

3.1.2. Criminal law and courts

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Criminal law in Lebanon is based on a civil law framework, influenced by French legal traditions and elements of Islamic jurisprudence in certain areas. The legal system is founded on the Lebanese Penal Code, originally enacted in 1943 and subsequently amended on multiple occasions.226

According to the Gherbal Initiative, a Lebanese nonprofit organisation, in Lebanon, each Governorate headquarters hosts one or more criminal courts, composed of a president and two consultants. Sessions are held in the presence of the Public Prosecutor (or Attorney General) and a court clerk.227 Lebanon's judicial system includes ordinary criminal courts from the Penal Single Judge to the Court of Cassation, as well as special courts such as the Judicial Council and the Juvenile Court, each with defined jurisdictions under specific legal frameworks.228

In Lebanon, criminal cases are filed in courts based on the location of the crime, the defendant's residence, or the location of the defendant's arrest.229 Offences are classified as felonies and misdemeanours under the Penal Code, and penalties range from fines and short-term imprisonment for minor crimes such as theft (*sariqa*) and assault (*zarʿ al-ʿudwān*) to long-term imprisonment or, rarely, the death penalty for serious crimes such as murder (*qatl*), rape (*iznāʾ*), terrorism, drug trafficking, corruption, or organised crime.230

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