In 2018, the Lebanese government took some positive steps towards promoting human rights and showed willingness to comply with certain human rights matters. However, it clearly lacked the capacity and political will to further improve legislation, enforce laws, uphold the country’s international obligations, and create meaningful change. This remained the strongest obstacle for the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of human rights in Lebanon, as did the lack of public support and awareness on certain rights. The following report highlights Lebanon’s improvements and setbacks in the most pressing human rights issues throughout 2018.

**Cooperation with international human rights bodies**

**State reports submitted in 2018**

- **Committee Against Torture**: June
- **International Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**: October
- **Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**: December

**Establishment of the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) which:**

- Communicates with international and regional human rights bodies
- Prepares reports and replies to communications from Special Rapporteurs

**Only 2 of 5 communications to Special Rapporteurs in 2018 were replied to by the Lebanese government.**
Arbitrary detention and guarantees of fair trial

The pretext of a “challenging security situation”, as a justification to deprive individuals of their liberty and right to fair trial, violates internationally protected rights and guarantees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Inmates in prisons</th>
<th>Pre-trial detainees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>6,246</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>6,508</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exceptional courts

In terms of judicial independence, Lebanon ranked 105 out of 137 states in the 2018 Global Competitive Index, regressing from its rank as 101st of 138 states in 2017.

Main exceptional courts in Lebanon

**The Supreme Council**
- Looks into cases against the President of the Republic, Prime Minister, and ministers
- Has never exercised its duties

**The Military Court**
- In 2018, a total of 544 civilians were sentenced by the Military Court in absentia, 70 of which were tried for drug-related crimes

**The Judicial Council**
- Is vulnerable to pressures by the executive branch and political figures
- Utilizes article 108 of the Criminal Code of Procedure to justify holding suspects in pre-trial detention indefinitely
- Lacks an appeals system

**Personal Status Courts**

**Press Offenses Court**

**Monopoly and Fraud Court**

**Juvenile Court**
Torture

The persistent use of torture against vulnerable communities, despite the creation of laws to prevent it, is deeply concerning. The Lebanese judiciary completely failed to implement the new law criminalizing torture.

Gender-based discrimination

Lebanon ranked 140th out of 149 countries in terms of gender equality in the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report, while it ranked 137th out of 144 countries in 2017.

Women’s possibilities to political empowerment in Lebanon are 97.6% lower than for men, the third lowest in global comparison.

2009 elections

12 women ran for office
4 were elected to parliament

2018 elections

86 women ran for office
6 were elected to parliament
**Child rights**

Children are deprived of an education and are being pulled out of school to work to provide for their families, or due to the costs of transportation or educational material.

*Among Lebanese and non-Lebanese children*

- 12% of primary school age children are out of school
- 24% of lower secondary school age children are out of school
- 34% of upper secondary school age children are out of school

*Between 5% and 7% of refugee children are engaged in child labor.*

**Refugees and asylum-seekers**

**Syrian refugees**

- **110,000** refugees are estimated to have returned to Syria from Lebanon in 2018.

- Despite claims by the Lebanese government that all the returns are voluntary, international organizations expressed concerns regarding the conditions of the return. Rapidly deteriorating conditions of displacement are serving as push factors for return.

- **76%** of Syrian refugee households living below the national poverty line in 2017, compared to **69%** in 2018.

- **74%** of Syrian refugees who do not have a residence permit in 2017, compared to **74%** in 2018.

**Problems in funding pose additional barriers to refugees’ access to services in Lebanon:**

Only **1/3** of the USD **2.291 billion** required to provide adequate support to Syrian refugees in Lebanon: was available in 2018.
Migrant Domestic Workers

Lebanon hosts over 250,000 migrant domestic workers. Due to several protection gaps within the Lebanese sponsorship system, migrant workers remain at risk of exploitation by their sponsors.

Persistent Abuses in 2018

- Denial of time-off
- Non-payment of wages
- Restriction of movement
- Confiscation of passport and identification documents
- Other forms of ill-treatment

Freedom of Opinion and Expression and the Right to Peaceful Meetings and Demonstrations

28 individuals have been arrested or summoned for questioning for expressing their opinions, threatening the right to free speech, out of at least 50 such cases since 2016.

According to the World Press Freedom Index, Lebanon ranks 100th out of 180 countries in terms of press freedom.
Elections

In May 2018, Lebanon witnessed its first parliamentary elections since 2009. The general election witnessed the emergence of candidates’ coalitions from non-traditional parties.

This election saw:

- Appeals were registered at the Constitutional Council: 16
- Complaints filed by citizens and candidates to the ESC: 50
- Additional complaints referred by the ESC to the judiciary: 45
- Critical incidents reported in the election process by Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE): 3600
- Several electoral frauds and miscounts

Environment

The solutions for the ongoing waste management crisis have focused primarily on finding alternative dump sites, instead of concentrating on adopting sustainable environment policies.

Law 80 passed in September 2018

Addresses solid waste management

Bans openly burning waste and penalizes violations

Enforced Disappearances

17,415 Lebanese citizens reported as disappeared
**Right to Health**

Lebanon is performing far behind developing countries, with a national spending on healthcare as merely **7.5%** of the GDP.

The public healthcare sector it is severely underfunded, underequipped, under-qualified, and unable to provide basic affordable health care.

The right to health is further violated by the costly Lebanese health care system. Almost **50%** of the Lebanese population cannot access affordable medical coverage, including emergency care.

Total of people living with HIV/AIDS in Lebanon has been **on the rise** due to a general lack of awareness on sexual and reproductive health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases Of HIV/AIDS in Lebanon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Labor and Social Security**

The main issue regarding labor rights is that the Lebanese Labor Law is non-inclusive.

*The law does not apply to:*

- **Domestic workers** employed in private households
- **Agricultural corporations** that have no connection with trade or industry
- **Family businesses** employing only family members
- **Day laborers** in municipal or governments services
- **Staff of “Electricite du Liban”** and wage-earners who are not governed by Civil Servant Regulations
The Right to Life, Liberty, and Security of Persons

Armed Violence

At least 73 shootings recorded as individual acts of violence in 2018, decreasing from 111 incidents in 2017.

Kidnapping

At least 17 cases of kidnapping registered in 2018, decreasing from 25 such cases in 2017.

Death Penalty

82 Convicts with death sentences identified in Lebanese prisons

34 Death sentences issued by the Military Court in absentia