

7.1.3. Discrimination in personal status matters

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The Lebanese Constitution guarantees equality; however, Article 9 authorises each religious community to apply its own personal status laws in matters such as marriage, divorce, and custody.554 As a result, 15 separate religion-based personal status codes are in force as of March 2025, producing substantial inconsistencies in the rights of women depending on religious affiliation.555 In the absence of a unified civil code, jurisdiction lies exclusively with religious courts.556 For more information on personal status law, see section 3.1.1 Personal Status Law.

Discriminatory provisions are embedded across confessional codes.557 While men are generally required to be 18 years old to marry, all sects permit the marriage of girls under 18.558 Women are deprived of equality in marriage and divorce559 and are typically excluded from guardianship of children following divorce, with the Armenian Orthodox community constituting the only exception. Custody rights for mothers are narrowly circumscribed,560 including various age requirements of the children.561 The nationality law further institutionalises discrimination by granting Lebanese men, but not women, the ability to confer nationality to their children and foreign spouses.562 Women's rights organisations continued to advocate for a unified personal status law and for reforms guaranteeing equal rights in custody, marriage, divorce, and nationality.563

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