

7.4. Journalists and media workers

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7.4.1. Threats and harassment against journalists and media workers

Journalists and media workers in Lebanon continued to operate in a restrictive environment marked by surveillance,617 harassment,618 intimidation,619 and legal prosecution.620 The ongoing political and economic crisis further exacerbated risks to the media. Journalists described arbitrary restrictions and digital harassment as obstacles to reporting, alongside direct intimidation and threats to their physical safety, including arbitrary arrests.621 Authorities monitored social media and electronic communications of journalists and security forces were reported to have infiltrated online groups used by activists.622

The persistent use of criminal defamation provisions remained one of the central mechanisms of pressure on the media.623 Defamation and insult laws were repeatedly applied against journalists and critics, particularly those investigating allegations of corruption or mismanagement.624 Amnesty International documented more than 15 cases of individuals summoned for interrogation between 2023 and mid-2025, noting that security and military agencies frequently deviated from standard procedures.625 In several cases, those summoned were not informed of the accusations beforehand, raising concerns regarding due process.626 Interrogated individuals were often pressured to delete content and sign pledges of silence.627 Following interrogation, individuals were generally not informed whether the charges against them would be dismissed. Even when cases did not advance to court, the summonses and interrogations functioned as a deterrent to free expression, according to Amnesty International.628

Several high-profile cases in 2024 and 2025 illustrated this trend. In June 2024, journalist Azza al-Hajj Hassan was sued by a parliamentarian and former judge on charges of libel and defamation after publishing an article examining links between politicians and bankers. In October 2024, Lebanese Syrian journalist Alia Mansour, deputy editor of NOW Lebanon, was detained for several hours after a fake social media account impersonating her allegedly interacted with Israeli social media users.629

Investigative journalists reporting on financial misconduct were subjected to continuous pressure. In July 2025, the chairman of Société Générale de Banque au Liban (SGBL), Antoun Sehnaoui, filed a defamation complaint against two journalists from Naqd media,630 an independent Lebanese media platform.631 In spring of the same year, Daraj Media and Megaphone News were summoned for interrogation by the Cassation Public Prosecution Office

after they were accused of undermining the state's financial standing, destabilising the currency, inciting deposit withdrawals, and conspiring against state security.632 The complaint followed critical reporting on certain candidates for the Central Bank governorship and on Lebanon's financial crisis.633 Rights groups warned that these lawsuits amounted to an attempt by financial and political elites to instrumentalise the judicial system to intimidate independent media and restrict scrutiny.634

The harassment extended beyond legal measures. Journalists reported physical threats, violent attacks and online harassment, often linked to supporters of political factions.635 Social media platforms were used to target reporters with smear campaigns, death threats,636 and accusations of treason.637 In some cases, physical intimidation was reported.638 In 2024, journalist and television presenter Eman Shweikh announced her resignation from MTV after receiving death threats and repeated harassment that were attributed to supporters of Hezbollah. She described being followed home, pursued in public, and her family being harassed, which led her to leave her position out of concern for her and her family's safety.639 Public opinion in Lebanon also contributed to an increasingly hostile environment. Journalists covering sensitive issues such as refugees, gender, and minority rights were accused of promoting Western agendas, leading to additional threats. Political activists, particularly Hezbollah loyalists, were reported to have engaged in intimidation campaigns, including threats directed at reporters.640 Lebanese authorities repeatedly failed to safeguard journalists from threats and acts of violence perpetrated by political, religious, and other influential groups.641

From October 2023 until the end of 2024, a minimum of nine journalists were reported killed in Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon, with several casualties involving individuals visibly identified as press and located away from active conflict areas.642 On 25 October 2024, an Israeli strike hit a residence in Hasbaya housing 18 journalists, killing three,643 with the attacks being condemned as deliberate targeting of the press.644 According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), killings of journalists in Lebanon remained unpunished.645

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