



The Use of Force in Lebanon

Overview of the Enforced Legal Framework
Monitoring and Analyzing the Human Rights
Violations Committed during the Past Five Years

January 2023



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Introduction

The image of police officers is often associated with the exercise of force, though most police operations do not necessitate the use force.

Only a handful of tasks require the use of force or the threat of force to achieve the legal police purpose, including arresting a wanted person or suspect, preventing crime, addressing events that involve disturbing public order, and encroaching on public or private property.

And since the State's use of force against its own people is no less than an extreme and exceptional measure that the state can take, specific standards have been set to limit its use.

Among the fundamental criteria lies the following question: **What is a lawful, necessary, proportionate and responsible use of force?**

The meaning of the word "force" is not always clear.

The police officer shall swiftly assess the type and magnitude of the threat, and chose the most appropriate approach to ensure that minimum harm is not exceeded.

"Legitimate force" can be defined as any physical force exercised by the police, ranging between open-hand tactics and the use of firearms, to compel or prevent people from doing something, with the aim of achieving a legitimate aim or performing a lawful task, within the limits necessary to perform the task¹.

As for Lebanon, it has been swamped, since 2019 by protest movements and cry outs for economic, social, civil and political rights. These movements were coupled by a wide controversy about:

- The legitimacy of the protest methods adopted by protesters;
- The legality and legitimacy of the methods used by the authority through its armed forces to accompany and sometimes suppress these protests under the pretext of maintaining security and order.

Is Lebanon stuck in a quagmire? This is what we will attempt to discuss in the present report after reviewing the international and national legal frameworks regarding the use of force to maintain security during demonstrations.

1 Basic Human Rights Principles on the Use of Force, Study by Marwa Abu el Ola, 24/11/2017

1. The International Legal Framework related to the Use of Force to Maintain Security during Demonstrations

The use of force by state agencies in security operations carried out during demonstrations and assemblies is built on international instruments, general principles of basic human rights, and multiple international standards.

A - International Instruments

The international legal framework for maintaining the security of demonstrations and gatherings
<p>International Instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)• The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of (1976)• The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms• The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union• The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)• The Arab Charter for Human Rights (2004)• The UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (1979)• The Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990)• The Jurisprudence of international courts

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression,”. Article 20 thereof stresses that “everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association,”

International standards are also based on Article 21 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights² with regard to the right to peaceful assembly and the right to demonstrate. Regional charters, namely Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and Article 12 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stress that the right to organize peaceful gatherings and demonstrations is a basic right and an essential element of a democratic society.

The European Court of Human Rights, stated the following: “Freedom of expression constitutes one of the fundamental foundations of a democratic society, and one of the basic conditions for its progress and for each individual’s self-fulfillment.”

B – Fundamental Charters

The two main international instruments dealing with the issue of police use of force and firearms during policing operations are:

- [Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials³](#)
- [Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials⁴](#)

Both issued by the United Nations in 1979 and 1990.

It is worth noting here that the existence of exceptional circumstances may not be invoked to justify any departure from the basic principles set forth in these two instruments, and they apply not only to the civilian police, but also to military officials who exercise police powers.

C - Main Human Rights Principles regarding the Use of Force

It is concluded from these two international instruments, as from other regional and international conventions, that the basic general principles related to the criteria for the use of force are [legality, proportionality, necessity, accountability and the duty of precaution](#).

◆ Legitimacy

The use of force by law enforcement officers is considered legitimate if it adheres to national laws and their internal instructions, which in turn are committed to international human rights covenants.

Both the goal and the means must be legitimate.

² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

³ Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, Adopted and made public by United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 34-169 of December 17, 1979.

⁴ Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, from 27 August to 7 September 1990.

◆ Proportionality

The type and level of force used should be commensurate with the threat posed or the legitimate objective that the security force is trying to achieve in the context of law enforcement.⁵

Force that is likely to result in severe injury or death should only be used when absolutely necessary and the only option available to prevent serious injury or death.⁶

Therefore, special attention must be paid to the alternatives of force, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, understanding the behavior of the public, and methods of persuasion, negotiation and mediation;

Examples of proportionality under international jurisprudence:

- Force that is likely to result in injury may not be used to violently compel a person who is not resisting.
- Force cannot be used to prevent damage to property in the absence of a need to respond to a threat of death or serious injury, or for the purpose of arresting a person, even if the failure to use force results in the wasting the possibility of arrest.

◆ Necessity

The use of force must be considered an exceptional measure - non-violent means must be attempted first, and force and firearms are used only if the said means remain ineffective or do not promise to achieve the intended result. Law enforcement officials may not use force except in cases of extreme necessity and within the limits necessary to perform their duty.⁷

Nor should force be used as a form of punishment.⁸

◆ Accountability

The need for a clear command structure that gives permission and authorization for the use of force. Every incident in which force is used must be recorded, whether or not it resulted in injury. Effective independent review: That is, independent administrative or judicial authorities take effective review measures in each case.

The necessity of enforcing the principle of personal responsibility: Obedience to the orders of a superior is not considered an excuse to use force unjustly. Based on this principle, law enforcement officers shall bear personal responsibility for their actions.

5 OHCHR, Resource Book on the Use of Force and Firearms, United Nations, New York, 2017, p. 18; A/HRC/26/36, April 1, 2014, para. 66; Principle 5(a), Basic Principles 1990; Commentary (b) on Article 3, Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials 1979.

6 Geneva Academy, 2016, "Use of Force in Law Enforcement and the Right to Life: The Role of the Human Rights Council," www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/in-brief6_WEB.pdf European Court of Human Rights, Nachova v. Bulgaria, Supreme Chamber, Judgment, 6 July 2005 §95.

7 Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, UN General Assembly Resolution 34-169 1979

Geneva Academy, 2016, "Use of Force in Law Enforcement and the Right to Life: The Role of the Human Rights Council".

8 Geneva Academy, 2016, "Use of Force in Law Enforcement and the Right to Life: The Role of the Human Rights Council".

◆ Duty of caution

Commanders entrusted with the responsibility for planning operations in which force is likely to be used must develop plans that limit the use of force as much as possible prior to law enforcement operations. In this context, Christoph Heinz, Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary executions, observed: “When a situation arises where the use of force is considered, it is likely too late to salvage the situation. Therefore, in order to save lives, all measures must be taken possible measures proactively to avoid situations arising in which we have to consider the option to pull the trigger.”⁹

Some other General Principles regarding the Use of Force and Firearms¹⁰

- Incriminate the unlawful use of force: arbitrary or abusive use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials is punished as a criminal offence under their law. Obedience to superior orders shall be no defense.
- Providing Assistance after the Incident: Law enforcement officials, in carrying out their duty, shall ensure that assistance and medical aid are rendered to any injured or affected persons at the earliest possible moment
- The law enforcement officials shall identify themselves as such and give a clear warning of their intent to use firearms, with sufficient time for the warning to be observed.
- The development and deployment of non-lethal incapacitating weapons should be carefully evaluated.
- Law enforcement officials, in carrying out their duty, shall, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms. They may use force and firearms only if other means remain ineffective or without any promise of achieving the intended result.
- Specifying the types of firearms and ammunition permitted and the personnel authorized to carry them.

9 UN Human Rights Council, 2014, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Christoph Heinz”.

10 Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, from 27 August to 7 September 1990.

2. The Lebanese Legal Framework related to the Use of Force to Maintain Security during Demonstrations

The Lebanese laws enshrine the protection of various forms of peaceful civil movements namely: the right to sit in and demonstrate, freedom of association, the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

These rights are inter-related, adopted by most constitutions and international laws, and are considered among the pillars of any democratic system applied in a real way, recognized and granted to the people as a fundamental and basic right to exert pressure on the authorities in order to change government policies.

Demonstration as a Constitutional Right

Although there is no explicit legal text enshrining freedom of demonstration in the Lebanese law, this freedom is directly related to the right to freely express one's opinion. These rights are both constitutionally enshrined.

The general Lebanese laws did not specifically address the use of force during the process of maintaining the security of protests. This was rather reflected in the texts and instructions of the security and military agencies.

A - The Most Prominent National Texts

The Legal Framework for Maintaining the Security of Protests and Gatherings

National texts

- The Lebanese Constitution
- Lebanese Penal Code
- Law No. 65: Punishment of Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Law No. 17: Organization of the Internal Security Forces
- Code of Conduct for the Internal Security Forces
- A guide to the work of the units of the mobile power unit
- ISF Security Management Operations Manual
- Rules of conduct for the Lebanese army in law enforcement during internal security operations

B - ISF Security Management Operations Manual

The various regulations and instructions of the Internal Security Forces provide for the basic principles related to the use of force.

There are many relevant regulatory texts in this context, including: the manual for the units of the mobile forces and the ISF Security Management Operations Manual.

Referring specifically to the principles of proportionality, necessity, and legality, Article 225 of Law No. 17 that regulates the Internal Security Forces stipulates that the members of the Internal Security Forces must, when exercising their coercive powers, avoid all violence that is not required.

The Code of Conduct, which is binding to all members of the institution, stipulates that the security forces should “refrain from using force except in cases of necessity in a manner proportionate to the situation and after exhausting all available non-violent means and within the limits necessary for the performance of duty.”

As for the most important document for the operational units that plan and implement security operations in cases of protests, it is [the ISF Security Management Operations Manual](#).

The aforementioned manual stresses the importance of building security related decisions on the principles of legitimacy, proportionality, necessity, accountability and caution, while defining the various tasks and responsibilities of all levels of leadership within the framework of responding to cases of breaches of security and order.

In particular, it deals with the following topics: the legal framework for the use of force, general principles for maintaining security and order, tasks and responsibilities of command, applied procedures for managing security and order operations, learning, briefing, debriefing, and communicating with the media.

C - The Lebanese Army - Code of Conduct when Preserving Internal Security

It is not customary for military forces to maintain security during protests as this is not one of its core tasks. The army is mainly entrusted with defending national borders and territories and, compared with the ISF, has different goals, objectives, training, techniques, rules of engagement and combat mentality.

However, the Lebanese reality imposed this task on the Lebanese army, which adopted a major (and only) document, which is [the Code of Conduct with Preserving Internal Security](#).

The aforementioned document is a brief document that includes the main goals, visions and general principles detailing the principles of dealing with demonstrations and demonstrators.

Below are the most prominent principles included in the Code of Conduct:

- Force shall only be used in cases of extreme necessity and to the extent that enables the performance of the duty.
- The use of force in breaking up peaceful demonstrations shall be avoided.
- Negotiation and warning are required.
- The use of force should be proportionate, and with the least possible injuries and losses.
- National and international rules and standards related to freedom of information, as well as the work of the media shall be respected in a way that guarantees respect for the impartiality of journalists and media officers and their access to the places of demonstrations.
- An investigation into all violations shall be opened and the necessary authorized accountability shall be exercised.

3. The Lebanese Reality since 2019: Excessive Use of Force and Lack of Accountability

A - A Series of Violations: Monitoring and Analysis

Despite the national texts, detailed in the previous section of the present report, which guarantee the freedom of peaceful civil movement: the right to sit in and demonstrate, the freedom to form associations, the right to freedom of expression of opinion and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, it became clear that since the October 2019 massive protests and their intermittent continuation in 2020 and 2021, the Lebanese authorities and opponents to the civil protests spared no effort to oppress freedom.¹¹

In 2019, activists gathering before the houses of the Ministers of Public Works and Transport to protest against the poor quality of infrastructure and roads were met with violence and assault¹². Days after the Beirut port blast in 2020, more than 100 demonstrators were injured while demonstrating in front of Parliament. The police fired tear gas at the protesters.¹³ In 2021, protesters gathered in Tripoli to oppose the renewal of the quarantine and the government's decision. After a clash between the police and citizens and the Lebanese army use of rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators, the Lebanese Red Cross reported 45 injuries.¹⁴

Not only have the Lebanese security forces failed in many cases to protect demonstrators from violence exercised by members of opposition parties and groups, but the authorities themselves have often used excessive force against demonstrators to forcibly end road blockades or to disperse crowds.

This repeated use of excessive force to suppress protests, amidst a total absence of accountability, has increasingly eroded the margin of freedom of expression. It is feared that Lebanon will move to the stage of institutionalizing violence with the authorities' systematic resort to violence without any accountability.

11 14-03-2023 Lebanon: No accountability for security forces' crackdown on protesters since 2019 - Amnesty International <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/latest/news/2023/03/lebanon-no-accountability-for-security-forces-crackdown-on-protesters-since-2019-report/>

12 11-02-2022 Lebanon: Unprecedented Use of Violence in anti-government protests - Civicus <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/lebanon-unprecedented-use-violence-anti-government-protests/>

13 08-2020 The Red Cross told the media that more than 110 were injured during the Beirut protests - Reuters <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-crisis-demonstrations-wounded-idUSKCN2540SK>

14 02-11-2021 Beirut explosion probe, worsening economic crisis and political interference spark protests - Civicus <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/beirut-explosion-probe-worsening-economic-crisis-and-political-interference-spark-protests/>

In a Human Rights Watch report issued on November 8, 2019, the organization confirmed that although the security forces have largely refrained from using excessive force against demonstrators since October 18, 2019, they have nevertheless used excessive force to disperse demonstrators on at least 12 occasions. The security forces also arbitrarily arrested dozens of peaceful demonstrators and prevented people from filming the course of the protests.¹⁵

On 26-11-2019, the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner issued a report condemning the use of excessive force against demonstrators, stressing that the security forces in Lebanon had used excessive force against a number of demonstrators and failed to adequately protect them from violent attacks by others, although the nationwide demonstrations over the past month have been very peaceful.¹⁶

The office's male experts stated: "The state is responsible under international law of protecting peaceful demonstrators and securing a safe environment that enables all people to exercise freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Even when demonstrators use roadblocks and block roads as a means of protest, which in some rare cases may necessitate the dispersal of demonstrators, the security forces do not use the necessary force except at a minimum level and if less strict and discriminatory means fail to manage the situation.

Members of the Internal Security Forces and the Lebanese Army used live ammunition, rubber bullets, and large quantities of tear gas to disperse the demonstrators, and sometimes kicked and hit the demonstrators with batons while arresting them. It is alleged that some of the demonstrators were ill-treated while being taken to police stations, and that some of them bore signs of ill-treatment on their bodies when they were released."

Among the many examples of these attacks are the occurrence of critical injuries - especially in the head, as a result of the illegal use of rubber bullets by the Internal Security Forces in the Martyrs' Square¹⁷.

On November 12, a Lebanese soldier reportedly shot and killed a demonstrator in Khaldeh, south of the capital, Beirut, in an attempt to disperse demonstrators blocking the road.¹⁸

Political party sympathizers have also allegedly attacked protesters on more than one occasion, destroying their tents and attacking them and journalists with rocks, metal bars, batons, and sticks. Security forces reportedly failed to protect peaceful demonstrators or arrest perpetrators in the context of at least six incidents in Beirut, Bint Jbeil, Nabatiyeh, and Tyre. It was also reported that the security forces attempted to prevent demonstrators and journalists from filming their actions, by using force, arrests, or confiscation of equipment.

The Lebanese Red Cross reported that it treated 1,790 people for protest-related injuries, including at least six members of the security forces, between October 17 and 30.

15 08-11-2019- Human Rights Watch. Lebanon: Protect Protests from Attacks: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2019/11/08/335470>

16 OHCHR – Press release, 26 November 2019, Lebanon: UN experts decry incidents of excessive force against protesters.

17 New TV Report- 18-01-2020

18 11-13-2019. The moment a Lebanese demonstrator was shot, south of Beirut - Al Arabiya.

<https://www.alarabiya.net/٢٠١٩/١١/١٣-شاهد-لحظة-اطلاق-النار-على-مواطن-لبناني-بالشويقات>

Since the outbreak of the revolution on October 17, 2019, until March 2020, the documentation team in the “Legal Agenda”, in coordination with the “Committee of Lawyers to Defend Protesters,” documented 732 injuries among the participants in the protests. The “Legal Agenda” published a detailed report¹⁹ on the series of violations, which included in its text the categories of victims of the attacks, the perpetrators, the types of injuries resulting from violence, and the circumstances in which the demonstrators were attacked.²⁰

B - Victims of Attacks

As mentioned earlier, the documentation team at “Legal Agenda”, in coordination with the “Committee of Lawyers for the Defense of Demonstrators,” was able to document 732 injuries among the participants in the uprising, including 75 women and at least 19 minors.

90% of the people who reported that they were subjected to physical violence are young men who participated in the demonstrations. Among them are men over sixty and minors, workers and unemployed, students in schools and universities, activists, journalists, lawyers, doctors, professors, and engineers.

Most of the victims were Lebanese nationals, in addition to a number of foreigners residing in Lebanon, bearing in mind that all of them have the right to demonstrate and express their opinions and to be protected from torture and violence without discrimination.

Violence against minors and women

At least 19 minors were subjected to physical violence due to their participation in the uprising, knowing that many school and university students had participated in the demonstrations. At least 75 women participating in the uprising were subjected to physical violence by the Internal Security Forces, Army Intelligence, Parliament Police, and civilians who are supporters of the ruling parties.

Violence against photographers, journalists and media professionals

Male and female media officers sector were clearly targeted while documenting demonstrations and violations committed against demonstrators. During this period, the SKeyes organization for media freedom monitored 65 cases of physical assault. The “Legal Agenda” documented the testimonies of 11 media professionals who were injured as a result of assaults by the security services and civilians who support the ruling parties.²¹

These assaults included beating media professionals or threats to beat them in order to prevent them from filming.

One of the many examples of this type of assault is a video that went viral on the Internet showing journalist Paula Nofal being beaten by members of the House of Representatives police in Nejme Square on 11-12-2019.²²

19 Nour Haydar, Legal Agenda, 16-10-2020, A Popular Uprising Met With Violence and Torture: Crimes Against Protesters During Lebanon’s Uprising.

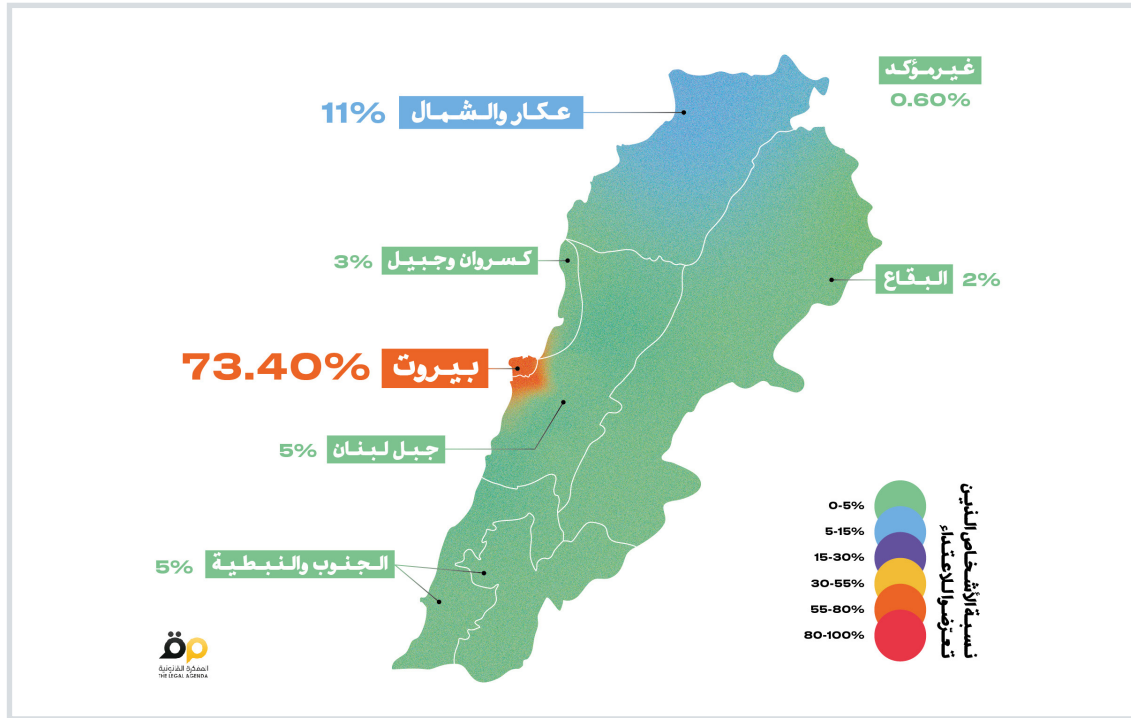
20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 <https://twitter.com/Rooqsthemuse/status/1204571408925446144>

Geographical Aistribution of the Attacks

Although the majority of the attacks took place in Beirut (73.4%), violent attacks were also documented in the different Lebanese regions.



Legal Agenda

C - The Aggressors

What about the security and military agencies responsible for acts of violence against demonstrators?

As a result of the monitoring, research and collection of testimonies conducted by the documentation team in the “Legal Agenda” in coordination with the “Lawyers Committee for the Defense of Demonstrators” it was found that 88% of the injuries resulted from violations and assaults committed by members of the security and military forces against civilians due to their participation in the revolution. Perpetrators were mainly the ISF (54%), the army and army intelligence (26%), Parliament Police (6%), and other parties, including municipal police in some regions (2%). In addition, about 11% of the documented injuries resulted from assaults by civilians who were supporters of the ruling parties or escorts of politicians.²³

During the first five months of the uprising and demonstrations in downtown Beirut, the riot police was a violent against male and female demonstrators, and their practices amount to torture as per international standards. Tear gas was excessively used, rubber bullets and sound bombs misused, and indiscriminate attacks were launched against demonstrators, in which the army participated, let alone massive arrests.

23 Nour Haydar, Legal Agenda, 16-10-2020, A Popular Uprising Met With Violence and Torture: Crimes Against Protesters During Lebanon’s Uprising.

The security forces, especially the riot police, have often dispersed protesters by firing huge quantities of tear gas canisters, which caused the demonstrators to suffocate or lose consciousness. They organized a tactic of indiscriminate attack on the demonstrators, using batons, kicking, threatening, dragging demonstrators to the ground, as well as using rubber bullets with the aim of evacuating squares or punishing protesters who stick to the street.²⁴

D - Types of Injuries

The documented injuries ranged between “moderate”, serious and severe injuries, and injuries that caused death.

39 injuries were considered “serious” as they led to the admission of the injured to the hospital or caused a permanent physical or mental impairment or malfunction, and 70 injuries were considered “critical” because they resulted in a fracture, defect, or temporary physical or mental impairment. Among these injuries, five people lost sight in one eye due to rubber bullets or a tear gas canister fired by riot police.

About 239 severe injuries were also documented. They resulted in deep wounds or prominent bruises and bruises in the head or face, and demonstrators were treated in emergency departments at hospitals.

Finally, 384 injuries are considered “moderate” as they consist of minor bruises, or because it is not possible to ascertain the extent of their seriousness due to absence of medical reports or documented pictures of the injuries.

In addition to the injuries documented in the medical reports, a number of the injured reported that they had sustained injuries that were not recorded in the medical reports, such as injuries to their genitals and sensitive areas resulting from intentional beating.



²⁴ Nour Haydar, Legal Agenda, 16-10-2020, A Popular Uprising Met With Violence and Torture: Crimes Against Protesters During Lebanon’s Uprising.

E - The Circumstances of the Assault and the Different Types of Violence

The high number of injuries as a result of violence and torture indicates that the agencies have deliberately and illegally used excessive force and harmed demonstrators to break up demonstrations, and in some cases, to punish and deter them from exercising their rights in opposing the ruling regime.

What are the circumstances of the assault and the different methods of violence used by the authorities against the demonstrators?

Two different types of violence clearly appear:

- Attacks by the security services on demonstrators in the squares.
- Violence and torture during detention, arrest, and interrogations.



Photo: Maher Al-Kachen, Legal Agenda

As already mentioned, politicians' escorts and supporters of the ruling parties have used violence against demonstrators. However, this pattern of attacks does not fall within the scope of the current report on monitoring and analyzing cases of human rights violations resulting from the excessive use of force by official agencies, including security and military forces, who have the right to use force in accordance with certain rules and restrictions, namely is the obligation to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality.

1. Attacks by the Security Forces on Demonstrators in Squares

81% of the documented injuries are due to patterns of violence resulting from the security services:

Excessive use of force to disperse demonstrations disproportionately and indiscriminately, as well as the adoption of riot control tactics that breach principles and codes of conduct and threaten health and life, most notably:

- The use of bullets and tear gas in violation of legal principles.
- Random violence in the squares.
- Violation of the principles of necessity and proportionality in the use of force.

2. Violence and Torture during Detention, Arrest and investigations

32% of the total number of documented injuries were subjected to assault by a security apparatus during arrest, including those who reported that they were subjected to severe beating and threats, either in the transportation vehicle or in the place of detention and investigation. This aspect of violence was exercised as follows:

Violence inside the vehicles during transportation and upon arrival at the security centers

Violence and excessive use of force during the arrest

Violence and beatings of a punitive, retaliatory nature

Torture to extract confessions and information

4. Concluding Remarks

1. Firearms and rifles were widely used, resulting in preventable injuries, which caused the situation to deteriorate and fueled mutual violence instead of maintaining public safety;
2. The massive and indiscriminate attacks on demonstrators and the use of batons and beating sticks against peaceful groups that do not pose an immediate threat constitute a clear example of the unlawful use of force;
3. The security forces focused on the main goal of dispersing the demonstrations instead of seeking to maintain order and protect freedom of assembly;
4. The principles governing the use of force, namely proportionality, necessity and legality, were not adhered to. Less lethal weapons such as rubber bullets and tear gas were used excessively, on closed streets, at close range and sometimes directly on sensitive areas of the demonstrators' bodies.
5. The security and military forces failed to communicate effectively with the demonstrators. Insufficient efforts were made to try to negotiate, issue clear warnings of the intention to use force, and did not allow sufficient time for the warning to be observed.
6. Documenting the attacks against demonstrators since the outbreak of the protests in 2019 shows that the security and military services have committed misdemeanors and felonies against the demonstrators, most notably: torture, enforced disappearance, attempted murder, beating and abuse, and infringement of civil rights.
7. These actions have remained, to this day, outside the framework of any serious accountability, as the agencies have not announced any transparent investigation nor did they hold their members accountable. Results of the so-called investigations were not disclosed, and the Public Prosecution Office refrained from initiating investigations.
8. The high number of injuries and their gravity indicate that the security forces deliberately followed, in a completely illegal manner, the tactic of using excessive force and harming demonstrators to disperse the demonstrations.

The injuries were not occasional or sporadic, but rather constituted a clear pattern of deliberate violence against the demonstrators. It also turns out that many of them were not caused by undisciplined members, but rather as a result of the spreading culture of oppression and violence in the security and military institutions in the absence of any serious and public accountability.

The most prominent factors behind this anomalous reality can be summarized as follows:

- A rampant culture of violence among the security and military officers and amidst the Lebanese society
- The failed deterrent power of punishment
- A complete loss of prestige and the image of a strong, just state
- The absence of accountability, which leads directly to the systematic use of violence by security forces without fear of accountability
- Lack of trust between the citizen and the authority - especially its armed forces and security services

Lebanon is becoming a State of institutionalized violence as it allows the culture of violence to spread within the security and military agencies who arbitrarily indulge in the use of force while their acts are unaccounted for.

5. References

1. Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.

Adopted and made public by United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 34-169 of December 17, 1979.

2. Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

Adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, from 27 August to 7 September 1990.

