detention**, which has increasingly become the rule rather than an exceptional measure justified by necessity. This practice is accompanied by a marked underutilization of alternative measures, such as bail and judicial supervision, resulting in the unnecessary deprivation of liberty before final judicial decisions are issued.

The Committee also identified deficiencies in the procedures governing applications for release pending trial. Such applications are frequently not decided within the timeframes required by the principle of prompt justice, while numerous requests are rejected without adequate reasoning. In addition, prosecutorial appeals against release decisions are often pursued without compelling justification, and the safeguards contained in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, particularly those establishing maximum periods of pretrial detention, are not consistently enforced. The Committee further observed inadequate periodic judicial review of the continued lawfulness and necessity of detention.

The Committee also found that **protracted judicial proceedings** constitute a major factor contributing to prison overcrowding. Courts continue to face substantial case backlogs, repeated adjournments, and delays in adjudicating criminal cases within a reasonable time due to excessive workloads and insufficient human and logistical resources. These shortcomings adversely affect the right to a fair trial.

The Committee additionally documented practical obstacles affecting the transportation of detainees to court hearings, particularly where detainees are temporarily held in facilities other than those responsible for producing them before the competent court. Such administrative complications frequently result in the automatic postponement of hearings, delaying judicial consideration of applications for release and unnecessarily prolonging detention.

Further challenges were identified in implementing judicial release orders. Delays were recorded in transferring foreign nationals released by the courts into the custody of the **General Directorate of General Security**. In contrast, the deportation of certain foreign detainees—particularly Syrian nationals—was hindered by security and logistical constraints. The limited capacity of General Security detention facilities has also contributed to the continued detention of individuals despite judicial orders directing their release.

The Committee considers that these shortcomings stem from broader structural deficiencies, including the insufficient number of judges and judicial personnel, inadequate prison infrastructure, and the absence of a coherent penal policy that systematically promotes alternatives to imprisonment.

In light of these findings, the Committee recommends rationalizing the use of pretrial detention by reaffirming its exceptional character and expanding the application of alternative measures, including conditional release, bail, judicial supervision, and electronic monitoring through electronic bracelets.

The Committee further recommends expediting decisions on applications for release pending trial by requiring courts to determine such requests within clearly defined

statutory deadlines, ensuring that judicial decisions refusing release are properly reasoned, limiting unjustified appeals against release orders, strictly enforcing **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, and strengthening periodic judicial review of the legality and necessity of continued detention.

To accelerate criminal proceedings more generally, the Committee recommends increasing the number of judges and judicial assistants, improving court scheduling to minimize unnecessary adjournments, and adopting digital case-management systems to facilitate more efficient judicial proceedings.

On the transportation of detainees, the Committee calls for enhanced coordination between the security services and the judiciary, adequate logistical resources, and the use of remote hearings where appropriate.

Regarding the implementation of release orders, the Committee recommends strengthening the detention capacity of the **General Directorate of General Security**, developing appropriate legal and administrative solutions for foreign detainees who cannot be deported, and expediting the administrative procedures necessary to execute judicial release decisions.

Finally, the Committee emphasizes the need for a comprehensive reform of Lebanon's penal policy by reducing reliance on custodial sanctions, expanding the use of non-custodial alternatives, improving prison conditions, and increasing prison capacity where necessary, in a manner consistent with international human rights standards.

The Conceptual and Methodological Framework of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture

The work of the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture** extends well beyond conducting on-site visits to places of detention. It is grounded in a sophisticated conceptual and methodological framework informed by international scholarship and comparative studies on the prevention of torture. Academic research and studies

published by specialized international organizations have deepened understanding of effective preventive mechanisms, shaping the working methods of National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs) across jurisdictions.

Among the most influential contributions in this field is the global study conducted by **Richard Carver** and **Lisa Handley** on the effectiveness of torture prevention measures. This research is widely regarded as one of the leading comparative studies examining the long-term impact of preventive policies across diverse legal and political contexts.¹⁷¹

These studies have provided¹⁷² an important knowledge base for developing the working methodology of **Committees for the Prevention of Torture**. They have helped shift the preventive approach away from the traditional emphasis on documenting violations after they occur toward a proactive strategy aimed at identifying the structural risk factors that may lead to torture or ill-treatment in places of detention.

Research indicates that the most effective preventive measures are those implemented during the **initial stage of deprivation of liberty**, when detainees are particularly vulnerable. At this critical stage, fundamental safeguards are paramount, including prompt notification of a family member or other trusted person of the detention, immediate access to legal counsel, and an independent medical examination from the outset of custody. Comparative studies have consistently demonstrated that ensuring these safeguards significantly reduces the risk of torture, coercion, and other forms of ill-treatment during the investigative process.

Building on these findings, the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture** adopts a comprehensive and systematic approach in carrying out its visits to places of detention.

¹⁷¹Carver, Richard, and Lisa Handley, *Does Torture Prevention Work?*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1gpcbdt>

¹⁷² Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), *Yes, Torture Prevention Works: Briefing Paper*, Geneva.

Available at:

https://www.apr.ch/sites/default/files/publications/aprbriefing_yestorturepreventionworks_ar.pdf

This approach combines an assessment of the legal and regulatory framework with an analysis of actual practices within detention facilities¹⁷³.

International experience has demonstrated that the mere existence of legislation prohibiting torture is not, in itself, sufficient to ensure effective protection for persons deprived of their liberty. In many instances, a significant gap exists between the legal framework and its practical implementation in police stations, detention facilities, and prisons. For this reason, the Committee places particular emphasis during its visits on assessing how legal safeguards are implemented in practice. This includes examining the procedures for recording arrests and detention in official registers, verifying whether detainees are informed of their rights, assessing their ability to communicate promptly with legal counsel and family members, and evaluating the independence and adequacy of medical examinations conducted during detention.

These studies have also contributed to the development of the fieldwork tools **the Committee for the Prevention of Torture uses** during its visits to places of detention. Comparative experience has led to the design of methodologies based on comprehensive inspection checklists, enabling visiting teams to assess all aspects of detention systems systematically and consistently.

These assessments encompass the physical conditions of detention, including available living space, ventilation, sanitation, lighting, and overall hygiene. They also involve examining detention and interrogation records, complaint mechanisms, levels of overcrowding, and the availability and quality of healthcare services provided to detainees.

This structured methodology enables the Committee to identify recurring patterns of systemic deficiencies that may create an environment conducive to torture or other forms of ill-treatment. It also allows the Committee to formulate evidence-based

¹⁷³ United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), *Approach of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture Regarding the Concept of Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture*, U.N. Doc. CAT/OP/12/6, 30 December 2010. Available at: <https://docs.un.org/ar/CAT/OP/12/6>

recommendations aimed at addressing the root causes of these deficiencies, rather than merely responding to their visible manifestations.¹⁷⁴

Comparative studies also highlight the central role of independent monitoring in preventing human rights violations in places of detention. These studies demonstrate that the existence of independent bodies empowered to conduct regular and unannounced visits, as well as to hold private interviews with detainees outside the presence of the authorities responsible for their custody, significantly enhances transparency and reduces the risk of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. The mere awareness that detention facilities may be subject to unexpected independent inspections acts as a powerful deterrent against abuse while encouraging improvements in detention conditions and greater compliance with the legal safeguards afforded to detainees.

Confidential interviews conducted by visiting teams with detainees likewise constitute one of the Committee's most important tools for identifying potential violations. Many victims of torture or ill-treatment are reluctant to lodge formal complaints because they fear retaliation or lack confidence in internal complaint mechanisms. Providing detainees with the opportunity to speak privately and confidentially with members of the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture** therefore creates a safe channel through which abuses can be reported. It enables the Committee to develop an accurate and comprehensive understanding of detention conditions within a given institution.

The methodological value of these studies extends beyond organizing monitoring visits to formulating the Committee's recommendations following each inspection. Comparative research consistently demonstrates that effective torture prevention requires addressing the institutional factors that create conditions conducive to abuse, including inadequate professional training for law enforcement personnel, ineffective mechanisms for investigating allegations of torture, and weak accountability within

¹⁷⁴ Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) and International Institute of Human Rights (IIHR), *Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture: Implementation Manual (Revised Edition)*, Geneva and San José, 2010. Available at: <https://nhrcrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/OPCAT-Manual-Arabic-Revised2010.pdf>

security institutions. Accordingly, the Committee's recommendations seek to promote institutional reform throughout the criminal justice system. This includes improving detention and investigative procedures, strengthening training programs for prison and detention personnel, reinforcing the independence of medical examinations, and ensuring the establishment of effective, accessible, and impartial mechanisms for receiving and investigating complaints.

Specialized literature on the prevention of torture also emphasizes that meaningful institutional reform cannot be achieved without fostering a culture of respect for human dignity within security and law enforcement institutions. In this regard, **Committees for the Prevention of Torture** play a vital role in promoting awareness of the international standards governing the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. They do so not only through the recommendations they issue following detention visits, but also through the constructive professional dialogue they maintain with prison administrations and security authorities during their inspections.

This ongoing engagement helps to build a cooperative, reform-oriented relationship with the relevant authorities, thereby increasing the likelihood that the Committee's recommendations will be implemented and that tangible improvements will be achieved in detention conditions and the protection of detainees' rights.¹⁷⁵

Accordingly, the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture's** reliance on this evidence-based conceptual and methodological framework, grounded in international research and comparative experience, significantly enhances the effectiveness of its preventive mandate. It ensures that the Committee's visits to places of detention form part of a comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing the structural factors that may create conditions conducive to torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

¹⁷⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Preventing Torture: The Role of National Preventive Mechanisms – A Practical Guide*, New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2018, Reference No. HR/P/PT/21, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/ar/publications/training-and-education-publications/preventing-torture-role-national-preventive>

These visits should therefore not be viewed merely as conventional monitoring activities. Rather, they constitute a fundamental preventive tool for promoting transparency, strengthening accountability, and improving conditions of detention. By identifying systemic deficiencies and encouraging institutional reform, the Committee's work contributes to safeguarding the dignity of persons deprived of their liberty and reducing the risk of torture and ill-treatment throughout the criminal justice system.

The State of Lebanese Prisons

The Israeli war on Lebanon significantly exacerbated the overcrowding crisis in Lebanese prisons after detainees were transferred from detention facilities in southern Lebanon and the Baalbek region to other prisons that were already operating beyond capacity. As a result, the occupancy rate reportedly increased from approximately **200%** to nearly **300%**. This development was accompanied by a marked deterioration in living conditions within prisons. At the same time, communication between detainees and their families became increasingly difficult due to widespread displacement and restrictions on prison visits.

Against the backdrop of an exceptionally high proportion of pretrial detainees—estimated at approximately **82%** of the total prison population—the **National Human Rights Commission**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, launched an initiative to facilitate applications for release pending trial pursuant to **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. The initiative sought to alleviate prison overcrowding while ensuring respect for the legal safeguards afforded to persons held in pretrial detention.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Balout, Marwa, "The War Increases Prison Overcrowding as the National Human Rights Commission Launches an Initiative to Facilitate Applications for Release Pending Trial," **The Legal Agenda**, 9 November 2024, available at: <https://vo.la/iWkP3Pb>

Statistics published by the **Human Rights Department of the Inspectorate General of the Internal Security Forces** illustrate the structural challenges affecting Lebanon's detention system. According to these figures, the total prison population as of **31 December 2025** stood at **6,146 detainees**, comprising **5,734 men**, **294 women**, and **118 juvenile detainees** (male and female). The data indicate that the majority of those deprived of their liberty were **pretrial detainees rather than convicted prisoners**, reflecting the continued and extensive reliance on pretrial detention within Lebanon's criminal justice system.

Updated statistics as of **10 March 2026** show that the total prison population had increased to **6,212 detainees**, including **5,810 men**, **288 women**, and **114 juveniles**. The nationality breakdown further **shows that Lebanese nationals made up the largest share of the prison population (59.02%)**, followed by **Syrian nationals (28.95%)** and **Palestinian nationals (6.9%)**, while the remainder comprised detainees of other foreign nationalities.

These figures underscore the persistent problem of overcrowding in places of detention in Lebanon and highlight the urgent need to adopt a more balanced penal policy, including reducing reliance on pretrial detention and expanding the use of non-custodial alternatives.

The debates surrounding the proposed General Amnesty Law reflect the deepening crisis within Lebanon's prison system, where severe overcrowding and prolonged pretrial detention have become among the most visible manifestations of dysfunction in the criminal justice system. The suffering of prisoners and the harsh conditions of detention have increasingly been invoked as legislative justifications for adopting a broad amnesty, without addressing the structural causes of the crisis, including protracted judicial proceedings and inadequate guarantees of a fair trial.

This approach also raises concerns that a general amnesty may entrench a culture of impunity rather than promote sustainable reform of the judicial and penitentiary

systems ¹⁷⁷. More broadly, it exposes a deeper crisis in Lebanon's criminal justice administration, where political pressures intersect with longstanding institutional deficiencies affecting both the judiciary and prison administration.

Prison overcrowding is one of the principal factors contributing to inhuman conditions of detention in Lebanon. The high proportion of pretrial detainees, coupled with the limited use of alternatives to detention, remains one of the primary drivers of the growing prison population.

Overcrowding severely undermines prison authorities' capacity to meet detainees' basic needs, including adequate food, drinking water, sanitation, and security. The quality and quantity of food provided by the prison administration have deteriorated, while inflation has significantly eroded detainees' purchasing power. Prisons also cannot adequately meet essential healthcare needs. Medications for chronic illnesses, cleaning supplies, mattresses, bedding, and clothing are all in critically short supply.

Family visits have become less frequent because of rising transportation costs. At the same time, prison infrastructure is in serious decline, with inadequate facilities and obsolete equipment, including prisoner transport vehicles, ambulances, and other essential resources. Overcrowding also undermines the availability and effectiveness of rehabilitation programs, vocational training, and cultural and recreational activities.

In addition, Lebanon's prison system faces longstanding institutional and structural challenges. These include the lack of specialized prison personnel, inadequate salaries, frequent staff rotations, high levels of corruption, and the continued application of an outdated legislative framework, notably **Decree No. 14310 of 1949** governing prisons. These problems are compounded by the absence of effective risk assessment and offender management systems, as well as broader deficiencies within the criminal justice system, including political interference in the judiciary.

¹⁷⁷ Saghie, Nizar, "The Moderation Bloc Introduces a Revised General Amnesty Bill: Reducing Transitional Justice to Emptying the Prisons," *The Legal Agenda*, 3 January 2025. Available before at: <https://vo.la/cOdR7Y3>

Prison conditions in Lebanon are widely recognized as falling well below internationally accepted standards. Chronic shortages of facilities, services, and essential resources pose serious obstacles to ensuring humane conditions of detention and compliance with applicable national and international legal standards and human rights principles. Healthcare services, necessities, vocational workshops, and other essential programs remain insufficient to meet the needs of persons deprived of their liberty.

The excessive use of pretrial detention, together with lengthy criminal proceedings prior to judgment—which in some cases may continue for indeterminate periods—constitutes one of the principal causes of prison overcrowding. This overcrowding further undermines the availability and effectiveness of educational, vocational, and recreational programs intended to promote rehabilitation and reintegration.

Lebanon's two central prisons—**Roumieh Prison** and **Zahle Prison**—are the only facilities originally designed and constructed as prisons. Many of the facilities currently used as places of detention were initially built for entirely different purposes, including horse stables, military barracks, police stations, and warehouses. Some have never undergone structural modifications to adapt them for use as prisons. In contrast, others, despite partial renovations, continue to suffer from significant deficiencies affecting both their suitability as detention facilities and their overall state of repair.

Accommodation conditions in most prisons are characterized by severe overcrowding. Cells, rooms, and dormitories are largely devoid of basic furniture, forcing detainees to sleep on mats or other improvised materials where available. In many facilities, there is insufficient floor space for all detainees to lie down simultaneously, so they must sleep in shifts.

Lebanon's prisons continue to face mounting pressure due to the increasing reliance on custodial sentences, placing considerable strain on already overstretched facilities. This upward trend is driven primarily by the growing number of persons in detention, resulting from several interrelated factors, most notably:

- the excessive use of pretrial detention;

- the increasing average duration of detention for both pretrial detainees and convicted prisoners; and
- judicial paralysis and court backlogs, which significantly delay the adjudication of criminal cases.

Sanitation and hygiene conditions present an additional challenge in most detention facilities. Toilets frequently become sources of disease because of shortages of cleaning materials and disinfectants. Insufficient funding, deteriorating facilities, and inadequate sanitation infrastructure are among the principal factors contributing to poor public health conditions within places of detention.

Most prisons also struggle to prioritize rehabilitation and social reintegration programs, despite the pressing need for psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Although several non-governmental organizations attempt to fill these gaps, their resources remain limited and insufficient to meet the needs of all detention facilities across the country.

The management of detention facilities in Lebanon also raises growing concerns about equal treatment among detainees and compliance with legal standards governing detention. Repeated incidents involving escapes from detention facilities, together with indications that certain detainees have received preferential treatment and special privileges, have highlighted persistent deficiencies in oversight, transparency, and accountability within the security agencies responsible for the administration of places of detention.

In this context, on **24 March 2025**, the **Permanent Military Court in Beirut** delivered judgments against several officers and personnel of the **General Directorate of General Security** in connection with the escape of detainee **Faez Al-Abed** from the detention facility of the **Investigation and Procedure Department in Beirut** on **10 May 2024**.

The proceedings revealed troubling indications that certain detainees had been granted special privileges within the detention facility, including greater freedom of movement

and repeated access to mobile phone communications—privileges that were not afforded to other detainees.

The Court convicted several defendants of offenses including **facilitating the escape of a detainee, abuse of authority, bribery, and dereliction of official duties**. Sentences ranged from **one month of imprisonment to three years' imprisonment with hard labor** for some defendants, while others were fined or had their charges dismissed.

This case is part of a broader series of investigations into detainee escapes between **2021 and 2024, raising serious concerns about integrity within places of detention, equal treatment among detainees, and the effectiveness of oversight and accountability mechanisms within Lebanon's security institutions.**¹⁷⁸

Against the backdrop of worsening overcrowding in places of detention in Lebanon and the high proportion of pretrial detainees, legislative debate emerged during 2024 and early 2025 on reforming the system of pretrial detention through two proposed amendments to **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. The first proposal was introduced on **28 September 2024**, followed by a second on **16 December 2024**. Both sought to establish clearer limits on the maximum duration of pretrial detention and to prevent its prolonged use in a manner that undermines the presumption of innocence.

These initiatives are of particular significance from a human rights perspective, given that pretrial detainees account for approximately **65% of the total prison population**, against a backdrop of severe prison overcrowding and substantial delays in the adjudication of criminal cases. Although the two proposals differed in their approaches—one focusing on reducing the permissible periods of pretrial detention and the other on restructuring the applicable exceptions—the legislative debate underscored the urgent need for reform to ensure that pretrial detention remains an exceptional measure, is applied in accordance with the principle of proportionality, is accompanied

¹⁷⁸ Ayoub, Laure, *"Detainee Escapes from Holding Cells Expose Special Privileges Granted to Certain Detainees," The Legal Agenda*, 26 March 2025, available at: <https://vo.la/kVrnqGs>

by prompt judicial proceedings, and is followed by automatic release whenever the statutory maximum periods are exceeded.¹⁷⁹

Proposals for a general amnesty in Lebanon raise profound human rights concerns relating to the principles of equality before the law, victims' rights to justice and redress, and the limits of using amnesty as a tool to address prison overcrowding and the excessive use of pretrial detention. These concerns become particularly acute when amnesty is proposed without a comprehensive framework for truth, accountability, and institutional reform, transforming what should be an exceptional measure into a mechanism that perpetuates impunity. In this context, the assessment of any legislative proposal for a general amnesty must be based on its consistency with the principles of genuine transitional justice, rather than merely its capacity to reduce overcrowding or empty prisons.

On **3 January 2025**, a group of Members of Parliament introduced a revised draft law on general amnesty. The proposal expanded the scope of the amnesty to encompass a broad range of criminal offenses, subject to specified exceptions. Its sponsors presented the initiative within the framework of "**transitional justice**" and as a means of addressing prison conditions and the widespread use of pretrial detention. However, from a human rights perspective, the proposal was criticized for reducing transitional justice to the release of detainees, without incorporating parallel mechanisms for truth-seeking, victim redress, guarantees of non-recurrence, or reforms to the judiciary and security institutions.

On **11 February 2025**, more than **100 Syrian detainees** at **Roumieh Central Prison** launched an open-ended hunger strike in protest against their conditions of detention. They called for the implementation of an agreement providing for their transfer to Syria to complete their criminal proceedings or serve the sentences imposed upon them. The

¹⁷⁹ Faranjieh, Ghida, and Ali Sweidan, "Two Proposals to Amend Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure: A Necessary Reform of the Pretrial Detention System," *The Legal Agenda*, 28 February 2025. Available at: <https://vo.la/RI70dk8>

detainees stated that they had remained in custody for years without any clear resolution of their legal status.¹⁸⁰

On **14 July 2025**, a riot broke out at **Amioun Prison**, during which several inmates threatened to set the prison on fire and temporarily took two members of the security forces hostage before the situation was brought under control. The incident reflects the continuing challenges facing prison management and detention conditions in Lebanon, particularly in light of persistent overcrowding and inadequate resources.¹⁸¹

As part of its ongoing efforts to monitor places of detention and strengthen coordination with the authorities responsible for prison administration, **Rida Azar**, a member of the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture** within the **National Human Rights Commission**, participated in a meeting of the **Prison Working Group** held at **Roumieh Prison** on **18 December 2025**.

The meeting addressed several key issues relating to conditions of detention, with particular emphasis on severe prison overcrowding, improving detainees' access to physical and mental healthcare, expediting judicial proceedings, and strengthening rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Participants also discussed measures to improve prisoner transportation to court hearings and advanced practical recommendations to reduce the excessive use of pretrial detention while reinforcing the legal safeguards afforded to persons deprived of their liberty, in accordance with applicable national and international human rights standards.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ **Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH)**, *Human Rights Brief: 10–16 February 2025*, 17 February 2025.

Available at:

[https://www.cldh-lebanon.org/HumanRightsBrief/d9fca637-29b8-47ed-83a5-0b55777b2f8b_HR%20Brief%20\(February%2010%20to%20February%2016\).pptx.pdf](https://www.cldh-lebanon.org/HumanRightsBrief/d9fca637-29b8-47ed-83a5-0b55777b2f8b_HR%20Brief%20(February%2010%20to%20February%2016).pptx.pdf)

¹⁸¹ **National News Agency (NNA)**, *"Individual Arrested After Threatening to Kill the Warden of Amioun Prison Following a Prison Riot,"* available at: <https://vo.la/AUSFtl.s>

¹⁸² **National Human Rights Commission**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, *"Committee for the Prevention of Torture Participates in the Prison Working Group Meeting at Roumieh Prison,"* 18 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/archives/3919>

On 15 March 2026, the **National Committee for the Prevention of Torture** participated in the graduation ceremony of a new group of inmates who completed a literacy and English language course at **Roumieh Central Prison – Sentenced Prisoners' Building**. The **Committee's Chair, Judge Dr. Khalil Abu Rajili**, attended the ceremony.

On this occasion, the Committee emphasized the importance of educational and rehabilitation programs within correctional institutions as an integral component of a modern approach to prison administration based on respect for human dignity and the promotion of rehabilitation and social reintegration. It also stressed the need for legislative and procedural reforms to reduce overcrowding in prisons and detention facilities, while expanding the use of alternatives to pretrial detention and custodial sentences.¹⁸³

As part of efforts to strengthen a humane and preventive approach within places of detention, Rida Azar, a member of the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture** within the **National Human Rights Commission**, participated in the Christmas Mass held at Jbeil Gendarmerie Prison on 25 December 2025. The **General Prison Chaplaincy in Lebanon**, affiliated with the **Council of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops**, organized the event.

The occasion underscored the importance of integrating spiritual support with preventive human rights monitoring in order to safeguard the dignity of detainees and protect their fundamental rights. It also provided an opportunity to engage directly with a number of prisoners, hear their concerns and requests, and reaffirm the value of humanitarian and faith-based initiatives that help improve detention conditions while fostering trust and dialogue within prisons. These efforts are consistent with the mandate of the **National Committee for the Prevention of Torture** to monitor detention

¹⁸³ **National Human Rights Commission – Lebanon**, *"Committee for the Prevention of Torture Participates in the Graduation Ceremony of the Literacy and English Language Program at Roumieh Prison,"* 15 March 2026, available at: <https://nhrcnb.org/archives/5016>

conditions and promote compliance with relevant national and international human rights standards.¹⁸⁴

The Anti-Torture Law and the Fate of Referrals

Lebanese law and international conventions impose an absolute prohibition on torture, allowing no exceptions or justifications, regardless of how severe the circumstances may be. Torture is regarded as one of the gravest crimes in contemporary legal systems because of the profound harm it inflicts—not only on the physical and psychological well-being of its victims, but also on the dignity of society and its fundamental values.

However, this prohibition loses much of its effectiveness unless it is accompanied by robust accountability mechanisms that ensure perpetrators are held responsible, victims receive justice, and such violations do not recur. Although Lebanon ratified the **United Nations Convention Against Torture** in 2000 and enacted **Law No. 65 of 2017**, criminalizing torture, there have been virtually no judicial rulings convicting perpetrators of this crime. One of the few notable exceptions is a judgment¹⁸⁵ issued by the **Beirut Court of Appeal** in 2013.

This situation is largely attributable to the judiciary's tendency to circumvent both domestic legal provisions and Lebanon's international obligations, as well as its systematic reluctance to conduct effective and thorough investigations into allegations of torture.

The indictment issued in the case of the Syrian refugee **Bashar Al-Saoud** marked a significant milestone in the prosecution of torture crimes in Lebanon¹⁸⁶. It led to the first criminal trials of individuals accused of committing torture under **Law No. 65/2017**,

¹⁸⁴ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, *"Christmas Mass at Jbeil Gendarmerie Prison Highlights the Role of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Its Partnership with the General Prison Chaplaincy,"* 25 December 2025, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/3970>

¹⁸⁵ *"The 'Farrouj' Torture Case on Appeal Nine Years Later: Only a Fine Imposed...,"* **The Legal Agenda**, 21 March 2013, available at: <https://vo.la/xVKWPIA>

¹⁸⁶ Ayoub, Laure, *"The Military Court's Judgment in the Al-Saoud Death Case: Torture Denied by Majority Vote, Not Unanimously,"* **The Legal Agenda**, 4 November 2024, available at: <https://vo.la/7Erpx6L>

which criminalizes torture. This development was widely regarded as a partial breakthrough in the long-standing pattern of near-systematic impunity that has characterized the handling of such crimes.

However, this progress was accompanied by the adoption of a restrictive interpretation of the relevant legal provisions, resulting in the affirmation of the military judiciary's jurisdiction over torture cases. This approach raises serious concerns from the perspective of international human rights standards, which generally favor the adjudication of torture cases by ordinary civilian courts, given the gravity of the offense and its close connection to the accountability of law enforcement officials.

These concerns are further compounded by the broad jurisdiction vested in Lebanon's military judiciary, notwithstanding its ostensibly exceptional nature. In practice, its jurisdiction extends to a wide range of offenses, particularly those involving members of the armed forces or security agencies, thereby significantly expanding its role in criminal proceedings.

Moreover, the military judiciary applies procedural rules and trial mechanisms that differ from those governing the ordinary civilian courts. This raises serious questions regarding the compatibility of these procedures with the principles of equality before the law and the guarantees of a fair trial enshrined in international human rights instruments.

The **National Human Rights Commission**, which incorporates the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, addressed two official letters to the **Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation** and the **Government Commissioner to the Military Court**, requesting statistical data and information on complaints, investigations, prosecutions, and judicial decisions relating to torture and ill-treatment cases over recent years. The requests were based on **Law No. 62/2016**, particularly Articles 14 and 25, as well as the **Right of Access to Information Law**. This initiative formed part of the Commission's mandate to prepare its annual report, monitor the prosecution of torture-related offenses, and promote transparency and accountability in this field. As of the date of this report, the Commission had not received any response to either of these requests.

More than seven years after the enactment of **Law No. 65/2017** on the criminalization of torture and the punishment of its perpetrators¹⁸⁷, the implementation of this legislative framework continues to face significant challenges that hinder the provision of effective protection against torture and ill-treatment in Lebanon. Although Lebanon acceded¹⁸⁸ to the **United Nations Convention Against Torture** in 2000 and its **Optional Protocol**¹⁸⁹ in 2008, the law still requires substantial amendments to fully comply with international standards.

The implementation of the law since its adoption has revealed its limited effectiveness, as many allegations of torture have remained without serious investigation or genuine accountability. This is attributable to several factors, most notably the overly narrow definition of torture contained in the law, the continued referral of the majority of torture cases to the military judiciary, and procedural shortcomings relating to investigations and the collection of evidence.

Experience has also demonstrated that the existing legal framework fails to provide adequate protection for victims and witnesses or to ensure the independence of investigations. As a result, impunity has persisted in several cases that have attracted significant public attention.

On 3 October 2019, Member of Parliament Ali Khreis introduced a bill to amend the **Anti-Torture Law (Law No. 65/2017)**. The proposed amendments were referred to the **Parliamentary Committees on Administration and Justice and Human Rights**, where

¹⁸⁷ **Law No. 65/2017**, *Punishment of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, enacted on 20 October 2017, published in the **Official Gazette of the Lebanese Republic**, No. 50, 26 October 2017, pp. 3775–3777. Available at: <https://nhrcb.org/law-65>

¹⁸⁸ **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**, adopted by the **United Nations General Assembly** and opened for signature, ratification, and accession by **General Assembly Resolution 39/46** of 10 December 1984. The Convention entered into force on 26 June 1987, in accordance with Article 27(1). <https://nhrcb.org/convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading>

¹⁸⁹ **Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)**, adopted by the **United Nations General Assembly** at its fifty-seventh session pursuant to **Resolution A/RES/57/199** of 18 December 2002. <https://nhrcb.org/optional-protocol-to-the-convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading-treatment-or-punishment>

they were examined during several sessions held in early 2020. Following their deliberations, both committees recommended adopting the proposed amendments, subject to certain modifications.¹⁹⁰ However, the legislative process surrounding these amendments raised several concerns. Each parliamentary committee examined the bill independently, without producing a unified draft, resulting in two different versions of the proposed amendments being referred to the Parliament's General Assembly. Furthermore, the discussions during most committee sessions were largely confined to representatives of the security agencies and certain government ministries, without the participation of human rights organizations or institutions concerned with the prevention of torture.

This exclusion extended to the **National Human Rights Commission**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, even though it had submitted its views on the proposed amendments at the time. Its recommendations, however, were ultimately not taken into consideration.

¹⁹¹. This approach reflected the continued predominance of a security-oriented perspective in addressing the issue of torture, whereas a human rights–based approach should have been the guiding principle in the discussion of legislation intended to protect individuals from abuse and violations.

The proposed amendments to the law introduced several important reforms aimed at addressing existing legislative gaps and strengthening accountability for torture. Among the most significant proposals was the revision of the definition of torture to bring it into

¹⁹⁰ Amendments Proposed by the Parliamentary Committees on Administration and Justice and Human Rights to the Draft Law Amending the Law on the Punishment of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted during committee deliberations in January and February 2020, before consideration of the bill was postponed by the Parliament's General Assembly on 21 December 2020, available on the **National Human Rights Commission** website:

<https://nhrcb.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Amendments-by-the-Administration-Justice-and-Human-Rights-Committees-in-the-Lebanese-Parliament-to-the-draft-law-amending-the-law-on-punishing-torture.pdf>

¹⁹¹ National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, *Opinion on the Proposed Amendments to Law No. 65 on the Criminalization of Torture and the Punishment of Its Perpetrators*, 20 February 2020, available at: <https://nhrcb.org/archives/1908>

closer alignment with the definition contained in the **United Nations Convention Against Torture**. Under the current law, torture is limited to acts committed during the stages of investigation or trial, thereby excluding numerous instances of abuse occurring outside that context. The proposed amendment sought to remove this temporal limitation, allowing torture to be recognized as a criminal offense whenever its essential elements are present, regardless of the stage at which it occurs. The revised definition would also expressly encompass psychological and mental suffering, in addition to physical harm, reflecting the evolution of international standards that recognize the profound psychological consequences of torture.

Determining the competent judicial authority to hear torture cases constitutes another essential safeguard for ensuring accountability. Experience has demonstrated that referring such cases to the military judiciary has frequently undermined or delayed effective investigations. Accordingly, the proposed amendments provided that jurisdiction over torture offenses should rest exclusively with the ordinary judiciary, thereby reinforcing the independence of investigations and safeguarding victims' rights to participate effectively in judicial proceedings.

The amendments also proposed strengthening the penalties imposed on perpetrators of torture by classifying torture as a felony in all circumstances. This approach reflects recognition of torture as one of the gravest violations of human dignity and a serious breach of fundamental human rights. The proposed reforms further provided for enhanced penalties where torture results in permanent disability or the death of the victim, with the most serious cases carrying the possibility of life imprisonment.

Another significant reform concerned the protection of victims and witnesses. The proposed amendments would require judicial authorities to adopt the necessary measures to protect them from intimidation or retaliation. They also recognized victims' rights to rehabilitation and compensation, including access to medical, psychological, and social support.

Despite the significance of these proposed reforms, the issue of statutes of limitations for torture offenses remained one of the most contentious aspects of the legislative debate. The two parliamentary committees rejected a proposal to make torture crimes exempt from prescription, maintaining that statutes of limitations constitute a fundamental principle of Lebanese criminal law, notwithstanding Lebanon's clear obligations under the **Convention Against Torture**.

Successive Lebanese governments have justified the application of statutes of limitations to torture offenses by relying on the general framework established under Lebanese criminal legislation, particularly **Article 10 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, which regulates limitation periods for criminal offenses. Under that provision, public prosecutions become time-barred after ten years for felonies, three years for misdemeanors, and one year for minor offenses. The same article further provides that, for instantaneous offenses, the limitation period begins on the date the offense is committed. In contrast, for continuing offenses it begins upon the termination of the unlawful conduct. It also suspends the running of the limitation period whenever force majeure renders prosecution, investigation, or trial impossible, with the limitation period resuming once the impediment ceases.

In the context of the enactment of **Law No. 65/2017 on the Criminalization of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**, Article 3 introduced a specific amendment to Article 10 by providing that the limitation period for torture offenses shall not begin until the victim has been released from prison, detention, or temporary custody, provided that the deprivation of liberty does not continue thereafter. This amendment postpones the commencement of the limitation period so that it runs not from the date the offense was committed, but from the date the deprivation of liberty ends, thereby granting victims a longer period within which to seek judicial remedies and pursue accountability before the prosecution becomes time-barred.

Nevertheless, while this legislative framework represents a positive step toward facilitating the prosecution of torture offenses, it does not fully conform to international human rights standards. In particular, the interpretation and jurisprudence of the

monitoring bodies established under the **Convention Against Torture** increasingly recognize torture as a crime of such gravity that it should not be subject to statutes of limitations. By contrast, the Lebanese legislature has maintained torture within the general framework of domestic criminal law, under which criminal offenses are, as a matter of principle, subject to prescription. This approach is grounded in considerations of legal certainty and the legislative philosophy that criminal disputes should eventually be brought to a close after specified periods lapse.

Accordingly, the **National Human Rights Commission** considers that the continued application of statutes of limitations to torture offenses—even following the amendments introduced by **Law No. 65/2017**—remains an issue requiring comprehensive legislative reconsideration in light of Lebanon's international obligations. Such reform is necessary to strengthen efforts to combat impunity and to ensure victims' rights to an effective remedy and access to justice.

Although the parliamentary committees completed their examination of the proposed amendments in early 2020, the bill has yet to be adopted by the Parliament's General Assembly. During the legislative session held on **21 December 2020**, the proposal was read but not put to a vote, and consideration was postponed to a subsequent session. **The Parliamentary Committee on Administration and Justice examined a further proposal to amend certain provisions of the law during its meeting on 27 April 2021.** According to the official minutes, the Committee heard a presentation by the Chair of the **Parliamentary Human Rights Committee**, who outlined the substance of the proposed amendments after considering that Committee's report. After deliberating on the draft provisions, the Committee on Administration and Justice concluded that further examination should proceed in parallel with a separate bill introduced by Member of Parliament **Paula Yacoubian**, given the close connection between the two initiatives. It therefore decided to postpone its decision pending further study and joint consideration of both proposals.

This continued delay reflects the absence of sufficient political will to reform Lebanon's legislative framework governing the prevention and punishment of torture, despite

repeated calls for reform from human rights organizations and the **National Human Rights Commission**.

Visits to Places of Deprivation of Liberty

In light of the continued hostilities by the Israeli occupation forces following the **Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities** concluded on **27 November 2024**, the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture** monitored detention facilities in the southern areas that remained exposed to Israeli attacks, to assess the situation of detainees and ensure the protection of their rights.

Tebnine Prison and **Marjayoun Prison** have remained closed since the Israeli aggression, while the other prisons and detention facilities, which had been evacuated during the hostilities, have resumed operations.

On **29 October 2024**, the **Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation**, Judge **Jamal Al-Hajjar**, issued Circular ¹⁹² No. **122/S/2024**, assigning the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** responsibility for receiving applications from prisons and ensuring their transmission to the judicial authorities seized of detainees' cases for consideration and determination in accordance with the applicable legal procedures and as expeditiously as possible. The circular was issued to give effect to **Article 108 of the Lebanese Code of Criminal Procedure**. The significance of this circular lies in its formal recognition of the mandate of the **National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) against Torture**, operating within the NHRC, to monitor the situation of prisoners and detainees and to follow up on their legal cases in order to safeguard their rights as guaranteed under national legislation and international human rights standards.

¹⁹² Public Prosecution Office at the Court of Cassation, Circular No. 122/S/2024, "Circular on the Mechanism for Submitting Applications for Release Pending Trial by Detainees in Prisons to Reduce Overcrowding", 10 April 2025, Beirut. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Public-Prosecutor-at-the-Court-of-Cassation-Circular-2024.pdf> to.

Further to the circular issued by the **Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation**, Judge **Jamal Al-Hajjar**, on **29 October 2024**, an additional circular¹⁹³ was issued on **10 April 2025** reaffirming the continued implementation of the mechanism established to give effect to **Article 108 of the Lebanese Code of Criminal Procedure**, to expedite judicial decisions on applications for release pending trial.

The circular introduced a procedural measure allowing detainees to sign their applications for release while in custody at their place of detention, rather than requiring their transfer before the competent judicial authority. This measure aims to simplify procedures, facilitate the submission of release applications, and reduce processing delays.

The circular also entrusted the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** with receiving applications for release from prisons and ensuring their transmission to the competent judicial authorities for consideration in accordance with the applicable legal procedures, in coordination with the **Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces**.

This mechanism forms part of a broader set of practical measures aimed at reducing prison overcrowding and improving the management of detainees' case files, particularly in light of the continued increase in the number of persons deprived of liberty and the worsening overcrowding crisis in places of detention across Lebanon.

Against this background, and as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen human rights protection in Lebanon, the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**, including the **National Preventive Mechanism against Torture (NPM)**, implemented an emergency legal project throughout 2025. The project was designed to assess the legal status of detainees, facilitate their release where legally justified, and address the persistent problem of overcrowding in prisons and detention facilities.

¹⁹³ Public Prosecution Office at the Court of Cassation, Circular No. 122/S/2024, "Circular on the Mechanism for Submitting Applications for Release Pending Trial by Detainees in Prisons to Reduce Overcrowding", 10 April 2025. Available at: <https://nhrc.lb.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Public-Prosecutor-at-the-Court-of-Cassation-Circular-2025.pdf>

Within this framework, the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, together with a team of lawyers contracted by the NHRC, visited several prisons and detention centers to assess the situation of detainees. These visits sought to identify individuals eligible for release pending trial and to address urgent issues arising from prison overcrowding.

The project also intensified follow-up on detainees' case files before the Public Prosecutors' Offices and the competent courts to expedite decisions on applications for release pending trial and advance stalled cases. Fieldwork revealed, however, that **procedural obstacles hindered access to information relating to detainees' files at the Public Prosecutor's Office in Baabda**, including the heavy workload borne by the prosecution registry and the absence of adequate administrative systems for file management. The team further observed that access to case information was at times affected by inconsistent administrative practices or shortages of available personnel.

The absence of digital case management and effective coordination between courts and places of detention was identified as a principal factor contributing to prolonged pre-trial detention and delays in judicial proceedings. Establishing an integrated electronic information system linking detention facilities, Public Prosecutors' Offices, and the competent courts would significantly facilitate case management, reduce delays in scheduling hearings and executing transfer orders, and improve the overall administration of justice. Strengthening institutional coordination between judicial and security authorities also remains essential to safeguarding detainees' rights and ensuring the timely conduct of criminal proceedings.

A central priority of the project was to assist detainees who had not been charged with serious offenses. Lists of eligible detainees were prepared by identifying their case numbers before the relevant courts, while particular attention was given to whether detainees were represented by legal counsel or receiving assistance from non-governmental organizations. Despite significant challenges—including the absence of comprehensive electronic databases, administrative constraints within the courts, heavy judicial caseloads, and the financial hardship faced by many detainees'

families—the project achieved important results in facilitating the release of eligible detainees and alleviating prison overcrowding. Close cooperation with judicial, security, and legal authorities, as well as with civil society organizations, proved instrumental in overcoming these obstacles. In addition, civil society organizations, most notably **Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture** and the **Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH)**, secured bail for a number of detainees.

Key Milestones, Outcomes, and General Statistics

This section documents the field monitoring and legal follow-up activities undertaken by the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture** during the period from **18 December 2024 to 9 December 2025**, through the team of legal experts contracted by the Commission, namely lawyers **Nicole Ghanem, Nayla Nahle, Fidaa Abdel Fattah, and Manwar Haddad**, with the participation of Committee members in several visits and specialized investigations, particularly **Dr. Josiane Madi Skaff** and **Rida Azar**, in certain missions relating to prisons, juveniles, and investigations into serious incidents occurring inside places of detention.

This period was marked by a shift from the general monitoring of detention conditions to a more intervention-oriented approach combining documentation, direct interviews with detainees, review of judicial files, the signing of applications for release, follow-up on urgent health and humanitarian cases, and monitoring compliance with the legal safeguards afforded to persons deprived of their liberty.

These efforts included **60 documented visits and attempted visits**, comprising **12 visits** to prisons, central holding facilities, and specialized detention centers, including **Baabda Women’s Prison, Barbar El Khazen Women’s Prison, the Women’s Prison in Qobbeh, the Dhour El Bacheq Juvenile Girls Rehabilitation Center, the Warwar Juvenile Rehabilitation Center, the Holding Facility Complex, the Tripoli Palace of Justice Holding Facility, the State Security Detention Center, and the General Security Holding Facility in Beirut**, as well as **48 visits** to police stations, police units, judicial

detachments, and barracks in **Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Akkar, and Nabatieh**.

The visits also covered groups in particularly vulnerable situations, including women, juveniles, foreign nationals, refugees, and persons experiencing serious physical or mental health conditions.

One of the principal milestones documented in this chapter was the attempted visit to the **General Directorate of General Security Holding Facility in Beirut** on **18 June 2025**, during which access to the detention facility was denied. This demonstrated the persistence of institutional obstacles to immediate and independent access to certain places where persons are deprived of their liberty, despite the urgent preventive nature of some of the complaints received.

The visits to the **Warwar Juvenile Rehabilitation Center** also represented a pivotal development in the Committee's work. They were not limited to assessing the Center's operational readiness and infrastructure. Still, they extended to investigating serious incidents involving the death of one juvenile and an act of self-harm by another. The visits also revealed shortages in staffing and healthcare services, documented serious allegations of ill-treatment and fear of reprisals, and identified prolonged pre-trial detention affecting certain juveniles.

Visits to **Baabda Women's Prison, the Women's Prison in Qobbeh, the Soufar Juvenile Holding Facility, Hammana Police Station, and the State Security Detention Center in Adlieh** also revealed recurring challenges, including overcrowding, inadequate ventilation, shortages of equipment, difficulties in transporting detainees to hearings, uneven access to legal assistance, and restrictions on communication with family members or lawyers.

Based on the interim reports, at least **841 judicial files** were directly documented and reviewed during this period.

The available figures further indicate that at least **110 persons** directly benefited from these efforts through release decisions or legal follow-up that resulted in their release or in the effective advancement of their cases. This figure does not include persons who benefited indirectly from legal advice, expedited scheduling of hearings, follow-up on transportation to court, intervention with judicial registries, or assistance in urgent health and humanitarian cases.

Beyond the numerical impact, these visits also generated significant qualitative results. They consolidated the Committee's presence in places of detention as an independent and trusted monitoring body. They strengthened cooperation with heads of police stations, police units, and prisons.

At the same time, the visits documented the structural, judicial, and administrative obstacles that continue to prevent full compliance with legal safeguards. These include delays in judicial proceedings, failures to transport detainees to court, difficulties in transferring detainees to central prisons, delays by General Security in taking custody of certain detainees, and inadequate infrastructure in many places of detention, particularly those designated for juveniles and women.

The monitoring and documentation activities undertaken by the Committee for the Prevention of Torture revealed a range of structural deficiencies and concerning practices in places of detention, including prisons and holding facilities, that directly affect detainees' fundamental rights and raise serious concerns regarding compliance with relevant international standards.

Health and Medical Conditions

A severe shortage of essential medicines was identified, particularly allergy medication, painkillers, and anti-inflammatory drugs, together with the limited capacity of the State to provide detainees with necessary medical care.

Inadequate ventilation was also observed in places of detention, resulting in high humidity levels and the spread of illness. Many holding facilities lacked access to sunlight, negatively affecting detainees' physical and psychological well-being.

These deficiencies were compounded by shortages of cleaning supplies and personal hygiene products, as well as insufficient mattresses, pillows, and blankets, in conditions that do not meet minimum humanitarian standards.

Overcrowding and Infrastructure

Severe overcrowding was recorded in several facilities, with detainee populations exceeding official capacity by extremely high margins, in some cases reaching more than **ten times the intended capacity**.

The available space inside detention rooms was also found to be inadequate for the number of detainees held. Police stations and holding cells continued to be used for prolonged periods of detention despite their legal designation as temporary detention facilities.

Living Conditions

Deficiencies were identified in both the quantity and quality of food provided to convicted prisoners. In many detention facilities, detainees were responsible for providing their own food and drinking water.

The absence of daily outdoor exercise periods and the lack of physical or recreational activities were also observed, adversely affecting detainees' physical and psychological health.

Communication with the Outside World

Cases were documented in which certain detainees, particularly those who had not yet been questioned, were prevented from communicating with their families for extended

periods. Such practices undermine fundamental safeguards associated with lawful detention.

Delays in Investigations and Trials

The findings showed significant delays in investigations and judicial proceedings. Some detainees remained in custody for several months without being questioned, while delays in transporting detainees to hearings postponed trials.

This situation adversely affects the right to a fair trial and contributes to the deterioration of detainees' psychological well-being.

Access to Legal Assistance

Lawyers did not represent a significant number of detainees. This was linked to the limited activation of legal aid committees within the Beirut and Tripoli Bar Associations, as well as detainees' limited awareness of their right to request the appointment of legal counsel.

The Committee emphasizes that these challenges cannot be viewed in isolation. Delays in judicial proceedings, difficulties in transporting detainees, delays in ruling on applications for release, and the failure to strictly implement legal safeguards form an interconnected cycle that aggravates overcrowding.

This situation results in prolonged detention that may, in certain circumstances, amount to **cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment**.

Recommendations

In light of the above, the Committee reiterates several recommendations aimed at addressing these challenges.

Healthcare

The Committee recommends:

- Ensuring the regular and adequate provision of essential medicines to all detainees.
- Strengthening medical services in places of detention by providing sufficient and qualified healthcare personnel.
- Improving ventilation and access to natural light.
- Ensuring daily exposure to sunlight.
- Providing personal hygiene and cleaning supplies on a sustainable basis.

Food and Essential Needs

The Committee recommends ensuring the provision of food that is adequate in both quantity and quality and subjecting food services to regular monitoring to ensure continuity and compliance with appropriate standards.

Overcrowding and Infrastructure

The Committee calls for the adoption of a comprehensive national plan to reduce overcrowding, including:

- Expanding the use of alternatives to pre-trial detention.
- Developing a plan to establish new detention facilities and prisons compliant with international standards.
- Making use of available State-owned property to construct modern facilities.
- Ending the use of police holding cells as long-term detention facilities.
- Securing the necessary national and international funding to improve prison infrastructure.

Expediting Judicial Proceedings and Preventing Arbitrary Detention

The Committee recommends:

- Expediting preliminary investigations and preventing detainees from remaining in custody for prolonged periods without questioning.
- Ensuring that detainees are transported to hearings on time.
- Using alternative means, including remote hearings where appropriate.
- Complying with international fair trial and pre-trial detention standards.
- Limiting unjustified appeals against release decisions.

Legal Assistance

The Committee emphasizes the need to:

- Activate the role of the legal aid committees of the Beirut and Tripoli Bar Associations.
- Require the competent authorities to inform detainees of their right to appoint a lawyer.
- Strengthen legal awareness programs inside places of detention.

Judicial Oversight

The Committee calls for strengthening the judiciary's monitoring role through:

- Regular visits by competent judges to places of detention in fulfillment of their legal supervisory duties.
- Effective judicial oversight of the legality and conditions of detention.
- The preparation of periodic reports to support the development of effective reform policies.

Addressing the Structural Causes of Overcrowding

Finally, the Committee stresses the need to address the structural causes of overcrowding by:

- Rationalizing the use of pre-trial detention and expanding its alternatives.

- Expediting decisions on applications for release and strictly observing statutory time limits.
- Increasing human resources within the judiciary.
- Developing a modern criminal justice policy that reduces reliance on custodial sentences.

Prison Visits

General Directorate of General Security Holding Facility | Beirut

On 18 June 2025, an attempted visit was made to the **General Directorate of General Security Holding Facility** in Beirut, located in Abdel Square, Adlieh, following information alleging that a female detainee had been subjected to ill-treatment inside the place of detention.

The lawyer assigned to the mission arrived at the General Security building carrying the authorization issued by the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, and wearing her official identification badge. However, the officer responsible for the Detainees Division stated that access to the holding facility could not be granted without prior written authorization from the Director General of General Security. As a result, the visit could not be conducted, and the conditions of detainees could not be assessed.

This incident highlights the challenges affecting the NHRC's access to certain places of detention, even though direct access is a fundamental element of independent preventive monitoring and the timely verification of allegations of ill-treatment.

This issue is particularly significant given the nature of the facility and the large number of persons held there, especially foreign nationals and refugees. Published data on the work of the Investigation and Enforcement Department of General Security in Beirut indicate that approximately 28,476 persons entered the holding facility between the

beginning of 2015 and July 2016, including 18,329 Syrian nationals, averaging approximately 1,488 detainees per month.

Statistics published in the General Security magazine also indicate that, between 15 December 2024 and 15 January 2026, a total of 9,060 detainees entered the department, including 5,660 Syrian nationals, averaging approximately 697 detainees per month.

These figures reflect the continuing high number of persons subjected to administrative detention, often because of their legal residency status. Although the holding facility was relocated from its former site beneath the Adlieh Bridge to its current location in Abdel Square to improve health and humanitarian conditions, various human rights reports continue to raise questions regarding the compatibility of administrative detention practices with fundamental legal safeguards, particularly in relation to the duration of detention and the availability of effective remedies to challenge administrative decisions concerning residency or deportation.

In light of the above, it was proposed that an official letter be addressed to the **General Directorate of General Security** clarifying the nature of the NHRC's mandate and its powers to visit places of detention under **Law No. 62/2016**, thereby enabling it to carry out its monitoring functions effectively.

It was also proposed that the **Baabda Appellate Public Prosecutor's Office** be contacted to facilitate access, where necessary, to information concerning detainees' files in judicial records. This would strengthen institutional coordination and reduce administrative obstacles that may hinder the monitoring of persons deprived of their liberty.

Warwar Rehabilitation Center for Juveniles in Conflict with the Law | Baabda District

On 24 July 2025, experts from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, visited the Warwar

Rehabilitation Center for Juveniles in Conflict with the Law in Hadath, Baabda District, to inspect the facility, assess its infrastructure and operational conditions, and evaluate its readiness to receive juveniles.

The Center was inaugurated on **28 May 2025** through cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, the Internal Security Forces, the Delegation of the European Union to the Lebanese Republic, and the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**.

The Center is intended to provide a safe and suitably equipped environment for the rehabilitation of juveniles in conflict with the law, in a manner that respects children's rights and reflects relevant international standards, particularly United Nations principles on juvenile justice and recognized best practices in rehabilitation and social reintegration.

The establishment and equipping of the Center, with technical support from UNODC, formed part of two European Union-funded projects implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and the Ministry of Justice.¹⁹⁴

The project builds on a pioneering initiative launched in 2003, when UNODC supported the establishment of a rehabilitation Center for juvenile girls near Dhour El Bacheq Hospital. This represented an important step toward developing a juvenile justice system in Lebanon that is more gender-sensitive and more firmly centered on children's rights, in accordance with international standards and best practices concerning the protection and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law.

¹⁹⁴ The project "Strengthening the Rule of Law by Improving a Human Rights-Based Criminal Justice System in Lebanon", funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), from March 2018 to February 2022.

The project "Enhancing Access to Justice and Safeguards for Fundamental Rights in the Criminal Justice System, including Prisons", funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Development program (UNDP), from January 2023 to December 2025.

Upon the visiting team's arrival, the delegation was received by the personnel on duty and met with the duty non-commissioned officer in his office. During the initial meeting, the team was informed that the personnel assigned to the Center had been serving there for approximately six months and that the Center had officially opened around two months earlier. However, no juveniles had yet been transferred to the facility, and it had not begun operating because of organizational and administrative reasons.

The Center consists of two main buildings. The first is an older building that formerly belonged to the Counter-Terrorism Center and has been renovated for administrative purposes. The second is newly constructed and is intended to accommodate, rehabilitate, and reintegrate juveniles.

Regarding human resources, the Center had only **25 personnel**, including a single female officer responsible for administrative duties in the registry and for searching female visitors. The visiting team considered this staffing level relatively limited given the Center's size, function, and location, particularly under a rotating shift system, which means the actual number of personnel present at any given time would be substantially lower than the total staffing figure.

The visiting team inspected the first building, which contains administrative offices and several rooms intended to accommodate juveniles during the initial period following admission to the Center. According to the officials, this period may last approximately **15 days**. The building also contains rooms designated for isolation.

These rooms had previously been used as holding cells when the Judicial Police occupied the building, and no substantial modifications had been made to adapt them to their new function as reception rooms for juveniles.

The team recorded several concerns relating to infrastructure and equipment, including:

- Metal beds that were not fixed to the floor, potentially raising safety and security concerns.
- Inadequate ventilation, which could adversely affect health conditions.

- The absence of certain basic amenities, such as televisions or small kitchen facilities available in rooms intended for longer-term accommodation, creating a marked disparity between initial reception conditions and subsequent living conditions.
- The absence of shower facilities in the isolation rooms is particularly concerning where isolation may be imposed because of a medical condition or infectious disease, as high standards of personal hygiene and infection prevention would be essential.

The team considered that continued use of these rooms in their current condition might not be consistent with modern standards applicable to rehabilitation centers and could reinforce juveniles' perception that they are being held in a prison-like environment rather than in a rehabilitative and corrective institution.

The second building, a newly constructed facility designated for the accommodation and rehabilitation of juveniles, consists of two main wings and includes a range of educational and vocational facilities intended to develop juveniles' skills and improve their prospects for reintegration into society.

These facilities include:

- Accommodation rooms for juveniles
- A library
- A literacy classroom
- A computer room
- A creativity room
- A training kitchen
- A music room
- Several vocational workshops
- An agricultural training area
- Three sports courts

The literacy classroom has been equipped with a teaching board and sanitary facilities. At the same time, the computer room and the creativity room have been furnished with modern equipment, each with its own dedicated sanitary facilities.

The library contains several books and storybooks. However, the visiting team noted that most of these publications are in foreign languages, with no books available in Arabic. In addition, many of the books are intended for younger age groups than those accommodated at the Center, which may reduce their educational value.

The ground floor of the building houses several vocational workshops designed to provide juveniles with practical skills. These include a metalworking workshop, a carpentry workshop, a solar energy, refrigeration, and heating workshop, an electrical and plumbing workshop, a barbering workshop, a music room, and a training kitchen.

The team observed that much of the equipment used in these workshops is relatively old. According to the Center's administration, most of it was transferred from **Roumieh Prison**, except for some new tools and worktables. The workshops also lack adequate ventilation systems and exhaust fans, as well as air-conditioning units, resulting in uncomfortable and potentially unhealthy working conditions, particularly in the carpentry and metalworking workshops.

In the music room, the team found that the musical instruments were old and damaged. Some appeared torn or corroded by rust, while the room itself suffered from inadequate ventilation.

The Center includes a small area designated for agricultural training. However, the team questioned the practical feasibility of training a large number of juveniles in such a limited space, particularly as the Center is expected to accommodate approximately **120 juveniles**. If one group of juveniles cultivates the plot, the remaining juveniles may have to wait until the harvest season before participating in agricultural training.

The Center also includes three sports courts located on different floors: one on the ground floor, another on the first floor equipped with exercise equipment, and a third on

the top floor used for basketball and football. The team noted, however, that the fencing surrounding the sports courts is neither sufficiently high nor sufficiently robust, raising potential security concerns in the event of escape attempts.

The juveniles' accommodation rooms are furnished with unfixed metal beds, a small dining area with a table, a television, and a kitchenette equipped with a refrigerator, an electric kettle, and an electric hotplate. Each room also has its own private bathroom.

The team nevertheless recorded several technical observations, including:

- Inadequate ventilation inside the rooms and the absence of air-conditioning, with only a small plastic fan provided.
- Water drainage pipes installed beneath the washbasin in a way that may impede cleaning and cause water leakage into the room.
- Weak door locks, which, according to staff, had already required maintenance twice before the facility had even entered full operation.
- Insufficiently robust metal grilles on some room windows, with certain windows located close to the outer perimeter wall, potentially facilitating escape, particularly given the wooded area surrounding the Center.
- Corridors between the rooms are not equipped with surveillance cameras.
- Exposed plumbing installations are visible on the bathroom ceilings despite the facility's recent construction.

The Center includes a room designated for face-to-face family visits, equipped with surveillance cameras. There is also a separate room for video calls with family members, which may additionally be used for remote court hearings when necessary.

A review of the surveillance system revealed shortcomings in camera distribution. Some cameras do not fully cover the required areas, while no cameras are installed in the residential corridors or in many other parts of the Center. Furthermore, there is no central control room equipped with a large monitoring screen to supervise all surveillance cameras around the clock.

The team also recorded several additional observations, including:

- The insufficient height of certain perimeter walls and fences.
- The proximity of the inner fence to the outer perimeter wall.
- The narrow access opening leading to the guards' observation room.
- The lack of adequate protection for the windows of the guards' rooms facing the public road.

Despite the relatively high cost of the project, the team observed evidence of repeated maintenance work in parts of the facility, together with signs of dampness and water seepage in several areas. The Center also requires a backup generator to support its solar power system, while the medical room has not yet been equipped with the necessary medical equipment. In addition, no designated waste collection area exists within the Center, creating the possibility that waste will accumulate near the entrance, leading to unpleasant odors and the proliferation of insects.

In light of these findings, the visiting team recommended the following measures:

- Install appropriate air-conditioning and ventilation systems in all accommodation rooms and workshops.
- Establish a central control room for continuous monitoring of the surveillance cameras.
- Reconfigure and expand camera coverage to include corridors and workshops.
- Reinforce perimeter fences and walls and increase their height where necessary.
- Carry out comprehensive maintenance of doors and locks and address dampness-related problems.
- Equip the medical room with the necessary medical equipment.
- Provide Arabic books appropriate for different age groups.
- Upgrade vocational equipment and musical instruments.
- Equip isolation rooms with shower facilities.
- Establish an appropriate waste management system.

- Construct drainage channels around the perimeter walls to prevent water accumulation during the winter.
- Increase the number of staff assigned to the Center, particularly female personnel.
- Equip juveniles' accommodation rooms with lockers for storing personal belongings.

On **16 October 2025**, a visit was conducted to the **Rehabilitation Center for Juveniles in Conflict with the Law** in Warwar, following reports of a serious incident that had occurred at the Center on **14 October 2025**, involving a juvenile who suffered a critical medical condition while in detention. The purpose of the visit was to establish the circumstances of the incident, assess the situation of the juveniles held at the Center, and evaluate compliance with the legal safeguards and national and international standards relating to the protection of juveniles deprived of their liberty.

The visit included meetings with the Center's administration and on-duty staff, individual interviews with several juveniles, and inspections of the various facilities within the Center, including the detention rooms, the infirmary, and the sanitary facilities.

The inspection identified challenges relating to staffing and healthcare services. It found a shortage of personnel trained to work with juveniles, as well as limited medical services, particularly the absence of a regularly available general practitioner and shortages of essential medicines and medical supplies in the infirmary. These deficiencies may adversely affect the Center's ability to respond to medical emergencies.

During the individual interviews, several juveniles made allegations suggesting that some had been subjected to treatment that could amount to **ill-treatment** or **cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment**. Physical injuries were documented on several juveniles, including injuries to the head, face, back, and limbs. Some stated that these

injuries had occurred following incidents inside the Center. It was also observed that several juveniles appeared reluctant to provide statements freely because they feared possible reprisals.

As part of the follow-up to the incident that prompted the visit, the team also visited the hospital to which the juvenile concerned had been transferred. The juvenile was interviewed, and his medical file was reviewed in coordination with the treating medical staff.

The examination documented multiple physical injuries. However, the available medical findings did not contain clear indications consistent with the reported account of an attempted hanging. Moreover, the statements collected within the Center presented differing accounts of how the incident had occurred. These discrepancies raise questions regarding the circumstances of the incident and underscore the need for an **independent and comprehensive investigation** to establish the facts and any potential responsibility, in accordance with international standards, particularly the **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)** and the **Istanbul Protocol** governing the investigation of allegations of torture and ill-treatment.

The visit also identified legal concerns relating to the prolonged pre-trial detention of several juveniles without final judicial decisions, as well as limited legal follow-up in certain cases. The continued detention of juveniles for extended periods without determining their legal status is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of juvenile justice, which require deprivation of liberty to be used only as an exceptional measure and for the shortest appropriate period, while prioritizing alternatives to detention whenever possible.

These findings highlight the importance of the Commission's monitoring role in overseeing detention conditions and responding to reports of serious incidents in places where persons are deprived of their liberty, thereby helping protect juveniles from all forms of violence and ill-treatment and ensuring respect for their fundamental rights.

Baabda Women's Prison | Baabda District

On 24 June 2025, a visit was conducted at Baabda Women's Prison to monitor detention conditions, assess compliance with the legal safeguards afforded to female detainees and prisoners, and review case files to prepare applications for release that could help reduce prison overcrowding. The visit included an inspection of the prison's different sections and direct interviews with several detainees to assess their legal, social, and health conditions.

The inspection revealed **severe overcrowding** within the prison wards, with each room accommodating between **18 and 20 detainees**, despite the absence of sufficient beds for all prisoners, forcing some to sleep on the floor.

The visit also identified challenges related to health and living conditions, including inadequate ventilation, high humidity, the presence of insects, and limited access to clean water and cleaning supplies. It was further observed that many detainees relied on their own resources to obtain food and essential medication, placing an additional burden on women who lacked financial means or family support.

Interviews with several detainees revealed cases of **prolonged pre-trial detention** without final judgments. Some prisoners stated that they had not appeared before a court for extended periods because they had not been transferred to scheduled hearings or because investigations had been delayed. It was also found that several detainees had remained in custody for months without detention warrants being issued against them. At the same time, other women had been detained for many years without final judgments in their cases.

These findings underscore the need to strengthen coordination between security agencies and judicial authorities to safeguard the **right to a fair trial** and expedite the adjudication of judicial cases.

Women's Prison in Qobbeh | Tripoli District

An **unannounced visit** was conducted to the **Women's Prison in Tripoli** on **3 September 2025** to assess the conditions of female prisoners. At the time of the visit, the facility accommodated **92 pre-trial detainees and convicted prisoners**, distributed across **11 detention rooms**.

The visit showed that the prison receives support from several associations that provide food assistance and legal services to the prisoners. During the inspection of several rooms, relatively overcrowded conditions were observed, along with the need to replace mattresses and other basic supplies. Hot water was also available only to a limited extent during certain periods.

The prisoners reported restrictions on telephone calls and on the periods during which cell doors were opened. During the visit, several prisoners were interviewed, and their legal files were reviewed. **Three applications for release** were prepared pursuant to **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**.

Dhour El Bacheq Juvenile Girls Rehabilitation Center | Metn District

A visit was conducted to the **Dhour El Bacheq Juvenile Girls Rehabilitation Center** as part of the monitoring of the conditions of girls deprived of their liberty in rehabilitation institutions. The visit aimed to assess their living conditions and determine whether their judicial files were being followed up regularly.

The Center is located near **Dhour El Bacheq Governmental Hospital**. It was established through an initiative of the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**. It is designated for girls in conflict with the law who are subject to arrest warrants or rehabilitative measures ordered by juvenile courts.

The visit found no significant improvements in the facility's infrastructure or living conditions compared with previous visits. The visiting team was unable to interview the

girls because they were participating in a rehabilitation activities program within the Center. The visit was therefore limited to meetings with the Center's administration and a review of the residents' judicial files.

The review showed that the files were being regularly followed up before the competent judicial authorities and that no additional intervention was required at that stage.

Juveniles in Lebanon are dealt with under **Law No. 422/2002**, which is based on the principles of the **1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child**. The law adopts a rehabilitative approach, regarding a juvenile as a person "in conflict with the law" rather than as a "criminal". It allows the judiciary to impose various rehabilitative measures or a custodial sentence subject to reduced limits.

However, the practical implementation of this legislative framework continues to face institutional and judicial challenges, most notably the absence of sufficient specialized facilities for juveniles, delays in establishing appropriate detention centers, and limited judicial specialization and professional training in this field. These challenges undermine the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system and its ability to achieve its rehabilitative and preventive objectives.

State Security Detention Center | Beirut

On **30 December 2024**, a visit was conducted to a **State Security detention Center** in the Adlieh area, Abdel Square, following reports that a detainee had attempted suicide inside the facility. The purpose of the visit was to verify the circumstances of the incident and assess detention conditions in the holding facility.

During the visit, the detainee concerned was interviewed, and his statement was taken in order to establish the circumstances of the incident and the factors that led to it. The other detainees held in the facility, numbering **three persons**, were also interviewed.

Their judicial files were reviewed to follow up on their legal situations, verify the lawfulness of the procedures taken against them, and assess compliance with the legal safeguards governing pre-trial detention.

The visit also included an inspection of the detention room, which was found to be confined, relatively isolated from the outside environment, and subject to continuous surveillance through security cameras. The inspection covered essential facilities within the detention room, including sleeping areas and the bathroom. The water supply was found to be controlled from outside the room.

The inspection showed that the Center was equipped with advanced security surveillance systems. However, the nature of the detention facility remained closer to a closed security environment that did not provide ordinary detention conditions suitable for prolonged periods. This indicates the need to consider transferring detainees to more appropriate detention facilities.

Information Branch Detention Facility, Mount Lebanon Branch, Jisr El Basha | Baabda District

On 3 February 2025, a visit was conducted to the **Internal Security Forces Building, Information Branch Office in Jisr El Basha**, to inquire about a detainee's case and assess the conditions of detainees held in the detention facility attached to the Center.

Upon arrival, the visiting team contacted the reception officer, who informed the relevant office of the visit. After **waiting, the team was informed that it would be necessary to refer the matter to the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces** and that access to the Center or its holding facility would not be permitted.

The team also requested the arrest warrant number relating to the detainee concerned. However, after further review and additional waiting time, the officers stated that they were unable to provide any information about the case.

Accordingly, the visit concluded without access to the detention facility or the requested information, preventing the assessment of detention conditions or the identification of cases that might have met the legal requirements for release.

Visits to Police Stations, Holding Facilities, Police Units, Judicial Detachments, and Barracks in Beirut Governorate

Helou Barracks | Beirut

On **16 January 2025**, the team visited **Helou Barracks** in Beirut, which houses the **Helou, Zoqaq El Blat, and Msaytbeh Police Stations**, to assess the situation of detainees and review their legal files.

During the visit, the team examined the operational procedures of the barracks and the challenges they faced, particularly overcrowding resulting from delays in judicial proceedings and the transfer of detainees to central prisons.

At **Helou Police Station**, **31 detainees** were being held. Following a preliminary review of their files based on the nature of the offenses attributed to them and the duration of their detention, **17 detainees** were selected for individual interviews.

At **Zoqaq El Blat Police Station**, **nine detainees** of different nationalities were in custody. A review of their files indicated that **six** might satisfy the requirements of **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. They were interviewed, and **four** signed applications for release.

The review also identified **two cases** in which no investigation hearing had been scheduled despite the detainees having been held for one month.

The visit further enabled the review of detainee registers across the various police stations and the identification of several cases suitable for legal follow-up through applications for release. Observations were also recorded regarding overcrowding and

the administrative and logistical challenges associated with managing detention facilities and transferring detainees to court hearings.

Mina El Hosn Police Station | Beirut

On **6 February 2025**, a visit was conducted at **Mina El Hosn Police Station** in Beirut to assess the holding facilities and review detainees' files.

The visit found **eight detainees** accommodated in two holding cells. Their cases related to various offenses, including theft, armed robbery, and other crimes.

Several detainees were interviewed regarding the circumstances of their arrest, the duration of their detention, and the judicial authorities responsible for their cases. The station's registers were also reviewed to verify arrest dates and basic legal information for each file.

The inspection showed that some detainees were awaiting the completion of investigations or the scheduling of court hearings.

The visit enabled the collection of preliminary information concerning detainees held at the station and the documentation of information relating to their judicial files in preparation for following up cases that might satisfy the legal requirements for submitting applications for release before the competent judicial authorities.

Visits to Police Stations, Holding Facilities, Police Units, Judicial Detachments, and Barracks in Nabatieh Governorate

Bint Jbeil Police Station | Bint Jbeil District

On **8 February 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Bint Jbeil Police Station** to assess the facility's condition following the damage it sustained during the security incidents that affected the area.

The inspection revealed that both the police station and the adjoining government building had suffered extensive damage, including shattered windows, structural deterioration, and rainwater infiltration into parts of the premises. The team also observed damage to electrical wiring and office equipment.

No detainees were present in either the police station or its detention facility. The visiting team was informed that detainees had been transferred to other detention facilities in different regions during the period of hostilities.

It was further noted that the station's activities had been reduced to the minimum level of security and administrative functions because of the difficult security situation in the area.

The visit enabled the documentation of the extent of the damage sustained by the facility and confirmed that no detainees were being held there at that time.

Visits to Police Stations, Holding Facilities, Police Units, Judicial Detachments, and Barracks in Mount Lebanon Governorate

Soufar Juvenile Holding Facility | Aley District

On **15 July 2025**, a visit was conducted to the **Soufar Police Station Juvenile Holding Facility** in Aley District to assess detention conditions for juveniles and evaluate their compliance with national legal safeguards and international standards relating to the protection of children's rights.

The visit included an inspection of the juvenile holding facility and discussions with the officers in charge. It was found that **five juveniles** were being held despite the limited space available, which was inadequate for the number of detainees and raised concerns regarding compliance with the minimum standards applicable to juvenile detention.

The review of the detainees' legal situations identified cases raising concerns about the justification for continued pre-trial detention. These included **a 12-year-old child**

detained on charges of attempted theft, as well as a juvenile detained since 9 January 2025 on felony charges, without an in-person detention warrant having been issued by the date of the visit.

The latter juvenile had cases pending before more than one judicial authority, including courts in Tripoli and Baabda. However, a lack of coordination between the judicial authorities and detention facilities, along with logistical difficulties in transporting detainees to the competent courts, prevented him from attending scheduled hearings, resulting in his prolonged detention without a determination of his legal status.

It was also noted that one detainee was awaiting transfer to the Directorate General of General Security, requiring procedural follow-up to expedite the relevant legal procedures.

The field assessment showed that the police station faced challenges arising from the limited size of the holding facility and difficulties in transporting detainees, as well as the postponement of certain court hearings. These factors may adversely affect juveniles' right to appear before a judicial authority within a reasonable time.

These findings underscore the need to strengthen coordination between judicial and security authorities and to establish more effective follow-up mechanisms to ensure respect for the legal safeguards applicable to juveniles and to reduce the risk of prolonged detention in temporary holding facilities.

Hammana Police Station Holding Facility | Baabda District

On 15 July 2025, a visit was conducted to Hammana Police Station in Baabda District, Mount Lebanon Governorate, to assess the situation of detainees and the conditions of detention within the station's holding facilities.

The station has two separate holding cells, one designated for adults and the other for juveniles, which is a positive measure in terms of compliance with the principle of

separating categories of detainees in accordance with relevant international standards. At the time of the visit, **five detainees** were being held.

The inspection showed that the holding facilities required maintenance and rehabilitation to improve detention conditions. Concerns were also identified regarding privacy in the sanitary facilities, as no door separated the toilet from the detention area, leaving it exposed to other detainees.

Communication between juveniles and their families took place through the door opening, as there was no telephone available, limiting their ability to maintain family contact during detention. The station commander expressed his willingness to address this issue by requesting the installation of a telephone in the corridor separating the two holding cells to facilitate communication between detainees and their families.

Regarding the legal status of the detainees, available information indicated that the duration of detention of the five detainees was not excessive in view of the offenses alleged against them, and that lawyers represented several.

During the visit, detainees were encouraged to sign applications for release so competent judicial authorities could review their cases. It was subsequently confirmed that one detainee had been released.

These findings highlight the importance of strengthening procedural safeguards for detainees, particularly by facilitating access to legal assistance and ensuring periodic judicial review of the legality of detention, thereby protecting the fundamental rights of persons deprived of their liberty and reducing the risk of unjustified prolonged detention.

Dekweneh Police Station | Metn District

On **13 March 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Dekweneh Police Station** to assess the conditions of detainees and inspect the holding facility.

At the time of the visit, **nine detainees** were being held in the detention room. Several were interviewed regarding the circumstances of their detention and their health and living conditions.

Some detainees reported high levels of humidity inside the room and inadequate ventilation. They also reported difficulties with cleanliness and access to healthcare within the holding facility. Individual cases involving detainees requiring medical follow-up because of health conditions were also identified.

These observations were documented together with a review of information relating to detainees' judicial files and the duration of their detention.

The inspection concluded that detention conditions at the station require improvements in ventilation, cleanliness, and basic services to ensure compliance with minimum humanitarian standards applicable to places of detention.

Broummana Police Station | Metn District

On **3 July 2025**, the Committee's experts conducted a field visit to **Broummana Police Station** to assess the human rights situation of detainees held in the adult detention room and to interview them regarding their legal status. The visit included interviews with all **12 detainees**, as well as an assessment of conditions inside the detention room.

The on-site inspection revealed difficult humanitarian conditions that did not meet the minimum international standards governing the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. Significant overcrowding was observed, with 12 detainees held in a confined space, a marked increase from the previous visit, when only eight detainees were recorded. This indicated a worsening overcrowding problem.

The detention room also had very high humidity levels and limited natural ventilation, as the small opening provided only minimal access to sunlight. These conditions were compounded by unpleasant odors resulting from inadequate hygiene.

The team also identified the case of a **62-year-old detainee** whose health and behavioral condition had visibly deteriorated. Other detainees reported that he urinated on himself and on the bedding inside the room, further increasing health risks within an already overcrowded detention space. These conditions point to serious challenges in providing an environment that meets minimum standards of public health, hygiene, and ventilation.

Interviews with detainees showed that none met the legal conditions set out in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. Therefore, it was not possible to obtain signatures on applications for release.

Three detainees were being held on behalf of the **General Directorate of General Security**, pending the completion of deportation procedures or the regularization of their legal status. Police officers reported that delays by the competent authority in taking custody of these detainees prolonged their detention at the station and contributed to overcrowding in the detention room.

Officers at the station also described the challenges they faced due to difficult economic conditions and the deterioration of their living circumstances, which affected working conditions within the detention facility.

Chiyah Police Station | Baabda District

On **14 August 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Chiyah Police Station** in Baabda District, Mount Lebanon Governorate, to assess the situation of detainees held in the station's holding facility. The visit followed an earlier visit conducted in February of the same year, allowing for a comparative assessment of changes made to the structure of the holding facility and detention management procedures.

The visit found that the entrance to the holding facility had been modified. It was no longer accessed directly from the station entrance. Instead, a wall had been constructed to separate it from the main corridor, and a new entrance had been opened through the guard room. This organizational measure may contribute to tighter control over access to the detention area and improved management of movement within the station.

The information collected during the visit showed that **four foreign female detainees** were being held in the facility, all in connection with different cases. One Kenyan detainee had been held since **24 January 2025** before being released on bail of **five million Lebanese pounds**.

Available information indicated that another detainee who had been held with her paid the bail amount. She received the amount from one of the police officers, paid it at the financial office of the Baabda Palace of Justice, obtained the release order, and delivered it to the competent Vice Squad.

The other detainees remained in custody in connection with different cases. It was also noted that one Syrian detainee had remained in custody since **March 2025** without appearing before a judge by the date of the visit. This raised concerns regarding compliance with the procedural safeguard requiring detainees to be brought before a judicial authority within a reasonable period.

The on-site inspection showed that detention conditions continued to be affected by several infrastructure and space-related deficiencies. The holding facility was extremely small and could accommodate no more than two detainees. At the same time, four women were being held there at the time of the visit, resulting in overcrowding within a confined space.

Maintenance, lighting, and ventilation conditions had shown little improvement since the previous visit, reflecting the continuing need for structural intervention. Addressing these shortcomings requires administrative and logistical measures to improve the infrastructure and ensure compliance with international human rights standards,

particularly for foreign nationals who may face additional challenges related to language, legal status, or limited access to legal assistance.

Bikfaya Police Station | Metn District

On **3 July 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Bikfaya Police Station** to monitor the situation of juveniles in detention and verify compliance with the legal safeguards afforded to them. The visit included individual interviews with several detained juveniles and a review of their legal files to assess the possibility of submitting applications for release or taking other forms of legal action.

The on-site inspection found that the holding facility designated for juveniles was unsuitable for accommodating them. It suffered from extremely poor ventilation and lacked air extraction equipment. The space was also very limited, with only two mattresses shared by four juveniles.

The sanitary facility inside the holding area required maintenance. Detainees took drinking water directly from the tap, raising concerns about the adequacy of health and hygiene conditions in the detention facility.

The review of legal files showed that **three detained juveniles** met the conditions set out in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. Their cases therefore required legal follow-up to submit applications for release or adopt the necessary judicial measures to expedite decisions on their legal status.

Jdeideh Judicial Detachment | Metn District

On **8 July 2025**, a visit was conducted to the **Jdeideh Judicial Detachment** to assess the situation of detainees held in its detention facility and review the detention records and related judicial files.

The inspection found **18 detainees** inside the holding facility. It was also established that approximately **110 detainees** were being held on behalf of the detachment across

several different detention facilities. This distribution reflects the considerable pressure placed on the various facilities accommodating detainees on behalf of the judicial detachment.

The review of legal files showed that **two detainees** held inside the facility met the conditions set out in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. A further **17 detainees** held at other detention facilities might also meet the same conditions, requiring individual follow-up of their files at their respective places of detention.

Ghazir Police Station | Keserwan District

On **18 December 2024**, the team visited Ghazir Police Station and assessed the conditions of detainees held in the station's holding facilities. The station serves as a major detention Center to which large numbers of detainees are transferred from detention facilities under the Jounieh Company.

The on-site inspection showed that the station contains three holding cells with a reported total capacity of approximately **75 detainees**. These cells accommodate detainees transferred from several detention facilities under the Jounieh Company, as well as some individuals transferred from other detention centers that had been required to close.

The inspection found that cleanliness within the station was generally acceptable and that no unpleasant odors were present. Family visits were permitted, with communication taking place by telephone through a glass partition. However, certain essential services were provided at the detainees' own expense. Detainees purchased drinking water, while officers obtained other necessities from a nearby shop. Food was supplied through meals transported from Roumieh Prison. It was also noted that the medical Center did not provide medication to detainees.

The experts conducted individual interviews with **67 detainees** in the station's interview room. These interviews enabled an assessment of their legal status and the provision of preliminary legal advice in certain cases, particularly where the requirements for submitting applications for release were not met because of the nature of the offense, prior convictions, multiple pending cases, the proximity of scheduled hearings, or the fact that the required detention period had not yet elapsed.

Following these interviews, **45 detainees** signed applications for release after it was determined that they met the legal requirements set out in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. The applications were entered in the station's administrative register and referred to the **Mount Lebanon Appellate Public Prosecutor's Office** for follow-up in accordance with the applicable procedures.

Aramoun Police Station | Aley District

On **13 January 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Aramoun Police Station** to assess conditions in the holding facility and review detainees' legal files.

The detention register showed that **six detainees** were being held inside the facility. Three of them were interviewed directly to assess their legal situations. A review of their files showed that the offenses attributed to the interviewed detainees were classified as felonies, preventing them from benefiting from the provisions of **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure** relating to pre-trial detention. It was also found that **nine additional detainees** associated with Aramoun Police Station were being held in trust at other detention facilities.

Qabr Chmoun Police Station | Aley District

On **13 January 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Qabr Chmoun Police Station**, during which the visiting team assessed the conditions of detainees held in the facility and reviewed the detention records.

The visit found that **15 detainees** were being held in the facility, including **12 men and three women** of different nationalities. They included four Lebanese nationals, nine Syrian nationals, and two detainees of other nationalities.

Nine of the 15 detainees were interviewed regarding their legal situations. Several detainees were selected for individual interviews. However, the interviews were conducted through the internal communication system from the lower floor because access to the upper floor, where the holding cells were located, was not permitted. The officer responsible for the station expressed reservations on security grounds, given the absence of the station commander and the limited number of officers present.

Although the visiting team reiterated the broad legal powers granted to the Commission to enter places of detention, it agreed to conduct the interviews through the internal communication system in order to fulfill the primary purpose of the visit, namely assessing the legal status of detainees.

The interviews revealed that only **two detainees** met the conditions set out in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. Their signatures were obtained on applications for release for follow-up before the competent judicial authorities.

Bourj Hammoud Police Station | Metn District

Two visits were conducted to **Bourj Hammoud Police Station** on **20 January 2025** and **16 March 2025** to assess detainees' conditions and inspect detention conditions.

During the first visit, **21 detainees** were found inside the holding facility. Sixteen were interviewed individually regarding their legal situations, and their judicial files were reviewed. Following the review, **10 detainees** signed applications for release.

Information on the remaining detainees was recorded for continued legal follow-up and to adopt appropriate measures to expedite their trials.

During the second visit, **15 detainees** were found inside the holding facility, although its maximum capacity was only **eight detainees**, indicating significant overcrowding.

The inspection also showed that certain facilities within the station required maintenance, particularly the sanitary facilities and basic equipment associated with the holding cell. Ventilation inside the holding room was also inadequate, potentially increasing pressure on detainees when their numbers rise.

It was further reported that the station faced shortages of personnel, vehicles, and logistical equipment relative to the security responsibilities assigned to it within its geographic area.

The two visits enabled the documentation of these observations, an assessment of the general conditions within the station and its holding facility, and follow-up on the legal situations of several detainees.

Jisr Police Station, Nabaa | Metn District

On **20 January 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Jisr Police Station** in the Nabaa area.

The visit found that **four female detainees** of different nationalities were being held in the facility, including one Lebanese national, one Syrian national, one Ethiopian national, and one Sierra Leonean national.

The review of their files showed that the conditions set out in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure** were not met in these cases. However, the visiting team observed delays in certain procedures, including delays in interviews by the Drug Enforcement Bureau and delays in transferring some detainees to General Security.

Chhim Police Station | Chouf District

On **11 March 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Chhim Police Station**, which falls under the Beiteddine Company, to assess the conditions of the holding facilities and detainees.

The station is located in an old two-story building that requires maintenance and infrastructure improvements. The inspection found that cleanliness within the station

was relatively poor, with visible accumulations of dust and cobwebs in certain parts of the building.

The station's two holding cells accommodated **nine detainees**, all of whom were interviewed. Basic information concerning their judicial files was collected.

A preliminary review showed that none of the detainees met the conditions for release at that stage because of the nature of the offenses, the duration of detention, or the fact that lawyers were already handling their cases.

It was also observed that the bathroom inside the holding facilities had no door and was separated only by a fabric curtain. In addition, the exhaust fans inside the holding cells were not operated during the winter. Overall, the station requires improvements to its infrastructure and internal organization.

Visits to Police Stations and Holding Facilities in North Lebanon Governorate

Holding Facility Complex at the Palace of Justice | Tripoli

The Commission conducted three follow-up visits to the Holding Facility Complex during 2025, on 6 November, 26 November, and 9 December, as part of its monitoring mandate to assess detention conditions and verify compliance with the legal safeguards afforded to detainees.

The number of detainees held at the complex during these visits ranged from **60 to 78**, all of whom were being held in trust on behalf of other detention facilities. This reflects the complex's role as a temporary detention facility receiving detainees transferred from different police stations and units.

During the visits, the Commission's team interviewed several detainees to assess their legal status and the progress of their judicial cases. The team also obtained information on the duration of detention and the competent judicial authorities. In addition, several detainees signed applications for release where the relevant legal requirements were met.

The visits also enabled the team to directly assess detention conditions within the complex, including infrastructure, cleanliness standards, and arrangements for providing food and medical services.

The inspections found that the infrastructure was relatively acceptable from a security perspective. However, cleanliness remained below the required standard. It was also observed that detainees or their families were frequently required to pay for food and medical services.

At the same time, the administration of the complex cooperated with the visiting team by facilitating its work, enabling it to interview detainees, and providing access to information concerning their conditions. This cooperation strengthened the monitoring and follow-up process.

Mina Police Station | Tripoli District

Three visits were conducted to **Mina Police Station** in Tripoli on **19 December 2024, 17 January 2025, and 2 October 2025**, as part of monitoring places of detention and reviewing the judicial files of detainees associated with the station.

During these visits, the visiting team met with the station commander, who cooperated and facilitated access to the official registers and detainees' files maintained by the registry. The team also reviewed judicial information concerning the detainees.

The inspection during the first visit identified several concerns related to detention conditions, most notably inadequate lighting, insufficient ventilation openings inside the

holding cell, overcrowding relative to its capacity, the absence of hot water for bathing, and the need to replace mattresses and pillows.

The second visit focused on following up on the judicial files of detainees associated with the station, whether they were held inside the station or at other detention facilities. Several applications for release were prepared after reviewing arrest dates and case numbers before the Public Prosecutor's Office and the competent judicial authorities.

During the third visit, it was found that **14 detainees** were associated with the station, including **11 held at the station** and **three held at other detention facilities**. The visit included interviews with several detainees and a detailed review of their legal files to identify cases that might meet the conditions set out in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**.

The Commission prepared applications for release and followed up on the necessary judicial procedure. The Commission also recorded observations on the need to improve certain essential services inside the holding facility.

These visits enabled the Commission to regularly monitor the situation of detainees associated with the station, assess detention conditions, and identify cases requiring legal follow-up before the competent judicial authorities.

Qobbeh Police Station | Tripoli District

On **10 February 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Qobbeh Police Station** in Tripoli to assess the conditions of detainees held in the facility and inspect detention conditions.

Several detainees were found inside the holding room. The detention register was reviewed, along with basic information related to their judicial files. Several detainees were also interviewed regarding their detention conditions, the duration of their detention, and the judicial authorities handling their cases.

The inspection showed that the holding facility experienced relative overcrowding at certain times because the number of detainees exceeded the available space. Concerns were also noted regarding ventilation and lighting inside the holding room.

The visit enabled the collection of preliminary information concerning detainees at the station, the documentation of information relating to their judicial files, and the identification of cases that might require subsequent legal follow-up before the competent judicial authorities.

Abi Samra Police Station | Tripoli District

An **unannounced visit** was conducted at **Abi Samra Police Station** on **5 March 2025** as **part of monitoring** detention conditions.

Five detainees were found inside the station, in addition to one detainee held at the Tripoli Palace of Justice Holding Facility.

The inspection revealed unsuitable detention conditions, including inadequate lighting, the absence of hot water, the lack of a bathroom door, the need to replace mattresses and pillows, and unpleasant odors inside the holding cell.

The visit also raised concerns regarding convicted persons continuing to serve their sentences inside the holding facility because of delays in transferring them to prison or to the Palace of Justice Holding Facility, despite the transmission of transfer notices.

Three applications for release were prepared for detainees who met the requirements of **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**.

Tripoli Palace of Justice Holding Facility

A visit was conducted to the **Tripoli Palace of Justice Holding Facility** on **18 November 2025**. At the time of the visit, **110 detainees** were being held, including **15 women**.

The visit found that the infrastructure and security arrangements were generally acceptable. However, concerns were noted regarding cleanliness and the arrangements for providing food and medical services, the cost of which was frequently borne by detainees or their families.

Several male and female detainees were interviewed, and their legal situations were reviewed. Some detainees also signed applications for release.

The visit also identified cases requiring follow-up with the competent authorities to transfer certain detainees to **General Security**.

Tal Police Station | Tripoli District

An **unannounced visit** was conducted to **Tal Police Station**, located in the Old Tripoli Serail, on **24 and 26 December 2024** to assess detainees' conditions and review their judicial files.

The visiting team met with the station commander, who cooperated and facilitated access to the registers and files maintained by the registry.

The records showed that **15 detainees** were associated with the station. Because of the registry's workload, the file review took two days. The files were screened to identify cases that might meet the conditions for release under **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**.

The review identified **six detainees** who met the applicable legal requirements at that stage. Other cases were to be reconsidered once the duration of pre-trial detention satisfied the relevant legal conditions.

The visit also enabled the team to review the progress of the judicial files and document detainee information to follow up on the related judicial proceedings.

Bab El Raml Police Station | Tripoli District

An **unannounced visit** was conducted to **Bab El Raml Police Station**, located in the Old Tripoli Serail, on **23 and 24 December 2024** to assess detainees' conditions and review their judicial files.

The visiting team met with the station commander, who cooperated in facilitating access to the registers and files maintained by the registry.

The records showed that **22 detainees** were associated with the station. Their files were reviewed to identify cases that could benefit from **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, which provides for release after a specified period of pre-trial detention.

Following the screening process, it was determined that **six detainees** met the applicable legal requirements at that stage. Other files were to be reconsidered after the expiry of the necessary legal periods.

The visit also enabled the documentation of essential detainee information and the monitoring of the progress of their judicial cases, with the aim of expediting the submission of release applications before the competent judicial authorities and contributing to the reduction of overcrowding in places of detention.

Beddawi Police Station | Tripoli

On **5 August 2025**, an **unannounced visit** was conducted to **Beddawi Police Station** in Tripoli District, North Lebanon Governorate, to assess the conditions of detainees held in the facility and review their judicial files. The visit also included a review of the files of detainees held in trust at other detention facilities on the station's behalf.

The information collected during the visit showed that **five detainees** were being held inside the station. Four were associated with Beddawi Police Station, while one was held in trust on behalf of Abi Samra Police Station. The detainees included **two Lebanese nationals, two Palestinian nationals, and one Syrian national**.

It was also found that another detainee associated with the station was being held at the Tripoli Palace of Justice Holding Facility. This reflects the practice of distributing detainees among different facilities for logistical or procedural reasons relating to judicial investigations.

The detainees' judicial files were reviewed to identify cases that might benefit from applying **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. As a result, **six applications for release** were prepared for **four detainees**, some of whom were held at the station and others at different detention facilities.

The on-site inspection of the two holding cells identified several concerns relating to infrastructure and detention conditions. The first cell accommodated five detainees and had a ventilation opening and a functioning exhaust fan. The second cell was not in use because it lacked an adequate ventilation system.

The sanitary facilities lacked hot water, and the lighting inside the holding cells was inadequate. The mattresses and pillows required replacement, and insects were observed inside the detention area.

Overall, the holding cells required maintenance and improvements to cleanliness and basic equipment.

The visit enabled documentation of the conditions of detainees associated with the station, identification of cases requiring legal follow-up before the competent judicial authorities, and recording recommendations on improving detention conditions inside the holding facility.

Souika Police Station | Tripoli District

The Committee conducted three visits to the Souika Police Station in the Old Tripoli Serail on 27 December 2024, 3 February 2025, and 24 September 2025, as part of its

ongoing monitoring of detainees' conditions and the review of their judicial files. During these visits, the visiting team met with the station commander, who cooperated fully and facilitated access to the official registers and judicial files maintained by the registry.

The review of the records during the first visit revealed that **16 detainees** were associated with the station. The team examined their files to identify cases that could benefit from applying **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, which provides for release after a specified period of pre-trial detention. It was found that **six detainees** met the applicable legal requirements at that stage, while other cases could be reconsidered once the legally required periods had elapsed.

During the second visit, the team inspected the holding facility and assessed detention conditions. The inspection found that the holding room was relatively small for the number of detainees, resulting in noticeable overcrowding at certain times. The team also observed limited ventilation and the need to maintain several basic facilities. Several detainees were interviewed regarding the conditions and duration of their detention, as well as the judicial authorities responsible for their cases.

During the third visit, it was found that the number of detainees associated with the station had decreased to **12**, most of whom were being held at the **Holding Facility Complex** rather than at the station itself. The visit focused on reviewing their judicial files to determine whether they met the conditions set out in **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. The Committee prepared a number of applications for release and pursued the necessary judicial procedures before the competent judicial authorities.

These visits enabled the Committee to monitor, regularly, the legal status of detainees associated with the station, assess detention conditions within the holding facility, and identify cases requiring further legal follow-up before the competent judicial authorities.

Tabbaneh Police Station | Tripoli

Two visits were conducted to the **Tabbaneh Police Station** in the city of Tripoli on **7 January 2025** and **16 January 2025** to assess the conditions of detainees held in the station and review their judicial files.

During the first visit, the visiting team met with the station commander, who cooperated fully and facilitated access to the registers and files maintained by the registry. The review of the records showed that **21 detainees** were associated with the station. Their files were examined to identify cases that could benefit from applying **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, relating to release after a specified period of pre-trial detention. It was determined that **five detainees** met the applicable legal requirements at that stage, while other files could be reviewed again once the legally prescribed periods had elapsed.

The second visit focused on inspecting the holding facilities and assessing detainees' living conditions. Interviews were conducted with several detainees to obtain information regarding their legal status, the duration of their detention, and the stage reached in their judicial proceedings. It was found that some detainees were awaiting the completion of investigations or the scheduling of court hearings, while others reported delays in being transferred to court because of a shortage of vehicles or escort personnel.

The two visits enabled the Committee to document the situation of detainees held at the station and gather the legal information necessary to follow up on cases that might meet the requirements for submitting applications for release before the competent judicial authorities.

Amioun Police Station | Koura District

On **12 February 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Amioun Police Station** to assess the conditions of detainees held in the station and review their judicial files.

The visit found that several detainees were being held on various criminal charges. The station's detention register was reviewed to verify information on the dates of arrest and the judicial authorities responsible for the cases. Several detainees were also interviewed regarding their detention conditions and the duration of their detention.

The inspection revealed that the holding facility was relatively small compared with the number of detainees present at certain times, resulting in noticeable overcrowding. The Committee also noted concerns about the ventilation of the holding room and the adequacy of its basic facilities.

The visit enabled the Committee to document these findings, assess the general situation within the station, and review legal information relating to detainees in preparation for follow-up on cases requiring further judicial action.

Dahr El Ain Police Station | Koura District

On **11 February 2025**, a visit was conducted to **Dahr El Ain Police Station** to inspect the holding facility and assess detention conditions.

The inspection revealed that the holding facility was overcrowded, with the number of detainees exceeding the room's designed capacity. Inadequate ventilation was also observed, including the absence of sufficient ventilation openings, as well as poor lighting inside the holding room.

The sanitary facility was located within the holding cell without a full partition to ensure detainees' privacy. These observations were documented alongside a review of the basic information relating to detainees and their judicial files.

The inspection concluded that detention conditions at the station require infrastructure and basic facility improvements to provide conditions of detention more consistent with the humanitarian standards applicable to places of detention.

Sebaal Police Station | Zgharta District

On **14 August 2025**, an **unannounced visit** was conducted to **Sebaal Police Station** in Zgharta District, North Lebanon Governorate. The appointed expert reviewed the files of detainees held at the station, as well as those held in trust on behalf of other detention facilities, **to identify cases that met the requirements of Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and to prepare applications for release in accordance with applicable legal procedures.**

The information collected during the visit showed that Sebaal Police Station is used as a detention facility for juveniles, which requires the application of specific legal and procedural safeguards given this group's particular vulnerability and need for enhanced protection within the criminal justice system. Five juveniles were being held at the station, all in trust on behalf of other detention facilities, reflecting the station's role as a temporary detention facility within the network of places of detention operated by the Internal Security Forces. The detainees included four Syrian juveniles and one Palestinian juvenile, highlighting the relevance of nationality to their legal and procedural circumstances.

The detainees' legal files were reviewed, and **three applications for release** were prepared for juveniles who met the applicable legal requirements, to expedite the submission of their cases to the competent judicial authority. This measure is particularly important in protecting the rights of juveniles deprived of their liberty. International standards, particularly the **United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules)**, emphasize that detention should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period. These standards also require additional procedural safeguards for juveniles, including the expeditious handling of judicial proceedings and treatment that preserves their human dignity and promotes their reintegration into society.

The on-site inspection of the holding facility at Sebaal Police Station identified several concerns related to infrastructure and detention conditions that require attention in

accordance with national and international human rights standards. The station contains one holding cell designated for juveniles. It consists of a single room accommodating five detainees, with a toilet separated from the rest of the cell by a curtain.

The holding cell lacked several basic conditions required in places of detention. There were no adequate ventilation openings or air extraction system, which could adversely affect air quality. Only one light source was available inside the cell, also illuminating the sanitary facility. Hot water and surveillance cameras were unavailable, and the cell required maintenance and repainting. The level of cleanliness was also inadequate; unpleasant odors were present, and no mattresses had been provided because of the high temperatures.

Addressing these deficiencies requires administrative and technical measures to improve the holding facility's infrastructure and ensure compliance with applicable human rights standards, particularly because the detainees are juveniles whose legal status requires enhanced protection and detention conditions adapted to their specific needs.

Zgharta Police Station | Zgharta District

Two visits were conducted to **Zgharta Police Station** on **29 January 2025** and **16 September 2025** to assess the conditions of detainees held in the facility and review their judicial files.

During the first visit, the detainee register was examined to verify essential information concerning the dates of arrest and the judicial authorities handling the cases. Several detainees were also interviewed regarding their detention conditions and the duration of their detention. The inspection found that detainees were held in a single room with inadequate ventilation and lighting and limited basic equipment, which could adversely affect living conditions in the holding facility. Lawyers represented some detainees, while others lacked regular legal assistance.

The second visit focused on reviewing the judicial files of detainees associated with the station. Their total number was **13**, including **10 detainees held at the station** and **three held at other detention facilities**. The visit included an examination of official records, interviews with several detainees, and an inspection of the holding facility and the station's infrastructure.

The files were reviewed to identify detainees who might benefit from applying **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. Several release applications were prepared for detainees who met the applicable legal requirements. Observations were also recorded concerning the need to improve cleanliness and provide certain essential services within the holding facility.

The two visits made it possible to document detention conditions at the station, monitor the legal status of several detainees, and identify cases requiring further judicial follow-up.

Ehden Police Station | Zgharta District

On **7 August 2025**, an **unannounced visit** was conducted to **Ehden Police Station** in Zgharta District, North Lebanon Governorate. The appointed expert reviewed the files of detainees held at the station, as well as those held in trust on behalf of other detention facilities.

The information collected during the visit showed that four persons were being held at Ehden Police Station, all in trust on behalf of other detention facilities. They included three Lebanese nationals and one Syrian national. Their judicial files were reviewed to identify cases meeting the requirements for release under **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. As a result, **two applications for release** were prepared for detainees held at the station on behalf of the **Sir El Dinniyeh Police Station** and the **Rmeileh Police Station**.

The on-site inspection of the two holding cells at Ehden Police Station identified several observations concerning detention conditions and infrastructure. Although the station

contains two holding cells, only one was in use because the sanitary facility in the second cell lacked water and therefore remained empty.

The first holding cell accommodated four detainees. Both cells were equipped with ventilation openings, functioning exhaust fans, and lighting inside the cells and sanitary facilities. Each cell also had a separate bathroom fitted with a door, providing detainees with a degree of privacy.

Water was available in the sanitary facility of the first cell but not in that of the second, and hot water was unavailable in both. The station also required repainting and maintenance to improve its general condition. Electricity was supplied through both a private generator and the public electricity network.

Addressing the infrastructure deficiencies, particularly the need to provide water in all sanitary facilities, is necessary to align detention conditions with international human rights standards.

Batroun Police Station | Batroun District

On **16 January 2025**, the team conducted an unannounced visit to **Batroun Police Station**, located on Old Batroun Souk Street, to assess detainees' conditions and review their judicial files. The visiting team met with the station commander, who cooperated and facilitated access to the registers and files maintained by the registry.

The review of the records showed that **24 detainees** were associated with the station. Their files were examined to identify cases that could benefit from applying **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, which provides for release after a specified period of pre-trial detention.

It was determined that **10 detainees** met the applicable legal requirements at that stage. Other files were to be reviewed again once the duration of pre-trial detention satisfied the relevant legal conditions. The visit also enabled the documentation of

detainee information and an examination of the progress of their judicial cases, to follow up on the relevant procedures before the competent judicial authorities.

Heri Police Station | Batroun District

On **20 January 2025**, the team visited **Heri Police Station** in Batroun District. During the visit, the team met with the station commander and examined the holding facilities, which consisted of two cells designated for detainees.

The visit included an inspection of the holding cells' infrastructure and an assessment of cleanliness, lighting, ventilation, and the services available to detainees. The files of **11 detainees** registered with the station were also reviewed. Several detainees were interviewed to obtain information concerning their legal status and detention conditions.

The review focused on screening the files to identify cases that might benefit from applying **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. It was found that several detainees might become eligible to submit applications for release once the legally required periods had elapsed.

Observations were also recorded concerning inadequate lighting, the absence of hot water, and the need to improve cleanliness inside the holding cells.

Minieh Police Station | Minieh-Danniyeh District

On **6 August 2025**, an **unannounced visit** was conducted to the **Minieh Police Station** in the **Minieh District**, North Lebanon Governorate. During the visit, the appointed legal expert reviewed the case files of detainees held at the station, as well as those of detainees held on behalf of the station at other detention facilities.

The information collected during the visit indicated that **17 detainees** were being held at the Minieh Police Station, comprising **14 Lebanese nationals, two Syrian nationals, and one Palestinian national**. In addition, **two detainees** were being held as "trust detainees" on behalf of the station at other detention facilities: one at the **Zgharta Police**

Station and the other, a juvenile, at the **Mashta Hassan Police Station**. This reflects the interconnected nature of detention management within the **Internal Security Forces (ISF)** system, whereby detainees may be held at different facilities for logistical or procedural reasons related to ongoing judicial investigations.

During the visit, the detainees' case files were reviewed to identify individuals eligible for release under **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. As a result, **six applications for release** were prepared on behalf of detainees who met the applicable legal criteria, whether they were being held at the station itself or at other detention facilities on its behalf.

The inspection of the detention facilities identified several observations concerning the infrastructure and conditions of detention. Access to the detention area is through an enclosed space secured by a barred iron gate. Detainees are accommodated in this enclosed area and in **two separate holding cells**. At the time of the visit, **13 detainees** were held in the enclosed area, while **two detainees** were accommodated in each holding cell.

The enclosed area had a ventilation opening, a functioning exhaust fan, and adequate lighting. However, the two holding cells lacked ventilation openings and mechanical air extraction systems, a deficiency that may adversely affect air quality within the detention facilities. Although both holding cells contained sanitary facilities, these lacked adequate lighting, and the toilets were separated from the detention area only by curtains rather than doors, limiting detainees' privacy.

The inspection also revealed weak water pressure in the sanitary facilities, the absence of hot water, the presence of insects inside the holding cells, and the need to maintain and repaint both the police station and the detention facilities. Regarding essential services, electricity was unavailable between **3:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.** due to the insufficient capacity of the station's solar power system. Addressing these shortcomings is essential to ensure that detention conditions comply with international human rights

standards and to strengthen protection against cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

Hasroun Police Station | Bsharri District

The Committee conducted an unannounced visit to the Hasroun Police Station on **1 September 2025** as part of its efforts to monitor the situation of detainees and facilitate the implementation of **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, to reduce overcrowding in places of detention.

Two detainees were found in the holding cell, both of whom were being held as **trust detainees** on behalf of other detention facilities. **Two applications for release** were prepared in accordance with the established procedures.

The inspection identified several deficiencies relating to the infrastructure of the holding facility, including the need for maintenance and repainting, inadequate ventilation, the absence of appropriate lighting in the sanitary facility, the lack of a bathroom door, the absence of hot water and surveillance cameras, high levels of humidity, and unpleasant odors resulting from the mountainous terrain. The mattresses and pillows also required replacement.

Hadath El Jebbeh Police Station | Bsharri District

An **unannounced visit** was conducted to the **Hadath El Jebbeh Police Station** on **1 September 2025** to assess detention conditions and monitor the implementation of the mechanism facilitating the submission of applications for release.

No detainees were present in the holding facility at the time of the visit. However, the inspection **found that the holding cell was unfit for use due to serious infrastructure deficiencies**. The sanitary facility was out of service and lacked privacy safeguards. The holding cell also had inadequate ventilation and lighting, no floor tiling, and required comprehensive maintenance and cleaning. In addition, no surveillance cameras were installed, and unpleasant odors resulting from poor sanitary conditions were observed.

These findings underscore the need to **rehabilitate the holding facility before it is used again as a place of detention.**

Akkar Governorate

Barqayel Police Station

The Committee conducted an unannounced visit to the Barqayel Police Station on **10 September 2025** as part of its monitoring of detention conditions and the implementation of **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. Five detainees were found in custody, including individuals detained on behalf of the police station itself and others held on behalf of other detention facilities. **After reviewing their case files, the authorities prepared three applications for release** for detainees who met the conditions outlined in Article 108.

The inspection of the holding facility identified several shortcomings, including the need for maintenance work and repairs to structural cracks, inadequate ventilation, insufficient sanitary facilities, the absence of hot water, and the need to replace mattresses and pillows. Poor hygiene conditions and the presence of insects were also observed. The police station administration also reported difficulties providing food and drinking water to detainees due to limited resources.

Mashta Hassan Police Station

On **11 August 2025**, an unannounced visit was conducted to the **Mashta Hassan Police Station** in Akkar Governorate. During the visit, the appointed legal expert reviewed the case files of detainees held at the station, as well as those detained on behalf of other detention facilities, to identify individuals eligible for release under **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure** and to prepare release applications in accordance with the applicable legal procedures.

This practice forms part of the Committee's preventive mandate to reduce unnecessary prolonged detention and to ensure respect for the fundamental legal safeguards afforded to detainees, in accordance with relevant international standards, particularly the principles of fair trial and the right to liberty and security of person.

The information collected during the visit indicated that the station serves as a detention facility for two categories regarded as particularly vulnerable within the criminal justice system, namely **juveniles** and **women**. At the time of the visit, **nine detainees** were being held, all of whom were detained on behalf of other detention facilities, reflecting the station's function as a temporary holding facility within the Internal Security Forces' detention network. The detainees included **seven juveniles**—three Lebanese nationals and four Syrian nationals—and **two women**, one of whom was **unregistered (Maktoum al-Qayd)** and the other Lebanese.

From a human rights perspective, this situation is particularly significant, given the additional safeguards required under international standards for the treatment of juveniles and women, including the **United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules)** and the **United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules)**.

The inspection further confirmed that the station **has two separate holding cells, one designated for juveniles and the other for women, which is** a positive measure consistent with the principle of separating different categories of detainees. Female police officers assisted in inspecting the women's holding cell, reinforcing respect for privacy and human dignity. Nevertheless, holding detainees on behalf of multiple detention facilities presents operational challenges related to judicial coordination and the allocation of administrative responsibility for detainees' conditions. This underscores the need to strengthen institutional coordination among the relevant security and judicial authorities to ensure respect for detainees' legal safeguards and expedite related judicial proceedings.

The inspection of the holding cells identified several concerns related to infrastructure and detention conditions that require attention under national and international human rights standards. Both holding cells are located on the first floor of the building and are accessed through a corridor secured by an iron gate. Each cell measures approximately **nine square meters**.

The juvenile holding cell accommodated **seven detainees** and was equipped with six ventilation openings, a functioning exhaust fan, lighting inside both the cell and the sanitary facility, and a separate bathroom door providing a degree of privacy. The women's holding cell accommodated **two detainees** and contained two ventilation openings, lighting, and a functioning exhaust fan.

Although electricity was available around the clock through a solar power system, **the sanitary facilities did not have hot water**. The mattresses and pillows required replacement, and unpleasant odors were detected in one cell. It was also noted that **no surveillance cameras** were installed inside the holding cells, raising concerns regarding internal oversight mechanisms and detainee safety. Addressing these deficiencies requires administrative and logistical measures to improve the infrastructure of the holding facilities and ensure compliance with applicable human rights standards, thereby promoting respect for the dignity of detainees and reducing the risk of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Halba Police Station Holding Facility

On **18 August 2025**, an **unannounced visit** was conducted to the **Halba Police Station Holding Facility** to assess detention conditions and verify compliance with the legal safeguards afforded to detainees. The visit was conducted without prior notice. The Head of the Police Station, **First Sergeant Robert Farah**, fully cooperated with the visiting team by facilitating its work, providing necessary information on detainees and their judicial files, and expressing his willingness to coordinate with the NHRC when detainees encounter difficulties obtaining legal assistance. This cooperation demonstrates the importance of coordination between national human rights

institutions and security agencies in strengthening procedural safeguards for detainees and improving detention management.

The inspection revealed that the holding facility has poor structural conditions. The cell measures approximately **three meters by two and a half meters**, including the sanitary facility. At the time of the visit, **eight detainees** were being held in the cell, resulting in significant overcrowding. The facility also required maintenance and rehabilitation to improve detention conditions.

From a legal perspective, the review of detainees' files indicated that most had been arrested only recently, preventing the submission of release applications under the conditions prescribed by **Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. Nevertheless, **one application for release** was prepared on behalf of a **Syrian detainee** held on charges of firearms offenses before the Military Court, with a view to pursuing the matter before the competent judicial authority.

The inspection also found that the judicial registry at the station maintained a well-organized detainee register containing essential information, including the detainee's identity, nationality, charges, and date of admission, thereby contributing to accurate documentation and effective management of detention records.

Halba Judicial Police Holding Facility

On **19 August 2025**, a visit was conducted to the **Judicial Police Holding Facility in Halba** to assess detention conditions and review the legal status of detainees. The officials in charge fully cooperated with the visiting team by facilitating its work, providing a copy of the detainee register, and allowing access to detainees' judicial files.

The inspection revealed **severe overcrowding**, with **15 detainees** held in a space measuring approximately **three meters by four meters**, including the sanitary facility, significantly exceeding the facility's capacity. A portable air-conditioning unit had been placed outside the holding cell to mitigate the effects of high temperatures, as the

existing ventilation system, including the exhaust fans, was insufficient to accommodate the large number of detainees.

The review of case files further showed that several detainees were subject to multiple arrest warrants, limiting the possibility of applying for release in many cases at that stage. In contrast, lawyers represented others before the competent judicial authorities. Nevertheless, **we prepared one application for release** for a detainee who had been held for an extended period without legal representation. In addition, **legal assistance** was provided to another detainee facing financial hardship by preparing an objection to a judgment rendered in absentia by the **Beirut Juvenile Misdemeanors Court**. These measures illustrate the importance of providing legal assistance to detainees to strengthen defense rights and facilitate access to justice.

Beino Police Station

Two visits were conducted to the **Beino Police Station** in Akkar Governorate on **18 January 2025** and **19 August 2025** to assess detention conditions and review detainees' judicial files.

During the first visit, **the team found eight detainees** in custody. Some were detained on behalf of the station itself, while others were held on behalf of other police stations or security centers. A review of the detention register revealed that information for certain cases was incomplete, with some entries lacking sufficient details on the date of arrest or the competent judicial authority. It was also found that, in contrast, lawyers represented several detainees, the nature of the offenses attributed to most detainees did not permit the submission of release applications at that stage.

During the second visit, **eleven detainees** were held in the station's holding facility, in addition to **two detainees** held at other detention centers on the station's behalf. The inspection found that the holding facility still required maintenance and rehabilitation, despite the installation of a solar energy system to meet part of the station's electricity needs.

The review of the case files indicated that **two detainees** appeared to meet the conditions for submitting release applications, particularly because they had been unable to appoint legal counsel and in light of the nature of the offenses attributed to them. Meetings with several detainees also revealed that some lacked a sufficient understanding of judicial procedures, prompting preliminary legal guidance on their rights and the procedural status of their cases.

The two visits enabled documentation of detainees' conditions, monitoring of detention conditions within the holding facility, and identification of cases requiring legal follow-up before the competent judicial authorities.

Qoubaiyat Police Station Holding Facility

On 20 August 2025, the team visited the Qoubaiyat Police Station, where it met with the Head of the Police Station, who fully cooperated by facilitating the mission and providing information on detainees and available records. He explained that the station performs extensive security functions owing to its proximity to the Syrian border, receiving a significant number of detainees transferred from Lebanese Armed Forces checkpoints in the area.

He further noted that only 18 officers staff the station, a number insufficient given its extensive security and administrative responsibilities, highlighting the operational challenges faced by certain Internal Security Forces stations in border areas.

The inspection found that the holding cell measures approximately **four meters by four meters**, including the sanitary facility, and requires maintenance and rehabilitation to improve detention conditions. It was also observed that **hot water was unavailable** due to electricity shortages and the absence of suitable water-heating equipment. Given the low winter temperatures in the area, this presents challenges in ensuring the minimum standard of basic services within the detention facility.

A review of the detention register revealed **nine detainees** held in the station at the time of the visit, in addition to detainees linked to the station but held in other detention

facilities, bringing the total number to **45 detainees**. Following a review of the duration of detention and the nature of the offenses attributed to them, **seven applications for release** were prepared for submission to the competent judicial authorities upon completion of the legal review of each case.

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

I. Conclusions

Based on the methodology adopted in this Report and the integrated analysis of data collected from official, national, and international sources, the Report reaches several key conclusions regarding the human rights situation in Lebanon during 2025.

First, the analysis demonstrates the persistence of structural challenges affecting Lebanon's human rights protection system, particularly regarding the rule of law, judicial independence, and accountability for human rights violations. Although the year saw certain positive judicial developments, including decisions reinforcing due process guarantees and recognizing State responsibility for violations in specific cases, these developments remained limited in their overall impact because ongoing institutional and administrative obstacles undermine the effective administration of justice and delay victims' access to effective remedies.

Second, the Report highlights the continuing pressures and challenges affecting freedom of opinion and expression and press freedom in Lebanon, including the use of criminal defamation proceedings and security or judicial summonses against journalists and activists. These practices underscore the urgent need to reform the legislative framework governing media freedom in line with international human rights standards.

Third, the Report identifies continuing shortcomings in **protecting the right to liberty and security of person**, particularly regarding arrest and detention practices, as well as the **persistence of risks of enforced disappearance** or arbitrary deprivation of liberty in certain cases. The findings further demonstrate the need to strengthen and fully implement the legal safeguards provided **under Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**, ensuring these guarantees are respected from the outset of detention.

Fourth, the Report draws attention to the continuing challenges in preventing **torture and ill-treatment** in places of detention, notwithstanding the legislative progress represented by **Law No. 65/2017** criminalizing torture. It also finds that investigation and accountability mechanisms for such violations continue to face legal and institutional obstacles that limit their effectiveness.

Fifth, the available evidence demonstrates the continuing challenges affecting **economic, social, and cultural rights**, as the ongoing economic crisis continues to undermine living standards and access to essential public services. These conditions were reflected in an increase in social protests related to the deterioration of public services, particularly electricity, wages, and municipal services.

Sixth, the Report confirms the persistence of multiple forms of discrimination and vulnerability affecting certain groups, including **women, children, persons with disabilities, refugees, and migrant workers**. It emphasizes the need for more inclusive public policies that adequately protect these groups' rights and respond to their specific needs.

Seventh, the Report highlights the continuing challenges relating to strengthening the independence of the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** and enabling it to fully discharge its mandate in accordance with **Law No. 62/2016** and the **Paris Principles**, particularly through the completion of its regulatory and financial framework and the provision of adequate resources necessary for its work.

Eighth, the Report underscores the growing role of the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture** in monitoring conditions in places of detention through field visits to prisons,

holding facilities, and detention centers. These activities constitute an important step towards strengthening preventive oversight of places where persons are deprived of their liberty.

Overall, the Report concludes that **a combination of persistent structural challenges and certain positive institutional and judicial developments characterized the human rights situation in Lebanon during 2025.** However, achieving meaningful and sustainable progress in the protection of human rights will depend on implementing deeper legal and institutional reforms aimed at strengthening the **rule of law, accountability, and the independence of public institutions.**

II. Recommendations

Based on the analysis presented in this Report, as well as **applicable international human rights standards and the constitutional and international obligations incumbent upon the Lebanese State, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, recommends adopting the following measures.**

Recommendations to the Lebanese Authorities

Based on the analysis contained in this Report, the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture,** considers that strengthening the protection of human rights in Lebanon requires the adoption of a comprehensive set of legislative, institutional, and administrative measures to address the existing gaps in the national system for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

In this context, there is an urgent need to take practical steps to strengthen **judicial independence and ensure the judiciary can fulfill its constitutional role in protecting**

rights and freedoms in accordance with the Lebanese Constitution and relevant international standards. This requires the prompt enactment of legislation guaranteeing judicial independence, including measures to ensure the financial and administrative independence of the **High Judicial Council**, and the establishment of transparent procedures governing the appointment, promotion, and disciplinary accountability of judges, free from political or administrative interference. It also requires strengthening the human and financial resources available to the courts to reduce judicial delays and ensure effective access to justice.

The NHRC further calls on Lebanese authorities to adopt legislative and procedural measures to ensure full implementation of the legal safeguards governing arrest and criminal investigations, particularly those outlined in **Article 47 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**. This includes guaranteeing the right of persons deprived of their liberty to consult a lawyer from the very outset of their arrest, ensuring their right to communicate with their families, and subjecting all investigative procedures to effective judicial oversight.

About the **prevention of torture and ill-treatment**, the NHRC emphasizes the need to strengthen the implementation of **Law No. 65/2017**, which criminalizes torture, and to ensure prompt, independent, and impartial investigations into all allegations of torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. The NHRC also calls for institutional measures to strengthen the capacity of judicial authorities to address such cases, including the development of specialized training programs for judges and judicial police officers on the investigation of torture offenses in accordance with international standards.

The NHRC also considers it essential to take practical measures to address **overcrowding in Lebanese prisons**, including expanding the use of alternatives to detention, particularly in non-violent cases, and reviewing policies governing **pre-trial detention** to ensure that it is used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period. Rehabilitation and social reintegration programs within correctional

institutions should likewise be strengthened to facilitate prisoners' successful reintegration into society.

In the field of **public freedoms**, the NHRC calls for a comprehensive review of the legislative framework governing publication and expression-related offenses, with a view to abolishing custodial penalties for peaceful expression and ensuring that prosecutions relating to publication offenses remain within the exclusive jurisdiction of the **Publications Court**. The NHRC further emphasizes the need to guarantee effective protection for journalists and human rights defenders against threats, intimidation, and harassment, and to ensure that all attacks against them are promptly and effectively investigated.

About **economic and social rights**, the NHRC considers that addressing the consequences of the economic crisis requires adopting public policies grounded in a human rights-based approach that places the protection of the most vulnerable groups at the Center of national priorities. This includes strengthening social protection programs and ensuring access to essential services, including healthcare, education, and food, in accordance with Lebanon's obligations under the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**.

The NHRC also calls for the adoption of targeted measures to strengthen the protection of the rights of **women, children, and persons with disabilities**, including the development of public policies and national programs responsive to their specific needs and ensuring that they are protected from all forms of discrimination and exclusion.

With respect to the **institutional framework for the protection of human rights**, the NHRC stresses the importance of completing the adoption of the implementing decrees provided for under **Law No. 62/2016** establishing the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, to guarantee its financial and administrative independence and enable it to discharge its mandate in accordance with the **Paris Principles**. This also requires allocating adequate financial and human resources to enable the NHRC to expand its activities in monitoring

human rights violations, receiving complaints, and conducting visits to places of detention.

Recommendations to the United Nations and International Donors

In light of the challenges facing the human rights protection system in Lebanon, the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**, including the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, considers that the international community, including the **United Nations system** and international donors, can play an important role in supporting national efforts to strengthen the rule of law and protect fundamental rights and freedoms.

In this context, the NHRC calls for the continued provision of **technical and institutional support** to Lebanon's national human rights institutions, particularly the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** and the **Committee for the Prevention of Torture**, to strengthen their capacities in monitoring human rights, investigating violations, and preparing reports.

The NHRC also encourages international partners to support programs aimed at **reforming Lebanon's justice sector** and strengthening **judicial independence**, including initiatives to modernize judicial administration, improve case management systems, and expand the use of digital technologies within the courts.

About the **prevention of torture**, the NHRC emphasizes the importance of supporting international programs designed to improve conditions in places of detention and strengthen the legal safeguards afforded to persons deprived of their liberty, in accordance with Lebanon's obligations under the **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)** and its **Optional Protocol (OPCAT)**.

The NHRC further calls upon international donors to continue supporting **social protection and development programs targeting** the most vulnerable groups in

Lebanon, thereby helping to address the structural factors that may contribute to violations of economic and social rights.

Finally, the NHRC underscores the importance of strengthening international cooperation with Lebanon through the **United Nations human rights mechanisms**, including support for the participation of national institutions in these mechanisms and for implementing the recommendations issued by the **Human Rights Council** and the **United Nations human rights treaty bodies**.