

7. Treatment of specific groups

7.1. Women and girls

7.1.1 Violence against women and girls

Lebanon's existing legislation includes the 2014 Law No. 293 on protection from domestic violence, as amended by Law No. 204 of 2020,[495] and the 2020 Law No. 205 criminalising sexual harassment.[496] The law on domestic violence,[497] was described as falling short of covering the full spectrum of gender-based violence (GBV), including marital rape, and to be hindered by poor application, limited enforcement[498] and the primacy of religious laws over civil law.[499] In 2017, Article 522 of the Penal Code was repealed. This article allowed perpetrators of rape to avoid prosecution by marrying their victims.[500] According to international human rights organisation Equality Now, despite the repeal of Article 522, impunity for rape persists in practice. Families or clans of victims, including minor girls, have at times compelled marriage between the perpetrator and the survivor to avoid public scandal, particularly in rural areas. Civil society sources reported that some judicial officials had occasionally suggested such marriages, notwithstanding their legal duty to uphold the law.[501] Furthermore, other articles concerning the possibility of perpetrators to avoid prosecution or imprisonment when marrying a minor with whom they had sexual intercourse, remained in force.[502]

Equality Now noted that rape survivors in Lebanon face multiple barriers to justice, including limited awareness of legal procedures, intimidation by perpetrators, and financial constraints in accessing qualified legal representation. Structural deficiencies within the criminal justice system, such as inadequate training, prolonged case resolution, and lenient sentencing, contributed to low conviction rates and mistrust, while gender-biased attitudes among judges further hindered fair outcomes.[503]

The judicial processing of domestic violence cases was also described as slow[504] and ineffective by LIBNANEWS.[505]

Incidents of GBV against women and girls in Lebanon were reported to have increased in recent years,[506] despite a decline of reporting of such incidents as a result of the ongoing security challenges.[507] Assessments carried out in 2024—including a GBV safety audit,[508] GBVIMS (Gender-based Violence Information Management System) data analysis,[509] and a multi-sectoral study[510]—consistently indicated that domestic and sexual violence were widespread.[511] Intimate partner violence and family violence remained a prevalent form of GBV, with survivors describing frequent psychological, physical, and economic abuse within the household.

512 Marital rape was further identified as a pervasive513 but legally unrecognised form of violence.514

Sexual violence - including rape, assault, and harassment - was reported across both private and public settings, including workplaces, transport hubs, displacement shelters, and urban neighbourhoods, with refugees and displaced women being particularly at risk.515 According to LIBNANEWS, street harassment was a daily reality for many Lebanese women,516 with Diab elaborating that its manifestations differed depending on a person's gender expression, nationality, and socio-economic background. Syrian refugee women reported that perpetrators frequently targeted them due to stereotypes of them being 'sexually available or "exchangeable" for material favors'.517 Furthermore, migrant domestic workers under the *kafala* (sponsorship) system faced workplace violence and exploitation, including sexual harassment518 and lacked access to justice.519 Patterns of violence varied between urban and rural settings.520 Informal urban settlements,521 (where housing lacks legal land rights or regulatory compliance) —especially in Tripoli and disadvantaged districts of Beirut— emerged as hotspots for harassment, intimate partner violence, and assaults in public spaces.522 According to Equality Now, survivors of sexual violence often refrained from undergoing medical examinations that could provide evidence of rape needed for trial, due to taboos surrounding sexuality and fears of family or community rejection as 'impure', leading to isolation and possible economic marginalisation.523

Forced marriage524 as well as child marriage remained widespread, with the latter particularly prevalent among Syrian refugee girls aged 11 to 17525 as well as Lebanese communities in difficult financial situations, such as those displaced by conflict.526 Furthermore, rural areas - including the Bekaa Valley, Akkar, and South Lebanon - continued to show elevated rates of child marriage.527 GBV experts as well as community members further regularly observed online harassment, digital blackmail and stalking, with teenage girls, migrant workers, and women in roles with high public exposure being disproportionately targeted.528

The Internal Security Forces' hotline recorded 615 domestic violence complaints between January and October 2024, excluding March 2024.529 In May 2025, the hotline received 74 complaints of physical violence, 69 in June 2025,530 and 59 in July 2025.531 In August 2025 the number of recorded complaints rose to 90 cases of physical violence, 10 cases of psychological abuse, 2 cases of sexual violence, and no cases classified as economic or other forms of abuse.532 In comparison, the NGO KAFA recorded 862 reports of domestic violence between January and July 2025, described an 18 % increase compared to the same period in 2024.533 According to the founder and director of the Lebanese NGO ABAAD, reliable data on femicide remained unavailable due to insufficient documentation, with only cases logged by the Internal Security Forces, reported by the media, or court-pursued recorded.534 A survey from 2021 by local NGO ABAAD found that 96 % of violence against women went unreported by survivors.535 According to the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) violence often went unreported due to cultural norms that instil fear of retaliation and stigma.536

Access to protection and response services, including shelters, remained limited, with survivors facing multiple barriers to support.537 Awareness of available services was low.538 Safe shelters were scarce – with six shelters throughout the country, including three in Beirut539 – and often inaccessible due to documentation requirements, restrictive admission criteria, and

discriminatory practices—particularly for refugees, undocumented migrants, single women, and LGBTIQ persons.540 Women and girls with disabilities highlighted the virtual nonexistence of adapted GBV services and elevated risks of neglect, while older women faced additional obstacles as many shelters refused to admit those over 60.541 When shelter access was granted, survivors described overcrowded facilities with little privacy and only temporary stays.542 Sexual and reproductive health services were defined as disjointed, expensive, and insufficiently accessible for unmarried women, LGBTIQ persons, and individuals with disabilities. In addition, care approaches that were trauma-sensitive and survivor-focused,543 as well as cooperation across health, legal, and shelter sectors, were characterised as largely lacking.544 Interruptions in services in remote and insecure conflict-affected areas, including South Lebanon and the Bekaa, further restricted access to GBV assistance.545

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