

3.1.3. Access to justice

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The Lebanese legal system recognises equal access to justice and courts, including legal aid for those lacking financial means.231 In civil cases, applicants must demonstrate poverty through a statement from the local authorities and a tax notice, while in criminal cases it can be granted by a judge, and managed by the Beirut and Tripoli Bar Associations, who handle funds for legal aid and assign lawyers to represent applicants, since the state does not contribute to legal aid. 232

During detention or arrest, the accused person is granted the right to contact a family member, an employer, a lawyer of their choice, or an acquaintance; to hire a sworn translator if they do not understand Arabic; and the right to request, directly or through a representative or family member that the Public Prosecutor refer them for a medical examination.233

Individuals in Lebanon can report a crime to a local police station234 or go directly to the public prosecutor's office, the body responsible for receiving complaints and initiating investigations. 235

In an interview with the EUAA, Daher stated that 'the deeply embedded system of sectarian loyalty [in Lebanon] undermines the authority of central state institutions, including the judiciary, whose powers are regularly overshadowed by the influence of sectarian leaders',236 which Freedom House similarly described as lacking independence, with political leaders exerting significant influence over judicial appointments, decisions, and processes.237 Access to justice for the poorest and most marginalised populations in Lebanon has been severely undermined by several factors, including political and economic crisis, widespread corruption, and an inadequate legal framework.238

According to the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, corruption within Lebanon's courts, such as bribery and outside interference, has become part of the daily routine, a problem that has worsened since the economic collapse, and further eroded public trust in the judiciary.239

Lebanon's legal system remains in deep crisis, with poorly paid judges, frequent court closures due to power outages, lack of basic resources, delayed trials, and blocked politically sensitive investigations, all of which undermine access to justice and public confidence.240 In addition, prison conditions in Lebanon remain dire, with severe overcrowding, inadequate food, and limited access to healthcare, particularly affecting pretrial detainees.241

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