

Freedom of Expression, Access to justice, Right to fair trial, Independence of the judiciary, Enforced Disappearance



The Lebanese Center for
Human Rights - CLDH

Geneva – Switzerland

UPR Info Pre-sessions

November 27th, 2025



Context

2020

- Beirut Port explosion → justice system overwhelmed & obstructed
- COVID-19 crisis → detention conditions collapse + court delays
- First wave of intimidation against protesters & journalists

2021

- UPR recommendations not implemented
- Judicial paralysis begins
- Accountability bodies inactive

2022

- Crackdown on journalists, human-rights defenders & LGBTIQ+ events intensifies
- Political interference in judicial appointments escalates
- Prison overcrowding + medical neglect become chronic

2023

- High-profile investigations freeze due to political obstruction
- Prison infrastructure & rehabilitation services deteriorate further
- Civil society documentation increases but enforcement remains zero

2023

- Southern border hostilities → expanded security powers with little oversight
- Forced deportations + discriminatory municipal curfews against refugees
- Fair-trial violations (delayed hearings, denied lawyers) become systematic

Judicial Independence: Implementation of Previous Recommendations

- No reforms to depoliticize judicial appointments or strengthen independence.
- NHRC and CPT remain non-operational due to missing decrees.
- Weak enforcement of anti-corruption mandates persists.



Access to Justice: Implementation of Previous Recommendations

- Partial implementation of the Right to Access to Information Law; major gaps remain.
- Anti-Corruption Commission lacks power to enforce decisions.
- Limited progress on strengthening legal aid or administrative justice.
- Pre-trial detention is routinely prolonged due to systemic case delays, misapplication of sentencing, and failure to transport detainees to courts.
- Inequitable access to counsel and inconsistent due-process guarantees obstruct fair trial rights.





Access to Justice: New Developments

High levels of non-compliance with information requests by ministries.



Labor courts and key judicial bodies remain non-functional.



Article 47 safeguards only minimally implemented.

Judicial Independence: New Developments

- Continued political interference in major investigations.
- Judicial bodies lack resources, staffing, and structural independence.
- Labor judiciary remains paralyzed, delaying access to justice.





Access to Justice: New Needs

- Introduce penalties for non-compliance with transparency laws.
- Reactivate labor courts and expand legal aid resources.
- Create a centralized national platform for public information.
- Guarantee timely hearings and access to legal representation from the investigation phase onward.
- Standardise sentencing calculations and bail procedures; release detainees held beyond lawful duration; apply alternative measures.
- Create safeguards against arbitrary detention.

Judicial Independence: New Needs



- Comprehensive judicial independence reforms and safeguards.
- Full operationalization of NHRC and CPT with proper funding.
- Strengthening judicial authority to enforce anti-corruption decisions.

Right to Fair Trial: Implementation of Previous Recommendations

- Military courts continue to try civilians, including minors.
- No progress on preventing torture or implementing SPT recommendations.
- High rates of pretrial detention remain unchanged.



Right to Fair Trial: New Developments

- Violations of Article 47 safeguards during investigations.
- No CCTV in interrogation rooms; torture practices persist.
- Inhumane detention conditions and overcrowding.





Right to Fair Trial: New Needs

1

Restrict military jurisdiction and end civilian trials before military courts by abolishing the military court.

2

Ensure implementation of Article 47 safeguards with proper monitoring.

3

Install CCTV in interrogation rooms and publish SPT report.

4

Establish a post-release support system to reduce recidivism.

5

Ensure the separation of children from adults and expand alternative sentencing mechanisms.

Enforced Disappearance: Implementation of Previous Recommendations

- The National Commission for the Missing Persons exists in law but is **not operational**.
- No data has been released, and no cooperation has taken place to uncover the truth.
- Lebanon has not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; it signed the convention in 2007 but has not completed the ratification process.



Enforced Disappearance: New Developments

- No visible role was seen in connecting with the victims appeared after the collapse of the previous Syrian Regime.



Enforced Disappearance: New Needs



- Immediately activate the National Commission and grant it full access to all archives and security agency records.
- Lebanon must ratify the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.



Freedom of Expression: Implementation of Previous Recommendations

- Non-implementation of reforms to defamation laws and protection for journalists.

- Continued military prosecution of journalists and activists.

- Lack of action to ensure safe environments for journalists.



Freedom of Expression: New Developments

- Rise in censorship, summons, and prosecutions under vague defamation laws.

- Increased use of military courts for civilians expressing opinions.

- Journalists killed or injured in the South without accountability.



Freedom of Expression: New Needs

- Decriminalization of defamation and legal protection for expression.

- Ending military trials of civilians; reforming censorship laws.

- Strengthening safety mechanisms for journalists and media outlets.

Final Reflection

- Lebanon has reached a point where partial reforms no longer shift outcomes. Even when laws exist; their institutional anchors remain deliberately disabled.
- Impunity now functions through “institutional inertia.” Authorities do not need to openly violate rights; they simply allow key bodies to remain non-operational and investigations to stall indefinitely.
- 2025 demonstrates that political interference is not episodic but operationalised. The same structures obstruct Beirut Blast accountability, torture accountability, judicial timelines, and enforced disappearance investigations.
- Accountability gaps are widening even as documentation increases. Civil society is producing more evidence, but state response capacity is shrinking — not because of lack of institutions, but because they are intentionally kept inactive.
- Lebanon’s human rights deterioration is no longer explained by crisis; it is explained by governance design. Keeping courts slow, commissions unfunded, and decree issuance suspended has become a political tool.



Thank you



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