

3. Legal system and the judiciary

3.1 Judicial system

Lebanon's legal system is based on civil law rooted in the Roman legal tradition, with the judiciary operating under codified civil and criminal procedural laws and legal processes conducted mainly through written submissions,¹⁹³ in a centralised judicial system composed primarily of ordinary courts organised in three levels, which handle both civil and criminal matters, alongside separate administrative and specialised courts.¹⁹⁴

Lebanon's judiciary includes the Court of Cassation (*Mahkamat al-Tamyiz*), Courts of Appeal (*Mahakim al-Istinaf*), Civil Courts (*Al-Mahakim al-Madaniyya*), Criminal Courts (*Al-Mahakim al-Jazaiyya*), Religious Courts (*Al-Mahakim al-Shariyya*), the State Council (*Majlis Shura al-Dawla*), the Military Court (*Al-Mahkama al-Askariyya*), and the Labor Arbitration Council (*Majlis al-Amal al-Tahkimi*).¹⁹⁵

Although Lebanon lacks court-administered alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, arbitration remains the sole officially recognised method, governed by the Civil Procedure Law, which empowers courts to appoint arbitrators when parties fail to agree and grants them exclusive authority to enforce or annul arbitral awards.¹⁹⁶ Mediation in Lebanon is governed by two laws: Judicial Mediation under Law 82 of 2018 allows courts to refer civil and commercial disputes to mediation with the parties' consent but excludes cases related to personal status, criminal matters, bankruptcy, and inheritance; Conventional Mediation under Law 286 of 2022 enables parties to voluntarily choose mediators outside of court, with both frameworks requiring neutrality and confidentiality.¹⁹⁷ No other source could be found to corroborate this information within the time constraints of this report.

The Court of Cassation serves as the highest judicial authority,¹⁹⁸ where decisions from the Courts of Appeal may be contested. Below it are the Courts of Appeal, which function as second-level appellate courts, and beneath them are the first-instance Civil Courts, which have jurisdiction over civil matters.¹⁹⁹ There are also Administrative Courts, where the State Council (known as the *Majlis al Shura* in Arabic and *Conseil d'Etat* in French²⁰⁰) is Lebanon's highest administrative court.²⁰¹

In addition, there are various specialised courts, including religious courts, which deal with matters within their specific areas such as personal status, and military courts.²⁰² Freedom House observed that military courts in Lebanon have assumed jurisdiction not only in cases concerning alleged espionage and militancy but also in proceedings involving human rights activists and protesters.²⁰³

Criminal Courts act as both trial and appellate courts for felonies and misdemeanours.²⁰⁴ For more information on Criminal Courts, see section [3.1.2 Criminal law and courts](#).

In addition, the Constitutional Council examines matters related to elections and the constitutionality of laws, and the Commercial Courts are responsible for commercial disputes.²⁰⁵

The Supreme Judicial Council,²⁰⁶ also known as the High Judicial Council (HJC),²⁰⁷ is presided by the First President of the Court of Cassation or Chief Justice,²⁰⁸ and is mandated to appoint and train all judges

in Lebanon.²⁰⁹

The HJC is an independent and self-governing judicial body and is responsible for overseeing the selection, appointment, transfer, promotion, and disciplinary proceedings of judges and prosecutors.²¹⁰ In recent years, Lebanon's judiciary has faced challenges to its independence due to political influence, official complaints from senior officials, and criticism of judges through social and mainstream media.²¹¹ In July 2025, Lebanon's parliament adopted a new law on judicial independence, which Human Rights Watch considers a positive step for enhancing judicial self-governance, but notes that it still falls short of fully safeguarding the HJC's autonomy and limiting executive influence.²¹² The HJC welcomed the law, noting that some provisions strengthen judicial independence, while others continue to fall short of fully safeguarding the judiciary.²¹³

193

Obeid & Partners, Litigation 2025, Lebanon, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

194

Obeid & Partners, Litigation 2025, Lebanon, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

195

Gherbal Initiative, ????? ??????? ??????? ??????? [Citizen's Guide to the Lebanese Judiciary], information observed on 8 October 2025, [url](#); Lebanon, Ministry of Justice, Lebanon courts, information observed on 8 October 2025, [url](#)

196

Feghali, G, Lebanon, Weinstein International Foundation, 2 April 2024, [url](#)

197

LG, Alternative dispute resolution law at Lebanon, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

198

Eid Jreissati, L., Introducing the Lebanese legal system and research, Globalex, NYU, Law, March/April 2025, [url](#); SALAH Mattar Law Firm, Lebanon Legal System, n.d., [url](#)

199

Eid Jreissati, L., Introducing the Lebanese legal system and research, Globalex, NYU, Law, March/April 2025, [url](#)

200

Eid Jreissati, L., Introducing the Lebanese legal system and research, Globalex, NYU, Law, March/April 2025, [url](#); TIMEP, Towards an independent judicial branch in Lebanon? Part 2: The Administrative Judiciary, 26 October 2021, [url](#)

201

AI, Lebanon: Landmark Shura Council decision must mark a turning point in ending impunity for torture, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

202

Obeid & Partners, Litigation 2025, Lebanon, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

203

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Lebanon, 2025, [url](#), section F2

204

Eid Jreissati, L., Introducing the Lebanese legal system and research, Globalex, NYU, Law, March/April 2025, [url](#)

205

Eid Jreissati, L, Introducing the Lebanese legal system and research, Globalex, NYU, Law, March/April 2025, [url](#)

206

NNA, Three new members of Supreme Judicial Council take oath before president Aoun at Baabda Palace, 30 May 2025, [url](#); The Legal Agenda, The government's first bill on the path to judicial reform: positive, negatives, and recommendations for improvement, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

207

RRRF, Functional review of the justice system in Lebanon, December 2023, [url](#), p. 5

208

SALAH Mattar Law Firm, Lebanon Legal System, n.d., [url](#)

209

Eid Jreissati, L, Introducing the Lebanese legal system and research, Globalex, NYU, Law, March/April 2025, [url](#)

210

RRRF, Functional review of the justice system in Lebanon, December 2023, [url](#), p. 5

211

BTI, BTI 2024 Country Report, Lebanon, 19 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 12-14

212

HRW, Lebanon: Judicial Reforms Positive, But Fall Short, 15 August 2025, [url](#)

213

This is Beirut, HJC Backs Judicial Law but Warns of Gaps, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu