

Child Rights Under Threat: Monitoring Violations in Lebanon

Monitoring Report

01 January – 30 June 2025

Acknowledgement

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Disclaimer

While the team made all efforts possible to cross-check information and reproduce facts and events accurately, this does not overrule the possibility of inaccuracies or oversights, for which ALEF hereby expresses its regrets.

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Executive Summary

As part of the MENA Child Rights Initiative, led by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), ALEF has been monitoring and documenting instances of institutional violence against children. The findings of ALEF's monitoring efforts are consolidated into monitoring reports. This report is the last of the series and covers the period between January 1 to June 30, 2025.

The respect of child rights in Lebanon remains weak, with significant gaps between legal provisions and practice. The age of criminal responsibility remains low, at seven years old, detention is overused, and minors are often detained alongside adults despite legal protections requiring their separation. Judicial challenges persist, including a lack of specialized juvenile judges and insufficient training for key actors. While some child-friendly court facilities exist in major cities, systemic reforms are lacking. Efforts like the opening of the Warwar rehabilitative center aim to improve child protection, but effectiveness remains to be seen.

This monitoring report provides an analysis of the evolving trends and patterns affecting institutional violence against children in Lebanon. It highlights the escalating security challenges against children, the remnants of the armed conflict, and recent developments and efforts toward reform. Key findings include:

- Violence and insecurity: Armed feuds and celebratory gunshots led to an increase in child casualties throughout the country at a concerning rate. Retaliatory kidnapping cases of children also appeared during this quarter.
- Sexual exploitation and violence: Cases of sexual abuse persisted, revealing critical gaps in preventative and protective mechanisms. Incidents monitored during this quarter highlight the urgency of addressing sexual violence in both physical and digital spaces.
- Remnants of the armed conflict: Despite the ceasefire agreement, minors continue to fall victim to attacks, with at least 10 child casualties. This was coupled with a surge in mental and physical health issues, hunger, and a halt in education.
- Milestones in child welfare: Despite the ongoing challenges, the Lebanese government and international and national organizations have worked to ameliorate child protection, health, and welfare. Some projects include safeguarding policies for day care centers, health initiatives aimed to helping children suffering from gastrointestinal or urinary diseases, and even the inauguration of Lebanon's first rehabilitation center for minors.

These findings demonstrate that Lebanon's child protection frameworks, while legally robust on paper, lack the necessary enforcement and resources to address the acute and chronic challenges children face. The report calls for urgent systemic reforms, emphasizing a holistic, rights-based approach that prioritizes the best interests of children. The report proposes the following **recommendations**:

To Civil Society Organizations and UN agencies

- Strengthen monitoring and reporting of violations against children, particularly in detention, displacement, and conflict-affected areas, and ensure findings are shared with judicial authorities and international accountability mechanisms.
- Advocate for legal reforms to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility in line with international standards (at least 12 years) and push for consistent application of child-friendly judicial safeguards.
- Expand awareness campaigns targeting parents, schools, and communities on risks of neglect (fires, unsafe infrastructure, school safety), online exploitation, and the psychological consequences of celebratory gunfire and violence.
- Support safe education by collaborating with the Ministry of Education to prevent discriminatory practices against Syrian minors, ensure inclusion regardless of documentation, and develop emergency education plans during conflict.
- Enhance MHPSS (mental health and psychosocial support) services for children impacted by conflict, neglect, and sexual violence, ensuring trauma-informed care and community-based interventions.
- Build partnerships with media institutions to establish child-sensitive reporting and entertainment standards that prevent exploitation and protect children from harmful political or sectarian manipulation.

To Donors

- Prioritize funding for rehabilitation and reintegration of minors through alternatives to detention, including expansion of rehabilitation centers like Warwar and support for community-based programs.
- Fund initiatives tackling sexual violence and exploitation, including preventive digital literacy programs, survivor-centered services, and training for law enforcement and judiciary on handling such cases.
- Invest in education continuity mechanisms in conflict-affected areas (digital tools, catch-up classes, safe learning spaces), with particular focus on vulnerable children and marginalized groups.

- Support emergency child protection responses addressing hunger, malnutrition, and health crises among children, with a focus on sustainable interventions such as child health programs.
- Ensure flexible and rapid-response funding mechanisms that can be activated during sudden escalations (armed violence, displacement, or school closures).
- Strengthen accountability frameworks by conditioning funding for government institutions on transparent reporting, inclusive oversight, and cooperation with CSOs.

To the Government of Lebanon (GoL)

- Amend Law 422/2002 to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to at least 12, ensure proportionality in sentencing, and fully align detention practices with CRC principles of last resort.
- Operationalize the juvenile justice system reforms, including mandatory training for judges, police, and lawyers on child rights and child-friendly procedures, while ensuring the independence of the Institute of Judicial Studies.
- Separate minors from adults in detention and fully utilize rehabilitation facilities like Warwar, ensuring adequate staffing, specialized training, and consistent oversight in line with the Mandela Rules.
- Develop and enforce national standards for child safeguarding in schools, nurseries, and media, including regulations that prevent child exploitation in entertainment and political discourse.
- Adopt comprehensive regulations on online child protection, focused specifically on combating exploitation and abuse while safeguarding freedom of expression.
- Ensure non-discriminatory access to education for all children, including refugees, by removing barriers such as documentation requirements and municipal restrictions.
- Implement a national strategy to reduce armed violence (celebratory gunfire, family feuds) through community awareness, stricter enforcement against perpetrators, and protection measures for children.
- Adopt a child-centered contingency plan for conflict and displacement, ensuring access to education, health, WASH, and psychosocial services during crises.
- Provide transparent reporting on deportations, arrests, and detentions of Syrian minors to ensure accountability and prevent violations of international commitments.

Respect of Child Rights in Lebanon

The Lebanese state has adhered to child rights frameworks on both the international and national levels, such as the 1991 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)¹, two out of three of the CRC's optional protocols,² and law 422/2002 on the Protection of Children in Violation of the Law or Exposed to Danger, which has a dual protection scope and thus applies to juveniles in conflict with the law and juveniles at risk.³ Indeed, law 422 emphasizes the best interest of the child in judicial and social measures, prioritizing rehabilitation and integration over punishment, establishing the role of juvenile judges, and mandating the involvement of social workers in juvenile cases.⁴ However, procedural protections embedded in the rule of law for children in Lebanon are not always observed.

In fact, the legal protection of child rights remains in an extremely dire state in Lebanon, as is shown in multiple aspects, one being the gap between national and international frameworks. For instance, Law 422 sets criminal responsibility for minors at seven years and above⁵, which contradicts international standards, particularly the Beijing Rules that recommend the age of criminal responsibility to be no less than 12 years old.⁶

Another such aspect is the gap between policy and practice. Law 422 states that juvenile detention must be a measure of last resort, similar to the CRC. However, in practice, detention continues to be widely used for minors in Lebanon, with most judges sentencing juveniles to prison even for relatively minor offenses.⁷ This practice results from the absence of reforms and the inability of NGOs to receive any juvenile that commits "dangerous crimes".⁸ Both frameworks also stipulate the separation of juveniles from adults in detention centers. Yet, this is not the reality in the country, as juveniles are often sent to detention cells alongside adults

1 UNTC. Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved from https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=_en

2 OHCHR

3 MoJ. (2002, June 6). Legal Texts - Juvenile Law: Law No. 422. Retrieved from <http://ahdath.justice.gov.lb/law-ahdath%20-1.htm>

4 Ibid.

5 Consortium for Street Children. (2020, November). Lebanon Status Offences. Retrieved from <https://www.streetchildren.org/legal-atlas/map/lebanon/status-offences/are-children-criminalised-for-vagrancy-loitering-truancy-or-similar-activities/>

6 OHCHR. United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules). Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/united-nations-standard-minimum-rules-administration-juvenile>

7 Beirut Today. (2023, August 14). Arrests and violations against juveniles in Lebanon. Retrieved from: <https://beirut-today.com/2023/08/14/violations-against-juveniles-grow-violent/>

8 Ibid.

while awaiting investigations.⁹ Additionally, prior to 2025, only one floor in the Roumieh prison was dedicated to minors, despite the fact that interactions between minors and adults cannot be entirely prevented, whereas this May, a new rehabilitation center for juvenile boys has been inaugurated, as will be discussed below.

Although Lebanon has established specialized juvenile courts responsible for examining all criminal and civil cases involving minors,¹⁰ the juvenile justice system remains limited by the absence of specific guidelines and standardized protocols.¹¹ Additionally, there is no institutionalized or systematic training framework for professionals who interact directly with children, including police officers, lawyers, and judges.¹² Among these actors, social workers are considered the most specialized, as they are the only group receiving mandatory training.¹³

Nevertheless, the child-friendly facilities available in courthouses of Baabda, Beirut, Saida, Nabatiyeh, Tripoli, and Zahle prevent and respond to forms of abuse and neglect that children involved in judicial proceedings can experience and reduce the psychological distress they may go through and ensure confidentiality.¹⁴

9 Salam w Kalam. (2016, December 1). Juveniles in Lebanon: Infringement and Violations on the Way to Obtaining Protection! Retrieved from <https://www.salamwakalam.com/articles/protection/169/juveniles-in-lebanon-infringement-and-violations-on-the-way-to-obtain/en>

10 Law Gratis. (2025, May 20). Juvenile Laws at Lebanon. Retrieved from: <http://www.lawgratis.com/blog-detail/juvenile-laws-at-lebanon>

11 AIMJF. (2023). CHILD PARTICIPATION IN JUVENILE JUSTICE IN LEBANON. Retrieved from <https://chronicle.aimjf.info/index.php/files/article/view/99/83>

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 UNICEF. (2022, June 23). Strengthening child-friendly justice in Lebanon. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/press-releases/strengthening-child-friendly-justice-lebanon>

Context Analysis

Lebanon's two-year long political deadlock came to an end at the beginning of 2025 with the election of a President, the appointment of a Prime Minister, and the formation of a new government. This came after twelve unsuccessful parliamentary sessions.¹⁵ Thus, Lebanese Army Commander-in-Chief General Joseph Aoun was elected as the 14th President of the Republic of Lebanon, after two rounds.¹⁶ With foreign pressure to form a government, on the 13th of January, two thirds of the 128 parliamentary members nominated Nawaf Salam, then-President of the ICJ, for the post.¹⁷ By early February, Salam had formed a new government, bringing together ministers from a wide range of backgrounds, including 5 women.¹⁸ However, as of June, some key appointments remain on hold, like the four deputy governors at the Banque du Liban and judicial and diplomatic appointments.¹⁹

In May, municipal elections took place, 9 years since the last election, including the last three years of postponements. These elections also came with hundreds of violations during each region's elections across the country, as reported by the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE).²⁰

Despite these positive developments and the political level, Lebanon continues to suffer from a multitude of crises, notably the remnants of the armed conflict with Israel. Despite the ceasefire agreement between Hezbollah and Israel on the 26th of November 2024, both sides continue

15 Now Lebanon. (2024, June 14). Lebanese Presidency Stalemate. Retrieved from <https://nowlebanon.com/lebanese-presidency-stalemate/>

16 L'Orient Today. (2025, January 9). Army Chief Joseph Aoun elected 14th president of Lebanon. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1442749/army-chief-joseph-aoun-elected-president-of-lebanon.html>

17 BBC. (2025, January 13). ICJ president Nawaf Salam named Lebanon's new prime minister. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2eg7ge72j2o>

18 LBCI. (2025, February 8). Lebanon's new government Ministers: A look at their diverse backgrounds. Retrieved from <https://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/news-bulletin-reports/836587/lebanons-new-government-ministers-a-look-at-their-diverse-backgrounds/en>

19 LBCI. (2025, June 11). Lebanon faces political paralysis: Key appointments remain on hold. Retrieved from <https://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/news-bulletin-reports/859275/lebanon-faces-political-paralysis-key-appointments-remain-on-hold/en?>

20 L'Orient Today. (2025, May 26). Despite thousands of violations, Aoun hails 'success' of municipal elections. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1461784/despite-thousands-of-violations-aoun-hails-success-of-municipal-elections.html>

to violate the ceasefire.²¹ Israel is responsible for air strike and shelling incidents, has destroyed property, and refuses to pull back its military from Lebanese land.²²

Moreover, tensions at the Lebanese Syrian border began to rise in early 2025, with a multitude of clashes breaking out between Lebanese “clans” and the Syrian army. By March, seven people were killed and 52 wounded.²³ This tension was triggered by a cross-border infiltration attempt by the “New Syrian Forces” in the Baalbek-Hermel district and the discovery of four bodies of Syrian soldiers.²⁴ By the end of March, the Lebanese and Syrian defense ministers reached an agreement on enhanced security and military cooperation along the shared border.²⁵

As the new government brought with it renewed focus on reforms, the lead investigator into the Beirut port explosion resumed his hearings following a two-year deadlock, interrogating 24 people by June 2025.²⁶ However, difficulties still persist as some officials have refused to appear at their hearings, like MP Ghazi Zayter whose lawyer presented a memorandum asserting that Zayter is taking part of a Parliamentary extraordinary session, implying he is protected by parliamentary immunity.²⁷

Prison Conditions

Prison conditions in Lebanon during the first half of 2025 have shown no improvement thus far. Indeed, the ongoing economic crisis and the new influx of Syrian refugees have continued to strain Lebanese prisons, leaving no room for progress. Major issues such as prolonged pretrial detention, severe overcrowding, deteriorating infrastructure, and a struggling healthcare system persist. Inmates endure degrading living conditions, with overcrowded facilities and insufficient hygiene, health, and food standards.²⁸ With little to no governmental support and increasing needs, detention conditions show little potential for improvement. In fact, prisons continue to increasingly rely on civil society organizations to enhance infrastructure and provide essential services.

21 Arab Center Washington DC. (2024, December 10). Israel's Violations of the Ceasefire with Hezbollah Threaten to Undo It. Retried from <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/israels-violations-of-the-ceasefire-with-hezbollah-threaten-to-undo-it/>

22 Al Jazeera. (2025, February 9). Here's how Israel is repeatedly violating the Lebanon ceasefire. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/9/heres-how-israel-is-repeatedly-violating-the-lebanon-ceasefire>

23 Al Jazeera. (2025, March 17). At least seven killed in spiralling clashes on Syria-Lebanon border. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/17/syria-points-finger-at-hezbollah-as-fighting-erupts-on-border-with-lebanon>

24 L'Orient Today. (2025, March 17). Deadly clashes on Lebanon-Syria border since Sunday: What we know. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1452033/deadly-clashes-erupt-on-lebanon-syria-border.html>

25 L'Orient Today. (2025, March 28). Syria and Lebanon reach preliminary border agreement in Jeddah. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1453829/syria-and-lebanon-reach-preliminary-border-agreement-in-jeddah.html>

26 L'Orient Today. (2025, March 16). Aug. 4 investigation: After 15 interrogations, what next? Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1451926/aug-4-investigation-after-15-interrogations-what-next.html>. And LBCI. (2025, July 17). Beirut Port explosion case update: More officials defy judge as probe nears final phase. Retrieved from https://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/news-bulletin-reports/867925/beirut-port-explosion-case-update-more-officials-defy-judge-as-probe-n/en?utm_source=chatgpt.com

27 L'Orient Today, (2025, June 27). Port explosion investigation: MP Ghazi Zeaiter's questioning postponed to July 4. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1466877/port-explosion-investigation-mp-ghazi-zeaiters-questioning-postponed-to-july-4.html>

28 Human Rights Watch. (2024, January 11). Lebanon: Rights Under Threat Amid Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/11/lebanon-rights-under-threat-amid-crisis>

In an attempt to ameliorate these prison conditions though, the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Justice inaugurated the courthouse at Roumieh Prison with hopes of alleviating the overcrowding crisis in prison. In fact, the first trial sessions took place on the 3rd of June, with the court holding 20 sessions on the first day and even concluding seven of those.²⁹

More than 2,000 Syrian prisoners and detainees are being held in Lebanon.³⁰ With the hope of resumption of bilateral ties between Lebanon and Syria, Lebanon is exploring the prospects of extraditing Syrian prisoners. In fact, Lebanon's then-caretaker prime minister Najib Mikati met with Syria's interim president and the two leaders agreed that Syrian prisoners should be repatriated.³¹

Lebanon also saw protests throughout the first months of this year, with hundreds of people demanding the release of Islamists detained during the civil war in Syria.³² This was accompanied by the ongoing hunger strikes within the prisons.

29 L'Orient Today. (2025, June 3). Roumieh holds first trial sessions, a step toward 'relieving prison overcrowding'. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1463072/roumieh-holds-first-trial-sessions-a-step-toward-relieving-prison-overcrowding.html>

30 The New Arab. (2025, February 13). Syrian prisoners in Lebanon go on hunger strike demanding extradition. Retrieved from <https://www.newarab.com/news/syrian-prisoners-lebanon-hunger-strike-demand-extradition>

31 The Arab Weekly. (2025, March 21). Lebanon preparing to repatriate hundreds of Syrian detainees. Retrieved from <https://the arabweekly.com/lebanon-preparing-repatriate-hundreds-syrian-detainees>

32 Al-Monitor. (2025, January 5). Lebanon rally calls for release of Islamists jailed during Syria war. Retrieved from <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2025/01/lebanon-rally-calls-release-islamists-jailed-during-syria-war>

Trends and Patterns Identified

Throughout the first half of 2025, Lebanon continued witnessing a troubling pattern of violations against the rights of vulnerable populations, particularly minors and those among them in contact with the law. While many patterns persist from the previous year, new trends have also emerged.

Persistent Violence against Children

Despite the existence of legal frameworks and child protection mechanisms, children in Lebanon continued to face persistent and multifaceted forms of violence during this period. Such violence is not only direct and deliberate but also institutional, rooted in the absence of effective safeguards, weak accountability, and the compounded effects of socio-economic collapse, displacement, and armed conflict. The risks monitored range from neglect that leads to preventable harm or accidental deaths, to various forms of exploitation, including sexual violence, and extend to the pervasive insecurity that undermines their right to a safe and nurturing environment. These realities highlight the urgent need for stronger protective measures and a comprehensive response that addresses both immediate risks and the broader environment enabling such violence.

Neglect and Accidental Deaths

Many children fall victims to one form or another of neglect in Lebanon, though it remains one of the most underreported forms of harm. Throughout the first half of 2025, different variations of neglect were identified, among which accidental death was most prominent. Indeed, at least five minors were killed by fires; with two teenagers killed in a large fire at a gas station in Akkar in January³³ and three killed from a fuel leak in Hermel in March.³⁴ Furthermore, a child was killed, alongside his mother, an officer, and two soldiers in an explosion of ammunition being transported in a military vehicle in South Lebanon.³⁵

33 L'Orient Le Jour. (2025, January 3). Two teenagers killed, and one man seriously injured in a large fire at a gas station in Wadi Khaled. Retrieved from <https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1441976/deux-adolescents-tues-et-un-homme-grievement-blesse-dans-un-grand-incendie-dans-une-station-service-de-wadi-khaled.html>

34 L'Orient Today. (2025, March 25). Three children killed, several injured in Hermel gas station fire. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1453280/four-dead-one-injured-in-hermel-gas-station-fire.html>

35 Arab News Japan. (2025, April 21). Southern Lebanon blast kills army officer, soldiers, mother, and child. Retrieved from https://www.arabnews.jp/en/middle-east/article_145739/

Neglect also took place in schools, when the Mayor of Al-Badawi forcibly removed kindergarten children at the Al-Badawi Public School from their classroom to the playground in cold weather, in protest against the Ministry of Education's decision to merge the Kindergarten and Intermediate schools.³⁶ Not only did that endanger the children's health, but it also violated their right to education, as reported by the Ministry. In another case, a 12-year-old student at Jannat Al-Atfal School in Keserwan attempted a viral TikTok challenge by trying to eat a croissant in a single bite. He passed away after choking, despite the efforts by school staff and paramedics to clear the blockage.³⁷ Also, following the death of a four-month infant, the Ministry of Public Health immediately closed a nursery in the Keserwan region. According to statements issued by the infant's family, the cause of death was a "respiratory arrest due to asphyxiation caused by milk reflux that blocked the infant's airway". However, it is important to note that there was no nurse present at the nursery at the time of the incident, and the infant died despite a 45-minute attempt of resuscitation at Our Lady of Lebanon Hospital.³⁸

Exploitation and Sexual Violence

Like neglect, exploitation can be depicted through a multitude of forms. In the first half of 2025, Al-Jadeed's show, "Mini Mafia", featuring children partaking in a political and sectarian debate, sparked child exploitation reports. The show's host asked the twelve-year-old participants who they believed should be elected as Lebanon's next president, which caused an intense argument and promoted bigotry and hatred. The Social Affairs Ministry condemned the episode, believing that it violated the Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by Lebanon in 1991, and stressed the need for a media environment that safeguards privacy and protects children from psychological harm that may be resulted by their participation.³⁹ As this criticism was coupled with others' critiques, Al-Jadeed issued an apology and removed the episode from its platforms.⁴⁰ This case is particularly important as it illustrates how child exploitation in Lebanon often extends beyond physical abuse or labor into the media sphere, where children's voices can be manipulated for political agendas, reinforcing harmful sectarian divides and underscoring the urgent need for stronger child protection framework in both traditional and digital platforms.

Although reports of sexual assault of minors have decreased so far into 2025 in comparison to 2024, it still remains an issue. In January, the General Directorate of the Internal Security Forces announced the arrest of a Lebanese citizen who had given his own son narcotic pills in an attempt at molesting him.⁴¹ Moreover, in late March, the General Security arrested Ali Ibrahim

36 This is Lebanon. (2025, February 6). Kindergarten children were taken out of their classrooms into the cold... and the Ministry of Education explains! Retrieved from <https://www.thisislebanon.com/lebanon/468821/>

37 Arab News. (2025, January 18). Lebanese boy chokes to death at school attempting viral TikTok 'one-bite challenge'. Retrieved from <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2586848/amp>

38 This is Beirut. (2025, April 30). Infant's Death at Keserwan Nursery Sparks Official Closure and Investigation. Retrieved from <https://thisisbeirut.com.lb/articles/1314252/infants-death-at-keserwan-nursery-sparks-official-closure-and-investigation>

39 L'Orient Today. (2025, January 6). Al Jadeed apologizes amid backlash for featuring children in political debate. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1442288/al-jadeed-apologizes-amid-backlash-for-featuring-children-in-political-debate.html>

40 Ibid.

41 I'm Lebanon. (2025, January 13). In Halba... he drugged his minor son and tried to harass him! Retrieved from <https://www.imlebanon.org/2025/01/13/isf-halba-2/>

Nassar, a General Security officer, on charges of harassing a six-year-old Syrian girl. Prior to that, a video had circulated on social media of Nassar molesting the girl in front of a group of children who were with her.⁴²

In May, a theme park in Metn was closed after fifteen girls from the Saints-Cœurs Ain Najem school, aged six to seven, were sexually harassed during an outing to the park. The suspect, a 17-year-old Lebanese boy who worked there, confessed to his actions after initially denying the accusations. Following this incident, the school said it has taken necessary legal measures and has been providing educational and psychological support to students and their parents.⁴³

Insecurity

Insecurity remained a grave issue in the first half of 2025 and was identified through various aspects, like kidnapping and gunfire. During this period, child casualties and injuries due to gunfire surged:

- A 12-year-old child died after being mistakenly shot by a man who opened fire at a restaurant after being refused half a chicken in Tripoli.⁴⁴
- A six-year-old girl was killed by a stray bullet from New Year's Eve celebratory gunfire in Akkar.⁴⁵
- Two children were killed in separate armed clashes following family feuds, one in Tripoli and one in Akkar.⁴⁶
- An 18-year-old boy was killed by a stray bullet in Akkar.⁴⁷
- One minor was killed, and another one was injured from a shooting exchange in Tripoli.⁴⁸
- A 15-year-old boy was seriously injured from celebratory gunfire following municipal elections in Akkar.⁴⁹

42 MTV. (2025, March 27). Watch: 49-Year-Old Man Harasses 6-Year-Old Girl. Retrieved from <https://www.mtv.com.lb/en/News/Local/1560067/watch--49-year-old-man-harasses-6-year-old-girl> and L'Orient Today (2025, March 27) General Security agent arrested for allegedly molesting six-year-old Syrian girl. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1453593/general-security-agent-arrested-for-allegedly-molesting-six-year-old-syrian-girl.html>

43 L'Orient Today. (2024, May 22). Students sexually harassed in Metn theme park; minor suspect arrested. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1461428/students-sexually-harassed-in-metn-theme-park-minor-suspect-arrested.html>

44 Arab News. (2025, March 13). Lebanese boy, 12, dies of head injury after man opens fire over half a chicken. Retrieved from <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2593513/middle-east>

45 The New Arab. (2025, January 1). Six-year-old girl killed in New Year's Eve celebratory gunfire in Lebanon. Retrieved from <https://www.newarab.com/news/six-year-old-girl-killed-new-years-eve-gunfire-lebanon>

46 Al Nahar (2025, March 6). Due to a family feud...an armed clash erupted in the Mankoubin area of Tripoli. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/lebanon/society/200046/مقتل-طفل-واصابة-شخصين-اثر-اشكال-عائلي-في-بلدة-القن> and NNA. (2025, March 21). A child was killed, and two individuals were injured following a family dispute in the town of Al-Qanbar that escalated into gunfire. Retrieved from <https://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/ar/justice-law/767423/مقتل-طفل-واصابة-شخصين-اثر-اشكال-عائلي-في-بلدة-القن>

47 L'Orient Today. (2025, May 2). 18-year-old killed by stray bullet in Akkar. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1458492/18-year-old-killed-by-stray-bullet-in-akkar.html>

48 L'Orient Today (2025, April 27). One killed by gunfire and one injured in a shooting following a road accident in Tripoli. Retrieved from: <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1457692/one-killed-by-gunfire-and-one-injured-in-a-shooting-following-a-road-accident-in-tripoli.html>

49 L'Orient Today. (2025, May 12). Celebratory gunfire in North Lebanon: Teenager in critical condition, LBCI journalist injured. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1459776/celebratory-gunfire-in-north-lebanon-teenager-in-critical-condition-lbci-journalist-injured.html>

There were also a few kidnapping cases involving minors, like the attempted kidnapping of two children in Hasbaya in March, in which the children managed to escape.⁵⁰ The two suspected kidnappers involved in this case were arrested less than 24 hours later.⁵¹ In a separate case, a young boy was abducted from the Public School for Boys in Badawi by several individuals in retaliation for the abduction of a young woman by a member of the boy's family.⁵²

Discrimination Against Syrian Minors

In Lebanon, insults, curfews, attacks, and discriminatory measures have become common experiences amongst Syrian refugees, not excluding children.

For instance, the Council of Ministers continues to refuse to authorize enrollment in public schools for refugee students who do not have UNHCR-issued documents; although this is contrary to the advice of the Ministry of Education.⁵³

Additionally, violence against helpless Syrian minors continues to be reported on several occasions: the murder of a Syrian child in South Lebanon by his Lebanese neighbor⁵⁴, the kidnapping (though later rescued) of a Syrian minor for ransom in Baalbek⁵⁵, and the sexual harassment of a six-year-old Syrian girl⁵⁶, as mentioned above.

Remnants of the War and its Impact on Children

The consequences of the recent armed conflict in Lebanon continue to affect children long after the ceasefire. Beyond the direct harm caused by airstrikes and hostilities, the remnants of war, whether physical, psychological, or social, leave children exposed to lasting risks and vulnerabilities. Unexploded ordnance, displacement, and the destruction of basic infrastructure place children at heightened risk of injury, death, and deprivation. At the same time, the war's disruption of essential services has had far-reaching implications for children's mental health, nutrition, and access to education, undermining their development and prospects for recovery. These enduring impacts underscore that children remain among the most affected groups in times of war, requiring sustained attention and tailored protection measures.

50 L'Orient Today. (2025, March 2). Attempted kidnapping of two children in Hasbaya. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1449932/attempted-kidnapping-of-two-children-in-hasbaya.html>

51 L'Orient Today. (2025, March 4). Two suspects arrested in south Lebanon for attempted child abduction. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1450299/two-suspects-arrested-in-south-lebanon-for-attempted-child-abduction.html>

52 L'Orient Today. (2025, April 9). Child kidnapped from Beddawi school in retaliation for abduction of woman. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1455390/child-kidnapped-from-beddawi-school-in-retaliation-for-abduction-of-woman.html>

53 L'Orient Today. (2025, January 24). Plus de 44 000 élèves syriens interdits d'école par le gouvernement Mikati. Retrieved from <https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1444801/plus-de-44-000-eleves-syriens-interdits-decole-par-le-gouvernement-mikati.html>

54 The New Arab. (2025, March 19). Syrians mourn child beheaded in south Lebanon. Retrieved from <https://www.newarab.com/news/syrians-mourn-child-beheaded-south-lebanon>

55 L'Orient Today. (2025, March 25). Lebanese Army frees kidnapped Syrian minor in Baalbeck. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1453321/lebanese-army-frees-a-kidnapped-syrian-minor-in-baalbeck.html>

56 L'Orient Today. (2025, March 27). General Security agent arrested for allegedly molesting six-year-old Syrian girl. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1453593/general-security-agent-arrested-for-allegedly-molesting-six-year-old-syrian-girl.html>

Child Civilian Casualties

During the first half of 2025, children continued to be victim to Israeli airstrikes and bombings. As regular violations of the ceasefire continued well into the year, at least ten children were killed. Most of these casualties occurred in the first few months of 2025, with;

- A seven-year-old boy in South Lebanon succumbed to head injuries sustained from shrapnel of a bomb dropped by an Israeli drone on January 29, 2025.⁵⁷
- Two sisters in Saida, seven and eight, were killed when furniture rigged with explosives left by the Israeli army detonated. Their sister was injured.⁵⁸
- A 14-year-old girl was killed by Israeli soldiers who opened fire in Houla, southern Lebanon.⁵⁹
- A 16-year-old girl died of her wounds when an Israeli drone struck a car nearby in Nabatieh, injuring her 3 siblings.⁶⁰

Mental Health, Nutrition, and Education

The war also affected children in terms of mental and physical health, displacement, and education. UNICEF reported in January that over 70% of caregivers reported anxiety and nervousness from their children and 62% reported depression. In Baalbek-Hermel, more than half (51%) of children under 2 years old are facing severe food poverty, while 45% of children in Bekaa are affected as well – a dramatic increase from 25% in 2023.⁶¹ In fact, Save the Children also reported that nearly 1/3rd of children in Lebanon began the year facing crisis-level hunger, with a 5% increase in child hunger from 3 months prior; and more children have been pushed into child labor as coping strategies.⁶²

The situation in Lebanon had already caused dire setbacks for the country's education system, mainly due to the effects of the economic crisis, a wave of teacher strikes, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, the situation only deteriorated further in 2024 with the armed conflict against Lebanon and continued to have an impact well into 2025. Indeed, UNICEF reported at least 1/4 of children in Lebanon remain out of school.⁶³

57 NNA. (2025, February 5). Child succumbs to injuries from Israeli drone attack in south Lebanon. Retrieved from <https://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/justice-law/757141/child-succumbs-to-injuries-from-israeli-drone-atta#:~:text=NNA%20%2D%20Seven%2Dyear%2Dold,drone%20on%20January%2029%2C%202025>.

58 L'Orient Today. (2025, February 7). 4 killed in explosion of Israeli booby-trapped furniture in Tayr Harfa, airstrike south of Saida. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1446981/4-killed-in-explosion-of-israeli-booby-trapped-furniture-in-tayr-harfa-airstrike-south-of-saida.html>

59 L'Orient Today. (2025, February 17). Houla residents detained by Israeli army escape. <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1448122/six-civilians-held-in-houla-israel-refuses-to-allow-army-and-unifil-to-evacuate-them.html>

60 Naharnet. (2025, February 26). 16-year-old Lea joins children killed in Israeli ceasefire violations. Retrieved from <https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/311256-16-year-old-lea-joins-children-killed-in-israeli-ceasefire-violations>

61 UNICEF. (2025, February 28). Decline in children's mental health, nutrition and education after the war in Lebanon: UNICEF. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/decline-childrens-mental-health-nutrition-and-education-after-war-lebanon-unicef>

62 Save the Children. (2025, January 20). Lebanon: Nearly a third of children facing crisis levels of hunger as country reels from year of conflict. Retrieved from <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/lebanon-nearly-third-children-facing-crisis-levels-hunger-country-reels-year-conflict>

63 UNICEF. (2025, February 28). Decline in children's mental health, nutrition and education after the war in Lebanon: UNICEF. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/decline-childrens-mental-health-nutrition-and-education-after-war-lebanon-unicef>

Milestones in Child Protection and Welfare in Lebanon

On a more positive note, the Lebanese government has taken positive steps to ameliorate conditions in Lebanon - many of them relating to child protection and welfare in the country.

To begin with, the Ministry of Public Health and UNICEF launched the first-ever child safeguarding policy for daycares in Lebanon in collaboration with the American University of Beirut. Specifically, it outlines practical steps for day care centers to uphold child safeguarding, clear and safe recruitment guidelines, mandatory training for all personnel on child protection principles, and effective reporting and response systems for safeguarding concerns from low-level risks to serious harm.⁶⁴

In the health sector, the Health Ministry, co-funded by the European Union Humanitarian Aid, launched a health initiative aimed to improve the lives of children suffering from gastrointestinal or urinary diseases that require surgery in Lebanon. More than 1,100 children and newborns across the country have received life-saving surgeries under this initiative.⁶⁵

Finally, Lebanon's first rehabilitation center for minors opened its doors in Warwar, Baabda that is set to accommodate more than 100 minors who were previously held in Roumieh Prison.⁶⁶ Inaugurated by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Internal Security Force (ISF), the European Union (EU), and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and funded by the EU, the center is set to be in line with international practices and standards, with the minors receiving tailored rehabilitation programs, which include social and psychological support, as well as activities that promote vocational and life skills training in order to assist their successful reintegration into society.⁶⁷ This project builds on a pioneering initiative launched in 2003 when the UNODC supported the establishment of a rehabilitation center for girls in conflict with the law near Dahr el-Bachek Hospital.⁶⁸ Additionally, it serves as a part of a broader program aimed at strengthening rule of law through a human rights-based criminal justice system in Lebanon, in line with the Mandela Rules. This new center thus tackles deeper systemic issues found within the juvenile justice sector, as it attempts to shift from a punitive to a rehabilitative approach, directly aligning with Law 422 and international standards, as well as promoting non-custodial measures. It also works on enhancing professional capacity within the center's staff, as the center is requiring specialized staff skilled in child-centered justice.

64 UNICEF. (2025, April 24). Ministry of Public Health and UNICEF Launch First-Ever Child Safeguarding Policy for Daycares in Lebanon. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/press-releases/ministry-public-health-and-unicef-launch-first-ever-child-safeguarding-policy>

65 L'Orient Today. (2025, June 11). Over 1,100 children underwent life-saving surgeries through EU program in Lebanon. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1464080/over-1100-children-receive-life-saving-surgeries-through-eu-program-in-lebanon.html>

66 L'Orient Today. (2025, May 29). Lebanon's first rehabilitation center for minors opens its doors in Baabda. Retrieved from <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1462202/lebanons-first-rehabilitation-center-for-minors-opens-its-doors-in-baabda.html>

67 Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon. (2025, May 28). Inauguration of an EU Funded Rehabilitation Centre for Boys in Conflict with the Law. Retrieved from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/inauguration-eu-funded-rehabilitation-centre-boys-conflict-law_en

68 UNODC. (2025). PRESS RELEASE: A Collaborative Milestone in Lebanon: Inauguration of the Rehabilitation Center for Children/Boys in Conflict with the Law. Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/romena/en/press/2025/May/a-collaborative-milestone-in-lebanon_inauguration-of-the-rehabilitation-center-for-children-boys-in-conflict-with-the-law.html

