



**Universal Periodic Review
(UPR) Second Round**
< Lebanon >



Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Second Round ◀ Lebanon ▶

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Introduction

◀ Lebanon between the Reality and the Intentions ▶

Lebanon participated in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in Geneva in 2015 and presented its report before the Human Rights Council (HRC) for the second time after year 2010. Lebanon received 147 recommendations in the first round, 100 of which were accepted, in addition to 257 recommendations in the second round, 139 of which were accepted. Lebanon will be absent from the midterm reporting session, which will be held later this year (2018).

The UPR process is a key mechanism for human rights accountability, including the midterm report, which is a follow-up and monitoring tool to assess States' compliance with the recommendations received. Despite the lack of binding mechanisms, the report is crucial for determining the human rights status in the country, particularly the pressing issues that have grabbed the attention of HRC Members States, such as the Syrian refugees and gender equality issues.

The importance of the UPR process lies in its recognition of the role of stakeholders, including the civil society as full partners enabling them to present their assessments and allowing a multilateral dialogue on human rights violations and recommendations. Over 40 civil society organizations in Lebanon, including national and regional networks, have formed a coalition to prepare this report, which addresses the following issues: civic and political rights, economic and social rights, women's rights, children's rights, refugees' rights and disabled persons' rights.

The report is the outcome of decades of experience in the field of human rights, whereby civil society organizations advocated for and monitored all the progress and violations. The participation of civil society organizations as representatives of diverse and marginalized social groups, especially grass-roots organizations, is a contribution towards the democratic and inclusive approach of the UPR process.

Lebanon's modern history, especially after the Taif Agreement, is fraught with human rights violations. The war indeed ended, yet without the establishment of a lasting and sustainable civil peace. Lebanon went through difficult times, especially after repeated Israeli wars and assaults, and the explosion of political disputes following the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation, which led to a series of political assassinations. Lebanon was also exposed to the implications of recurrent crises in the region at various political, economic and social levels. All these events combined have contributed to the failure to comply with the human rights obligations enshrined in international law. For instance, political participation is based on sectarian quotas responsible for the formulation of unfair civil rights to women, and the remarkable decline in political freedoms, especially freedom of expression where many activists are being arrested because of a publication or a tweet on social media. Economic and social rights' violations are also numerous, especially in regards to employment policies that lack the human rights approach and are not in line with the international conventions to which Lebanon is party to, in addition to the absence of a comprehensive and integrated social protection system. The patriarchal culture and ideologies continue to overlook laws, thus increasing discrimination between women and men, as for instance recurrent in personal status laws, penal code and trade laws. Although the official discourse in Lebanon is focused on the «refugee crisis», there's a lack of strategy that deals with this issue from a human rights perspective that guarantees the dignity of refugees, maintains stability in the country, ensures refugees' safe return to Syria, or proposes resettlement

mechanisms to third countries.

The UPR process coincides with Lebanon's submission of the Voluntary National Review on sustainable development before the UN High-Level Political Forum, which evaluates the conformity of the economic and social conditions and political and civic rights with the sustainable development objectives and Agenda 2030. By far, the sustainable development goals are in line with the human rights principles, first the right to development and then the issues of governance, democracy, peace, security, the rule of law and the achievement of justice and personal security.

Lebanon's contribution to these international events must not be a routine procedure that does not lead to a real change in applied policies. Today, it is essential that these events constitute the beginning of a shift in order to limit the human rights violations, attempt to improve the economic and social conditions of individuals, and reduce discrimination and marginalization, as part of an integrated national strategy concerned with the rights of all groups without exception.

The Lebanese Constitution asserts equality of individuals without discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, sect, gender or social position, as well as the freedom of belief, opinion and expression.

The Constitution also affirmed Lebanon's commitments to human rights law and the various covenants and aimed to reflect them in all fields. In May 2018, Lebanon elected a new parliament, following five years of extension and postponement. Despite the gaps in the electoral process in terms of legislative framework and practice, the election of a new parliament, the consequent formation of a new government and the renewal of institutions may provide an opportunity to improve the human rights situation in Lebanon and work towards full ratification of international conventions, withdrawing reservations, amending laws and policies, and implementing mechanisms of protection, transparency and accountability.

This report highlights the most prominent violations of human rights in Lebanon and presents the recommendations that should be taken into account. This report was achieved thanks to the contribution of civil society, which is a key partner for enhancing human rights records and achieving sustainable development.

Ziad Abdel Samad – Arab NGO Network for Development



◀ Economic and Social Rights ▶

- Arab NGO Network for Development
- Lebanese Labor Watch (Al Marsad)
- Mouvement Social

Overview:

During its second Universal Periodic Review (UPR), held on November 93 ,2015 States made 257 recommendations to Lebanon; Lebanon accepted 139 of them. This report provides an assessment on the implementation of the recommendations received; with a focus on economic and social rights. It serves as a midterm report before the 3rd cycle review that will take place in 2020.

The following chapter categorizes these recommendations under 5 groupings; namely:

- Recommendations in relation to International Instruments for the promotion and protection of economic and social rights: assessing the progress and regress on the normative framework
- Recommendations in relation to labor rights: assessing the right to work with general recommendations and in subsections focusing on the child labor, migrants workers' rights, Palestinian workers rights, people with disabilities
- Recommendations in relation to the right to health: assessing social protection
- Recommendations in relation to the right to education
- Recommendations in relation to the adequate standard of living: focusing on the situation of poverty, redistribution

Rights-based action plan; inclusive approach is taken as key indicators for the assessment, together with data availability for each recommendations' implementation and a rating is given either as NO PROGRESS, LIMITED PROGRESS and PROGRESS for each section. Most of the economic and social rights related recommendations have no or limited progress.

Indeed, an overall assessment shows that Lebanon is slow in progress, with minimal action taken due to lack of strong political will to address ongoing human rights violations. There is no implementation plan- a Road Map- that would help Lebanon overcome sporadic actions. In this context, Lebanon's UPR engagement is a standalone act; rather than a process reflecting commitment to promotion and protection of human rights for all in the country. On the other hand, as in many other country cases economic and social rights recommendations directed to Lebanon remain broad; that turns into a challenge for measurement of progress. However, it is obvious that addressing economic and social rights violations in Lebanon requires a holistic approach and revision of social and economic policies to ensure their alignment with the rights-based development approach. In this context, there are several steps¹ that should be taken by the government including:

- Adopting a new and comprehensive approach to address inequalities, unemployment, poverty reduction and social marginalization. This includes a shift to productive economy enhancing inclusive growth that generates jobs. This requires reviewing trade and investment policies to diversify the job market and adopting a tax system that stimulates local productivity
- Transforming the overall government approach to development, and reconsider the way social protection is understood in Lebanon: As the right of social protection is part of redistribution policies, programs should be based on the principle of equitable distribution of wealth. There is a need to adopt social policies that increase the scope of coverage to

tackle discrimination against most vulnerable groups and ensure their inclusion in society. It is also crucial to ensure the adoption of fair taxation based on a progressive direct taxation

- and to avoid the negative impacts deriving from VAT increase.
- With regard to the right to work, labor laws need to be implemented, and amendments need to be introduced in line with international commitments. All discriminatory clauses need to be removed and the gender gap addressed. This includes canceling the sponsorship system to which domestic workers are subject and granting Palestinian and other refugees' full rights in the Social Security and the right to join and practice liberal professions.
- Addressing disparities in education requires enhancing the quality of public education, implementing strategies aimed at supporting public schools in rural areas and ensuring Syrian refugees' enrollment in schools.
- Revisiting socio-economic policy choices should aim towards achieving equitable partnership for women. This requires their integration in development plans and programs and providing the necessary resources. Focus should be put on the question of budgets in general and especially budget allocations towards targeting equality between the sexes. It is also important to integrate the needs of women in national strategies, budgets and programs, based on equality and the classification of data according to gender.

Furthermore, it is crucial to make an assessment on UPR recommendations with a holistic approach, thus taking into consideration the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in Lebanon. In this regard; Lebanon still lacks a comprehensive national strategy on rights-based development. Adoption of a national strategy ensuring the integration of 5Ps (people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnership) and localization of the Agenda is vital for advancing human rights; and addressing human rights violations. A quantitative approach aiming at meeting targets set by Goals is only short-sighted and does not address the root causes of the structural challenges. In this context, this report is an occasion to stress on the need for a strong political will for monitoring and fulfilling Lebanon's human rights obligations at human rights monitoring mechanisms like UPR, treaty bodies but as well in follow up of the High Level Political Forum 2018, during which Lebanon had its first Voluntary National Review. Monitoring should be a tool for enhancing accountability and must be done with a holistic approach. In relation, Lebanon should establish a follow-up mechanism aiming at adopting a national action plan for UPR and in line with a national development agenda- that should be adopted without further delay. Current institutional structures including NHRI and the National Committee for SDGS should be used to ensure inclusive, multi-stakeholder and transparent national dialogue in Lebanon in the planning, adoption and implementation of these plans.

¹ These recommendations were provided by civil society groups in Lebanon in their assessment of the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and in response to addressing structural challenges in Lebanon. This report considers them vital in relation to state's duty to protect, promote and fulfill economic and social rights.

International Instruments for the promotion and protection of economic and social rights

Recommendations received:

- Ratify international instruments on human rights to which the country is not yet party
- Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Withdraw its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Ratify various international human rights statutes and conventions, including the Rome Statute and the ILO Conventions Nos. 169 ,87 and 189

Level of implementation: **NO PROGRESS**

Lebanon is state party to core international human rights treaties, yet many others that would advance the situation for vulnerable groups are pending ratification. During the second cycle review, Lebanon 'noted' all recommendations with regard to strengthening the normative framework for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. Of particular importance among these is the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, which once ratified and implemented, "becomes key to changing the situation on the ground for women claiming their rights nationally, regionally and internationally as they offer important additional opportunities to seek accountability". Despite the same recommendation being received in the first cycle review, there has been no progress in its implementation.

Labor rights

As in first cycle, the second cycle review focused mainly on child labor, the Palestinian refugees', people with disabilities and migrant workers' right to work. Although these constitute key problematics for the full enjoyment of the decent right to work by all in Lebanon, there was no focus on the need to adopt comprehensive employment policy and to support the productive sector that generates sustainable and decent employment opportunities. This is despite the fact that unemployment is identified as the root of Lebanon's problems and is in excess of %20 . Unemployment is higher in certain areas of the country, nearly the double in Wadi Khaled (around %58) . Furthermore, "figures show a large gender gap in terms of employment between men (67%) and women (25%).

General Labor-rights related recommendations

Recommendations received:

- Establish a monitoring mechanism to prevent abuse, guarantee decent working conditions and wage payments
- Ensure equal rights to all workers in the country in accordance with international standards
- Pursue efforts to ensure that labor relations between workers and employers are in line with international labor standards
- Work towards additional efforts to promote economic and social rights, to enhance in particular the right to work, education, health and housing

Level of implementation: **NO PROGRESS**

Lack of effective enforcement mechanisms is a key challenge behind the genuine implementation of state obligations deriving from being state party to International conventions (i.e. ICESRs, ILO Conventions) as well as related national labor laws. As put forward by the Legal Agenda, "this weakness is most evident in the sluggish operation of the labor arbitration councils." The cases take long, members and participants in the councils are weak, litigation and the right to seek remedy is denied in a few cases.

Nevertheless, as a positive development, the Economic and Social Council members and president were appointed in 2017 after being inactive for over a decade. The Council should play an active role facilitating social dialogue, and

ensuring multi-stakeholder participation in policy making. General labor rights related recommendations require a proactive institution, which enhances inclusive social dialogue. In respect to the several recommendations directed to Lebanon both in first and second cycle, the labor rights violations for domestic workers require an effective monitoring mechanism to be put in place. As such, %75 of cases received at the embassy of the Philippines "often include a complaint about non-payment of wages", which could be addressed under this mechanism.

Child Labor

Recommendations received:

- Take appropriate steps to address acts of torture of all persons, including migrants in detention, and to tackle the phenomenon of child labor and ensure that all children of school going age have unimpeded access to education
- Develop a strategy to combat child labor
- Implement measures to fight against child labor
- Continue efforts of the Lebanese Government to improve the functioning of the education system, including by advancing the enrolment and by protecting street children from the worst forms of child labor
- Progress on measures to provide psychological and specialized medical services for children victims of abuse, and continue fighting the worst forms of child labor
- Enhance promotion and protection of the rights of the child, including measures against sexual and labor exploitation

Level of implementation: **LIMITED PROGRESS**

With the launch of the "National Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Lebanon by 2016", Lebanon's commitment to withdraw children from streets was made clear. Further steps of progress include coordination for the implementation of the "National Plan to Protect Women and Children" in partnership with UNICEF as well as the development of a code of conduct and coordination mechanism between Internal Security Forces, NGOs and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to address child labor. Level of implementation reflects limited progress; due to these steps taken while, as also admitted by the report presented to the treaty body reviewing child's rights in Lebanon; structural challenges still remain to be addressed; and require immediate action. This include; "the weak coordination at the national and local levels in child rights issues, the lack of allocation and approval of budgets and more political will, awareness, knowledge and human and financial resources to build effective and practical systems for implementing human rights and the rights of the child". Particularly, to eliminate child labor, the issue should be considered as a social phenomenon in collaboration with employment, health and poverty aspects and an effective monitoring system should be put in place, ensuring the implementation of the legislative and regulatory framework.

While recommendations received with regard to child labor had no reference to the Syrian crisis impact; child labor is a big violation for Syrian refugee children rights. As of 2015, around %73 of children living/working (street based children-as defined by UNICEF) are from Syria, whereas %10 from Lebanon, and %8 are Palestinian children. (See Chart 1)

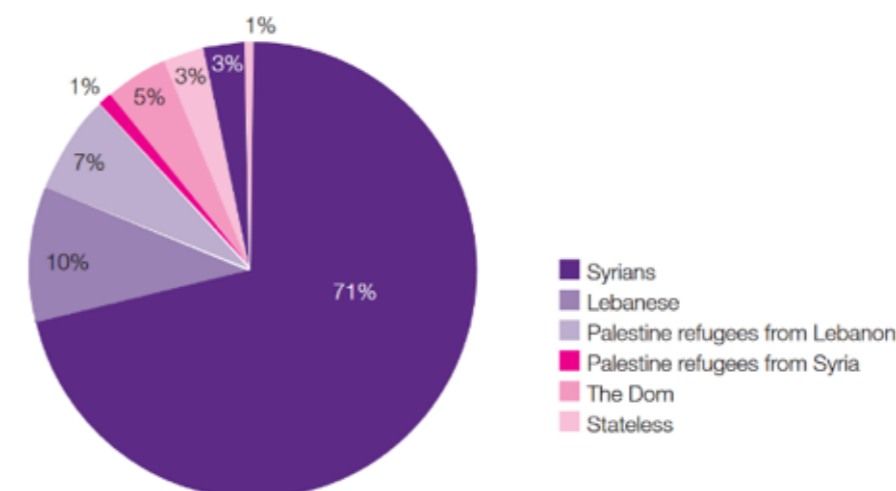


Chart 1

Source: UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/Final_Study_SBC_En.pdf 1).

Same study by UNICEF reveals that children engage in different economic activities: begging (%43) being the most common, followed by street vending (%37). While these being hazardous activities, another sector to witness child labor rise is agriculture. Identified by ILO as one of “the three most dangerous sectors in terms of occupational safety and health, irrespective of the age of the worker, because – in addition to occupational diseases – it results in a high rate of work-related fatalities and non-fatal accidents, largely through use of motorized agricultural machinery” .

To address child labor, but as well to ensure rights of the child, Lebanon should prioritize the adoption of a comprehensive policy on children that encompasses all areas covered by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and with allocation of sufficient human, technical and financial resources for its implementation. Specifically for child labor, further measures should be taken to “prevent children from being economically exploited by ensuring that the relevant provisions of the Labor Code and Penal Code, and other legislation related to child labor, including Decree No. 8987, are enforced, in particular with respect to the minimum age for hazardous work, and harmonize the minimum age of 14 for work with the age of 15 for compulsory education” .

• Palestinian refugees right to work

Recommendations received:

- That the Ministry of Labor accelerates passing the executive decrees of the Labor Law to facilitate access to employment for Palestinians and open the prospect of work in all professional fields
- Improve the situation of refugees by facilitating their registration and by renewing residency permits, by setting up an effective mechanism for birth registration to avoid statelessness of newborn children, and by allowing refugees, including Palestinian refugees, access to segments of the official labor market
- Remove the discriminatory restrictions on access to the labor market for Palestinian refugees

Level of implementation: NO PROGRESS

All the recommendations in relation to Palestinian refugees’ right to work were simply noted by the Lebanese delegation. This reflects a regress compared to similar recommendations being accepted in the first cycle, i.e. calling Lebanon to improve the working possibilities and working conditions of the Palestinian refugees and more specifically calling Lebanon to amend the Labor Law and the Social Security Law granting Palestinian refugees the right to work be made operational as soon as possible. Nevertheless, no concrete action was taken towards ensuring Palestinians’ full access to decent employment opportunities.

One important and positive step is the first-ever census carried out by the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee in -2017 towards providing some statistical information. Covering 12 Palestinian camps and 156 informal «gatherings», the census indicated a lower number than the UNRWA registered refugee number in country (174,422 vs 500.000) .

With regards to the Palestinian refugees’ right to work, several violations and discriminatory practices continue while their unemployment rate stands around %23.2 (in 2015). These violations that require remedial action include :

1. Discrimination in hiring and opportunities for employment due to bureaucracy and stigma and informal restrictions on the types of jobs and industries they can be hired for precarious work due to lack of written contracts (only %14 of the PRL labor force have an employment contract);
2. Violations of decent working conditions including lack of employment benefits (%87 of employed PRL do not benefit from either sick or annual leave), as well as insecure job tenure (%48 of employed PRL are paid on a daily basis, %37 on a by-piece/service basis and %8 work in seasonal employment);
3. Differential treatment in the workplace is also an issue as Palestinian refugees are often unable to access better paid positions and are paid less than their Lebanese counterparts for the same work;
4. Palestinian refugees do not benefit from all social security indemnities knowing that they pay all related fees. They are still deprived of the family compensation, comprehensive health and maternity leave security.

• Migrant workers

Recommendations received:

- Amend the Labor Code to extend legal protection to domestic workers equal to that afforded to other workers and reform the visa sponsorship system so that workers can terminate employment without sponsor consent
- Abolish the «kafala» sponsorship system with regard to migrant domestic workers
- Improve the legal situation of migrant workers
- Further strengthen the promotion and protection of rights of foreign workers
- End the sponsorship system for migrant domestic workers
- Amend the labor code and visa sponsorship system to accord the necessary legal protection to migrant domestic workers on an equal footing with other workers
- Take necessary measures to ensure that effective protection against discrimination in all aspects of their employment is provided to all migrant domestic workers
- Strengthen efforts to improve the well-being of women migrant workers in Lebanon and their rights
- Identify, protect and support victims of trafficking and forced labor

Level of implementation: NO PROGRESS

A key to improving the legal system for migrant workers is namely the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families is still pending in Lebanon. There are around 220,000 migrant domestic workers in Lebanon in an overall workforce of 1.4 million for whom the ratification and effective implementation of this international convention is vital.

On the contrary, kafala system continues to make migrant domestic worker dependent on the employers and as well vulnerable to exploitation . Violations of domestic workers rights include excessive working hours, non-payment of wages, confinement in the work place and in some cases physical and sexual abuse. A 2016 ILO study reveals that:

- The salary levels of MDWs are generally quite low: of surveyed employers, more than %35 paying less than 200\$ a month. As there is no minimum wage for domestic workers in Lebanon, key salary determinants were dependent on employers’ household income and the workers’ nationality;
- The majority of workers (%73.8) do not receive a copy of the contract after signing it,;
- %94.3 of employers surveyed continue to withhold their workers’ passports, as a practice;
- Around %65 of domestic workers are confirmed having experienced a situation of forced labor, servitude, or slavery during their time in Lebanon .

In January 2015, the Domestic Workers Union was set, yet was denounced illegal by Ministry of Labor. In 2016, a Nepalese domestic worker who was part of the union was deported from the country. Human rights groups like HRW noted that her arrest and deportation were due to her active participation in the forum for advocacy of migrant domestic workers’ rights . At least 21 other cases of deportation of domestic workers with children were reported in 2016.

International Domestic Workers Day (June 24th) was taken as an another occasion to shed light on violations faced and immediate remedial actions, calling Lebanese government to abolish the “kafala” system as well as :

- Ratify and implement the International Labor Organization Convention 189, which is founded on the fundamental premise domestic workers are neither ‘servants,’ nor ‘members of the family’ nor second-class workers”;
- Ensure the right for workers to resign and legally stay in Lebanon to seek alternative employment;
- Give a halt to the administrative detention of workers suffering violence and exploitation;
- Ensure closer monitoring of recruitment agencies.

• People with disabilities

Recommendations received

- Ensure the effective implementation of the National Plan for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, especially regarding access to education and employment

Level of implementation: **NO PROGRESS**

Law 220 of 2000 provides the key framework for the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities, including the right to education and employment (%3 of public sector employees). Nevertheless, its implementation is weak despite activities organized in Lebanon to raise awareness about the law, in cooperation with the Social Affairs Ministry and civil society organizations. According to the unofficial data on disability in the country, there is %83 of unemployment among persons with disabilities, and only less than %50 of children with disabilities enrolled in regular public schools.

Lebanon has not yet ratified the Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities and shows lack of commitment for ensuring inclusion. In this regard, diverse projects designed for promoting disability inclusion remain random efforts. For instance, the Ministry of Education has recently launched its national project for inclusive education in public schools. However, there has not been any announcement of the location of these schools, so children with disabilities could not get enrolled and the information regarding the quality check of these schools' buildings remains discreet. Initiatives as such -funded under specific projects- lack sustainability as well. Lebanon needs a comprehensive approach to ensure inclusion and transparent national budget lines allocated for these projects. The national strategy for inclusion should be comprehensive and addresses inequalities at various fronts, such as:

- **The lack of the recognition of accessibility standards in the country's electoral systems;**
- **The country's urban infrastructure, which remains far from being accessible at all for persons with disabilities;**
- **The lack of accessible ICT programs, mainly regarding accessing information almost does not exist, especially at the level of governmental services.**

With regards to inclusive education, a 2018 Human Rights Watch report shows the challenges, noting as well the challenges of lack of data and statistics in the country. The report further notes:

"There is no clear data on the total number of children with disabilities in Lebanon or on how many children with disabilities are in school. According to Rights and Access, the government agency charged with registering persons with disabilities, there are currently 8,558 children registered with a disability aged between 5 and 14 (the age of compulsory education in Lebanon). Of these, 3,806 are in government-funded institutions, with some others spread among public and private schools. But many of those registered do not attend any type of educational facility. Furthermore, these figures are low, given that the United Nations children's agency (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Bank estimate that at least 5 percent of children below the age of 14 have a disability. Based on this statistic, a conservative estimate is that at least 45,000 children ages 5 to 14 in Lebanon have a disability. This discrepancy raises concerns that tens of thousands of Lebanese children with disabilities are not registered as such and many of these may not have access to education."

◀ The right to health ▶

Recommendations received:

- Continue the search for measures to address the high cost of health services and the existing quality disparity in the market for such services
- Improve access to quality education, health and social services, in particular for children and women
- Strengthen the efforts to ensure the protection and dignity of Syrian refugees, especially with regard to health care, access to education and protection of children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities in situation of risk

Level of implementation: **NO PROGRESS**

The second UPR pointed a key challenge with regard to the right to health in Lebanon, namely the quality gap between the private and public services and the increasing costs. Whereas the Ministry of Public Health tries to regulate this plural system, the 2020-2016 strategic plan adopted by the Ministry admits that "finding approaches to harmonize effort between the public and private sectors is likely to become the primary long-term strategic challenge." Accreditation is a measure implemented to set standards but is not enough to close the gap between public and private facilities. Private hospitals are the majority (168), comprising %84 of hospital beds in the country.

Existence of multiple delivery channels as a means to providing more health coverage is misleading, given that private health services remain too expensive for many groups, such as Palestinian and Syrian refugees and people with disabilities (PwDs). World Bank analysis on health sector in Lebanon notes additional challenges that require reforms, including the decline in government spending, allocation of MoPH budget (%62) to high cost curative care rather than the lower and cost effective preventive and primary health care. Whereas these structural challenges remain constant, initiatives on "e-health" and other "innovative tools" to fight chronic diseases for better healthcare have only minimal impact in ensuring the full enjoyment of the right to health in the country.

In terms of social protection, the official discourse admits that there is "some form of health insurance" but this approach does not necessarily correspond to Lebanon's obligations for achieving "universal health coverage". The most vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, the unemployed, migrant workers, refugees, farmers, and others working in the informal sector remain outside the framework of coverage of the most formal social protection systems. Focus should be on adopting a comprehensive policy aiming at a universal and publically provided health care, as well as extending social protection coverage to include the unprotected.

As a positive development, on 16 February 2017, the Lebanese Parliament enacted a new Legislation which grants persons already enrolled in the Sickness and Motherhood Insurance Coverage at the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) the right to benefit from such coverage even after their retirement. Despite the title, the law obfuscates the issues for several reasons:

- It requires beneficiaries to pay a contribution to this fund, although they are no longer productive or have a source of income, especially in light of the failure to shift from an end of service indemnity scheme to the previously mentioned pensions and social protection scheme. Moreover, retirees benefiting from the law would have previously paid all their contributions during the time they were employed, which raises the question of imposing additional contributions, although they do not work;
- The law benefits retirees with 20 years of service. However, only %50 of workers have been subscribed to the NSSF since its establishment, meaning that half of the retiring workforce will not benefit;
- Some sectors are not covered by the Labor or NSSF laws, such as agriculture, and thus workers will not benefit from the law by default;
- The NSSF Law allows one parent (father or mother) of sons/daughters subscribed to the fund to benefit from health and maternity insurance, meaning that a section of retirees will prefer to benefit from their children's insurance, instead of Law 27, which imposes a contribution fee.

< The right to education >

Recommendations received:

- Make primary education compulsory, free and accessible to all children
- Pursue efforts to provide education for all people residing in the Lebanese territory
- Continue efforts to establish a free and compulsory quality education for all children up to the age of 15
- Ensure equitable and sustainable resources to education
- Strengthen and expand the education infrastructure in order to offer quality inclusive education to all children on its territory
- Pursue efforts to promote the quality of education and to establish mandatory free education for all
- Guarantee free, obligatory, and quality education for all children
- Ensure the effective implementation of the National Plan for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, especially regarding access to education and employment
- Further strengthen efforts to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, including by developing and implementing policy instruments to meet the education needs of children with disabilities
- Continue to realize the rights of persons with disabilities, including their right to education, in the framework of the National Plan for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities which it has adopted
- Strengthen measures towards the integration of children with disabilities into formal education mechanisms
- Implement policies focused on the integration of children with special needs into the public education system, adapt buildings, and provide training to teachers and educational staff to promote an enabling and inclusive environment for education
- Intensify efforts to integrate persons with special needs in schools
- Continue to strengthen the educational system and to ensure equal access of disabled children to education

Level of implementation: LIMITED PROGRESS

Compulsory quality education and the integration of the children with special needs into formal education system constituted the major issues covered by the recommendations received in relation to the right to education. Indeed, being state party to ICESCR and the Convention on the rights of the child, Lebanon has obligations to provide free compulsory primary education and access to secondary education without discrimination to all children. Gross enrolment rates stand at %93.17 and %85.08 for male and female for primary education in 2016, while for secondary and tertiary education, the rates drop significantly (to %59.86 for male and %60.14 for female and %39.6 for male and %45.85 for female respectively).

Inclusive education was a common point of most of the recommendations. However, as documented by HRW report, “children with disabilities are often denied admission to schools because of their disability. And for those who manage to enroll, most schools do not take reasonable steps to provide them with a quality education. Instead, many children with disabilities in Lebanon attend institutions, which are not mandated to provide an education, or receive no education at all”.

The Syrian refugee children’s right to education is another key challenge, despite several good practices implemented by the Lebanese government, including opening up second shifts, simplifying enrolment procedures (for under grade 6), etc. In this context, in 2016, Lebanon adopted a five-year Reaching All Children with education (RACE) II plan with the goal of enrolling 440,000 Syrian children in formal education by the 2021-2020 school year. However a 2016 Human Rights Watch report shows that more than 250,000 children—approximately half of the nearly 500,000 school-aged Syrian children registered in Lebanon—are out of school.

Furthermore, a significant challenge; namely addressing the gap between private and public schools still persists in Lebanon. RACE I report in 2016 admits the gap as well as related other challenges like the over-supply of under-qualified teaching staff in public schools for basic education, through allowing contractual teacher positions and weak entry requirements. MEHE acknowledges the impact on quality noting that “reliance on an under-qualified and unskilled teaching force has important consequences on the real learning outcomes of children in the public school system, with important disparities in learning outcomes amongst different regions, and further differences amongst nationalities.”

< The right to adequate standard of living >

Recommendations received:

- Continue consolidating the national policies to combat poverty and social exclusion in favor of the most vulnerable sectors
- Continue implementing the program of support for the poorest families as a means to combat poverty

Level of implementation: LIMITED PROGRESS

Poverty in Lebanon is not new, yet became a key issue following the huge influx of the Syrian refugee population to the country. Despite this, the UPR 2nd cycle review remained limited, focusing only at the implementation of program of support for the poorest, which Lebanon has been implementing since 2011, with the launch of the National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP). It is important to note that “Limited progress” is for this specific program’s implementation, and hence should not be considered as a positive progress in overall assessment of the right to adequate standard of living. Accordingly, as of December 148,785, 2015 households (around 589,310 individuals) had applied to the program, and 105,811 households (460,281 individuals) were deemed eligible to receive the hospitalization and education benefits (i.e. below the cut-off score). Nevertheless, this program’s outcomes are limited, as it does not consider poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon but rather addresses poverty merely targeting certain segments of the society. Even officials are quoted to refer to the inadequacy of the program as “it is not appropriate to deal with citizens as though they are beggars in need of primitive care.”

In this context, vulnerable groups, including Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees remain in poverty at an increasing rate. The 2017 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR), reveals that %58 of the households are living in extreme poverty (increased from %53 in 2016). It is estimated that %65 of PRL and %89 of PRS live in poverty as well.

The right to adequate standard of living can be ensured when a comprehensive approach is adopted to address poverty, with all related elements; Taxation is one of them. However, the tax system in Lebanon does not address inequality, yet primarily aims at increasing public revenues. Tax regulations continue to be unfair, relying heavily on indirect taxation through the Value Added Tax (VAT) on consumption, which ultimately impacts the poor. Whereas during 2017, a new tax law (2017/45) was introduced and the law brought changes including the increase of the corporate income tax rate to %17 (from %15), the VAT increased by %1 to a total of %11, and the transfers of real estate have been subject to a duty of %2 of the sales value of the property. Further measures are required, including :

- **Imposing a progressive rate on rentier income, including on profits from sale of capital assets (such as real estate) as well as a progressive tax on interest income and bank deposits. The rates of these taxes would be high where top marginal rates exceed the existing ones on profit. However, this measure can be constrained by the bank secrecy law, which does not disclose the size of bank deposits, and thus the interest income earned by each depositor cannot be known. Therefore it would require either lifting bank secrecy laws or leaving a choice to depositors to disclose their accounts and those who do would benefit from a lower tax rate which would favor small depositors. Taxing rents would then finance the social wage and at the same time impose a heavy cost on those activities where investors would have more incentive to channel their investments to productive activities;**
- **Encouraging productive sectors and formal employment: As social service provisions, including universal health care, would be financed by taxes on rents, the contributions for health and maternity indemnities to NSSF would be removed, which will reduce labor costs for firms and encourage them to formalize the workers they employ. At the same time, firms would be given certain conditional tax incentives to encourage their activities, such as tax cuts and exemptions for certain sectors. This would be in the frame of general economic policies aimed at identifying productive sectors with growth and comparative advantage potential that would be encouraged to grow through low-cost credit and tax cuts (such as technology, green industries, agriculture, etc.);**
- **Introducing the global income tax: On all income (except rents as specified above since a special tax would be levied) including income from profit of holding companies that would be taxed like other profits from income. Moreover, a restructuring of the different income brackets ought to be done while increasing top marginal rates in line with standards of middle and high income countries. This would also entail removing of a wide range of exemptions especially relating to the sectarian system;**
- **Reforming tax on consumption: This would require two kinds of measures. First, replacing the uniform**

VAT tax rate with different scales according to products where basic food products would be taxed less than other products. At the same time removing the exemption on luxury items and taxing them with higher rates. Second, there should be efforts to relieve consumers from additional expenses that they incur on their consumption especially those related to electricity, water and transportation. This would imply significant public investment to reform these three sectors without privatizing them to ensure their full and sustainable coverage. Its benefits would not only benefit individual consumers but would also reduce costs on productive sectors (such as industry and agriculture) as they will have the necessary infrastructure to conduct their operations without inducing additional costs;

- **Transparency:** Measures to enhance tax transparency that would include periodical issuing of detailed tax returns according to their category, and information about tax payers in terms of their income range and the share of taxes they pay. Moreover, in order to deter evasion, the names of high earning individuals and entities avoiding tax or not paying it should be made public. Also, amongst other measures, tax payers ought to be insulated from corruption through increasing their salaries, implementing more severe disciplinary measures on those who collude with tax payers, and assuring constant rotation and mobility of tax inspectors to minimize the risk of building compromising relations with taxpayers.

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◀ Civic and Political Rights ▶

- ALEF – Act for Human Rights
- Restart Center for rehabilitation of victims of violence and torture
- Himaya
- Insan
- Caritas Lebanon
- Association Justice et Miséricorde – AJEM
- Together Against the Death Penalty
- Mosaic

Promotion and Protection of Human Rights on the Ground Implementation of human rights obligations

◀ Right to Life, Liberty and Security of Persons ▶

Despite the 2012 draft law supporting the abolition of the death penalty in Lebanon, the death penalty remains legal under articles 37 and 43 of the Lebanese Criminal Code. As such, capital punishment remains a common verdict, used in cases of extreme gravity. Nonetheless, there is an unofficial moratorium on executions since 2004 and thus no executions have occurred since. Lebanon however did not adopt the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR that calls for the abolition of capital punishment.

Recommendations:

- Officially ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR on the abolition of the death penalty.
- Adopt an official moratorium on the death penalty.
- Strengthen guarantees for fair trials.
- Amend the Lebanese Criminal Code to repeal all provisions entailing the death penalty.

◀ Promotion and protection of the rights of migrants and refugees ▶

- Due to inconsistencies in the policy's implementation, Syrian nationals seeking admission into Lebanon or already living in Lebanon face a variety of obstacles that violate their human rights. For example, some are asked to sign documents to pledge not to work, others are arbitrarily denied admission and are asked to pay a residency fee of 200\$ USD despite being eligible for a fee waiver.
- Exceptions for admission will be made by the Ministry of Social Affairs for humanitarian cases in coordination with UNHCR. (How does the UNHCR decide who is eligible for humanitarian exceptions? Issue of unfairness) However, the Ministry of Social Affairs has not defined 'extreme humanitarian case,' meaning that many would-be refugees can possibly be denied access to safety in Lebanon.
- Refugees in Lebanon who were registered with UNHCR prior to January 2016 are able to renew their residency permits every six months, and for a costly fee of 200\$ USD that many refugees cannot afford. Those that are either not registered or registered after January 2016 with UNHCR are obliged to apply for visas under the new regulations, meaning that in order to not pay the fee, they will need to present the necessary documents.
- Many municipalities have also enacted curfews for 'foreigners,' which in reality target only Syrians and Palestinians. When stepped outside past their curfews, refugees are arrested and may remain in jail arbitrarily.
- The Lebanese Labor Law excludes migrant domestic workers from its provisions, placing them under the control of the Kafala sponsorship system. The Kafala system provides more power to the employer, and an absolute control over the legal status and work permit of the migrant domestic workers. Common complaints made by migrant domestic workers include non-payment, delayed payment, forced confinement, no time off, and verbal and physical abuse. The restrictive visa system refrains migrant domestic workers from suing their employers for abuse, as by doing so, they will face legal obstacles and also risk imprisonment and/or deportation.
- Migrant domestic workers continue to be arbitrarily be denied residency permits.

Recommendations:

- Establish a legal mechanism to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly against arbitrary detention and refoulement.
- Continue to provide access to Syrian refugees on the basis of stricter review process in compliance with international refugee law standards, in particular the principle of non-refoulement and with human rights law.
- Facilitate access to protection and legal documentation for refugees in Lebanon.
- End the use of discriminatory curfews.
- Reform the visa sponsorship system (Kafala) so that workers' visas are no longer tied to individual sponsors, and they can terminate employment without sponsor consent.

◀ Right to identity ▶

- There are tens of thousands of stateless persons in Lebanon for various reasons, including inheriting the status from their ancestors who failed to register in the only population census of 1932 following the creation of the State of Lebanon, or fleeing from persecution from neighboring countries to Lebanon in the 1930s without a determined nationality.
- There is no special legal framework governing the status of stateless persons and their rights. They lack any legal status or documentation.
- There are no personal status records for stateless persons. Their marriages cannot be registered and children born to unregistered parents are not entitled to have their births registered. As a result, stateless persons are in an exceedingly disadvantageous situation, which makes them subject to serious abuse and exploitation, and generally, denial of basic and fundamental human rights.
- Statelessness is also an issue for many refugee newborns as many refugees are unable to complete the birth registration processes, e.g. because the parents lack valid residency themselves.

Recommendations:

- Establish a comprehensive rights-based protection framework for stateless persons, in order for them to be identified, registered and issued with documentation, as well as ensure their access to basic and fundamental rights.

◀ Access to justice ▶

- Lebanon fails to guarantee fair trials, particularly during investigations and pre-trial detention. Persons deprived of their liberty can face human rights violations when detained, e.g. hold in pre-trial detention beyond the stated limit or be held in detention without access to basic rights such as receiving visitors or contacting a lawyer for legal counsel.

Recommendations:

- Enhance effective access to legal aid.
- Periodically monitor places of detention.

◀ Independence of the judiciary ▶

- The independence of the judiciary is one of the main guarantees to the right of a fair trial. Yet, no recent measures ensure the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Lebanon. The perception remains that defendants that are financially strong and well-connected are privileged within the judiciary system. There is however no record of any judge being subjected to political pressure.
- The appointment of judges is not done by a politically neutral organ but based on a government decree. Political influence in the appointment of judges has corrupted the system.
- The Military Court rules over both military members and civilians. Their jurisdiction remains vague, resulting in military members occasionally tried in non-military cases and civilians in cases unrelated to the military. Judges of the military court are not required to have a law degree and officers from the military are allowed to prepare defence to the accused, questioning the impartiality and the right to a fair trial.
- Additionally the Judicial Council is also prone to political influence as cases to this court are given by the Cabinet.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that all serving judges are independent and impartial and not within the military chain of command.
- Appoint judges by a politically neutral organ instead of on a decree by the government.
- Ensure the military court is an integral part of the general judicial system, and that such courts apply due process procedures that are recognised by international law to guarantee a fair trial.
- Pass a law adopting restrictive jurisdiction for the military court to appropriate military matters, based on which the court will be allowed to try military officers and military cases only, and transfer the jurisdiction of trying civilians to ordinary courts.

< Torture in Lebanon >

- Although it is prohibited in the Criminal Law, torture is institutionalized, widespread and systematic in Lebanon, especially during interrogations. Confessions continue to be extracted under torture, denying the right to a fair trial.
- In September 2017 the Lebanese Parliament amended article 401 to strictly criminalise torture, but several gaps in the law hamper efforts to prevent torture. The law fails to include key information, (it excludes ill-treatment), to align Lebanese legislation with international recommendations against torture, allowing perpetrators in certain cases the possibility to be not held accountable. Moreover, the penalties for acts of torture do not commensurate with the gravity of the crime.

Recommendations:

- Criminalise torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in line with their respective definitions in the UNCAT.
- Create sentences for the crime of torture to reflect the gravity of the offence.
- Establish a protection mechanism for torture victims and witnesses.

< Missing and Enforced disappearances >

- The Draft Law for Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons stipulates the establishment of an institute or commission that 'shall be an independent administrative body in charge of determining the fate of the missing and the forcibly disappeared.' This draft was prepared by civil society organisations and submitted to the Parliament in 2012, but still has not been ratified.

Recommendations:

- Adopt the Draft Law for Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons and ensure its effective implementation.
- Create a DNA database for all the families of the missing.
- Take appropriate measures to protect potential mass graves in order to preserve information that could prove to be vital in any future truth-seeking process.

< Access to Information >

- The Whistleblower Protection draft law was submitted to the Lebanese parliament in 2010. It is currently still pending submission to the general assembly to be voted on.
- In January 2017, Lebanon ratified an access to information law pressing Lebanese authorities to be more transparent and accountable towards citizens. Implementation of the law however could face obstacles, as government offices are now required to publish key documents online and show indicators of their performance. Yet, a number of these entities do not have websites, so it remains unclear in what ways they will comply with this law. In addition, there's a lack of mechanism that ensures the correct requested information is communicated to the public and false data does not spread.

Recommendations:

- Adopt the Whistleblowers Protection law to guarantee transparency and accountability.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the Right to Access Information law.

< Respect the Principle of Periodic Elections and Reform Election Law >

- The role of women within politics in Lebanon has not significantly changed in the past decades. Women continue to be underrepresented in political life. There have been several draft laws written to ensure women make up %33 of parliament and local assemblies. None of these drafts have been passed.

Recommendations:

- Adopt a woman's quota of %33 in legislative elections as well as the cabinet.

< Freedom of opinion, expression and belief in Lebanon >

- Criminal defamation laws and laws criminalizing criticism of public officials and symbols continue to stifle freedom of expression in Lebanon. The press law, penal code, audio-visual media law, and military code of justice don't have adequate safeguards to protect the right to freedom of expression.
- Libel, defamation, and insult are terms that continue to be used loosely since they are not well-defined in Lebanese law. As such, Lebanese citizens who criticize Lebanese authorities or political figures are being arrested.
- The Lebanese government uses an outdated law from 1947 to decide how to censor media and artistic expression. Any production deemed to affect national security, incite sectarian tensions or threaten the relationship between Lebanon and friendly countries is forbidden under this law. The censorship bureau within the General Security does not provide justification for its decisions.
- The government has also failed to investigate attacks on media outlets, facilities and assaults on individual journalists.

Recommendations:

- Make libel, slander and defamation civil cases not criminal cases, with guaranteed fair access to the justice system and protection of vulnerable parties, while ensuring that the laws regarding defamation do not jeopardize the right to freedom of expression.
- Precisely define concepts related to content controls such as "defamation" and "libel" in order to prevent abuses in their application and a consequent decrease in the margin of freedom of expression in the country.

< Freedom of Association >

- Lebanon has not announced any plans to lift the ban on the establishment of association by civil servants.
- The Ministry of Labour also does not recognise the Domestic Workers' Union. Because of a lack of political will and the limitations imposed by the law, the right to freedom of association of migrant workers in Lebanon is being violated and is exposing them to various forms of abuse.

Recommendations:

- Recognise the Domestic Workers' Union.
- Amend Law Decree No. 112 issued in 1959 to allow civil servants to form associations.

◀ Right to have a private life (LGBTQ+ rights in Lebanon) ▶

- A January 2017 judge ruling issued a court order stating that sexual orientation should not be criminalised, meaning that homosexuality is not a crime. Nonetheless, article 534 of the Penal Code that criminalises 'unnatural intercourse' has not been defined in law or in practice and thus gives space for wide interpretation among judges, leaving LGBTQ+ persons prone to arbitrary arrest.

Recommendations:

- Prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Enhance the jurisdiction of article 534 to prevent arbitrary interpretations and therefore risk of persecution of individuals for their sexual orientation.
- Protect LGBTQ+ persons from homophobic and transphobic violence by creating an independent mechanism to monitor, document and report violations in order to assure accountability.

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◀ Women's rights ▶

- Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering
- Lebanese Council of Women
- Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women
- Fe-Male
- Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at Lebanese American University
- ABAAD Association
- Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action (CRTDA)
- KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation

Presentation of the Women Sector on the Universal Periodic Review

Lebanon has witnessed several political, economic and security stations in recent years that affected the life and rights of citizens in general and women's rights in particular. These crises also led to the failure of the Lebanese government to commit to the international conventions and charters on human rights, particularly the 2015 recommendations to Lebanon by the Human Rights Council following the Universal Periodic Review.

In 2015, the working group concerned with the Universal Periodic Review adopted a draft report including the recommendations of the United Nations Member States to Lebanon. The states delegations expressed concern about the human rights situation in the country. The review resulted in 147 recommendations addressed to Lebanon by 46 countries of which a 100 were accepted in the first round and 257 recommendations in the second round of which a 139 were accepted.

Women's rights were of particular importance in the recommendations: 78 recommendations were given in this regard, of which 18 were accepted by Lebanon, while the remaining recommendations were taken into account, as it is not allowed to reject them.

The present is a midterm report to review the most significant gaps in women and girls' issues in Lebanon, in relation to the recommendations given to Lebanon.

International commitment of Lebanon regarding women's rights

In 1996, Lebanon certified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by virtue of Law No (592) which entered into effect on 01.08.1996 with reservations on main subjects which are clause (2) of article (9) regarding the nationality, clauses (11), (8), (27), (5) of paragraph (1) of article (16) regarding the civil status and paragraph (1) of article (29). Lebanon received several recommendations encouraging it to withdraw the reservations, however, Lebanon has refused to do so. These reservations hinder the serious efforts made to achieve the equality promoted/embedded in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Recommendations:

- To sign the uncertified international conventions.
- To withdraw the reservations made to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- To certify the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Nationality Law

The discriminatory law against Lebanese women strips their right from them of passing their Lebanese nationality to their children when marrying a foreigner; this law is still enforced. The Lebanese government is constantly receiving a number of suggestions and draft legislation addressing the nationality issue taking into consideration the political and religious approaches. Lebanese women and families are still subjected to Law No 1925 impacting their right to enjoy their full rights as equal citizens.

Recommendations:

- To withdraw the reservations on article (9) of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- To amend the Lebanese nationality law, particularly article (1) thereof to become 'a Lebanese national is whose born to a Lebanese father or mother'.

Women involvement in public life

No practical efforts were made to activate the involvement of women in public life. Not even an intention was detected in this regard. This reality is proven by refusing to implement the "Female Quota" in parliament. Although the majority of political parties expressed the importance of the female quota and the need to give women a greater role in the political life, and despite the fact that the ministerial statement promised women associations to include the quota in the new electoral law, they have failed to include the female quota in the electoral law of 2017, which formed the core of the 2018 elections. In parallel, the general policies enhancing the status of women in the public life are also absent. At the municipality level, 1485 women stood for elections in 2016 compared to 1346 candidate in 2010. The rate of elected women in the municipality councils is %5.4. The aforementioned figures reflect an increase in women representation in municipality councils by %0.8 compared to the 2010 elections. The number of registered candidates in the municipality elections for the year 2016 in Lebanon was 21,932, for both male and female candidates, including 1,485 female candidate (%6.9). Women won 661 out of 12,139 places in 2016 municipality elections, meaning %5.4, while they won 536 places in 2010, estimated at %4.6 and %2.02 in 2004. As for the recent parliamentary elections, 111 women ran in the elections, 86 went through the electoral process and only six women won seats in parliament.

Recommendations:

- To acknowledge the positive measures in accordance with the general recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Personal Status Law

Lebanon still suffers from a multiplicity of legislations and courts in personal status cases, which are discriminatory in their provisions against women in the absence of adoption of a civil and unified personal status law based on full equality between genders. Lebanon does not provide a formal law for individuals who are not affiliated to an acknowledged religion. In light of the diversified marriage laws in terms of the minimum age for marriage, the violations of children rights in Lebanon continue with the early marriage of girls, due to the failure of the law to determine the minimum age for marriage in accordance with Lebanon commitments included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child for the year 1989, which considers the minimum age for marriage to be 18 years old, noting that Lebanon certified this convention. The Personal Status Law confirms the gender-based violence against women and girls through the judgments relating to custody, guardianship, inheritance and divorce.

In Lebanon, the personal status issues appear to be the most prominent complexity in the country, which is worsened by the control of religious institutions over the family laws and the absolute neutrality of the state from monitoring the religious courts and the judgments rendered by them, in addition to the fact that the parliament is not independent from the religious institutions and thus takes into consideration its recommendations and positions in amending the laws.

Lebanon witnessed civil movements claiming a civil personal status law, whereas some were claiming a mandatory civil status law and others were claiming an optional civil status law while a third party was working on a few amendments of specific issues in the personal status law rather than the whole law (such as custody for instance). The increased awareness of the youth of the discriminatory nature of the laws is an opportunity to eliminate this form of discrimination, which explains why many go abroad to conclude civil contracts. For the first time in its history, Lebanon has witnessed the execution of civil contracts based on a non-annulled decision issued at the time of the French mandate allowing the conduct of civil marriage contracts for persons who have removed their religious identity from registration records. A number of the youth adopted this mechanism, and thus a contract was registered which created a big fuss. However the pressure following this incident led the Lebanese Ministry of Interior to stop executing similar marriage contracts and thus the youth is facing many complications due to the impossible registration of the marriage, particularly in terms of registering their children.

Recommendations:

- Promoting a civil equal law for personal status.
- Providing a comprehensive national legal framework to protect girls from early marriage, in accordance with the international standards of human rights and the obligations of Lebanon by virtue of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

◀ Women protection from domestic violence ▶

Law No (293) relatively succeeded at many levels, mainly in breaking the taboo of domestic violence issues in Lebanon and acknowledging the protection role of the government, as well as promoting the media interaction with women issues, and most importantly was the institutional success in strengthening the role of the security forces and the judicial authority in addressing domestic violence. Nevertheless, there are challenges and dilemmas facing the implementation of Law No (293). It should be noted that efforts are being deployed to put an Arab Model Law for the Protection of Women and Girls from Violence in partnership with the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and to amend the Lebanese law afterwards in according to the Model Law.

It should also be noted that Lebanon is preparing this year, in cooperation with the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and the ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW), a national strategy to combat gender-based violence.

Recommendations:

- Promoting a draft law amending the Bill for the Protection of Women and Family Members Against Domestic Violence approved by the Council of Ministers on 3 August 2017.
- Working on raising the awareness and knowledge of Law No (293).
- Establishing a Victim Assistance Fund as provided for in the Law, as well as a Special Unit on Domestic Violence at the Internal Security Forces.
- Establishing a family court specializing in family issues and violence against women.

◀ Lebanese Penal Law ▶

The applicable Lebanese Penal Law is still incapable in some of its provisions of protecting women, as some regulations are violent against women and other allow violent practices against women and is lenient with the perpetrators thereof.

- Although article (526) which provided a mitigating excuse for the perpetrators of so-called honor crimes was annulled, the Lebanese judicial system still refers to the provisions of article (252) of the Penal Law.
- The Penal Law excludes from its provisions marital rape in articles (503) and (504) and is lenient with the perpetrators of marital rape.
- Article (522) is applicable to all the crimes provided for in articles (503) and (521) and exempts the perpetrators of one of these crimes from punishment, in case of marrying the victim. It is true that the impact thereof was annulled from the rape crime but was preserved in articles (505) and (518) by allowing the marriage of girls aged 15 years old and exempting the perpetrator from punishment in case of having established a relationship between them.
- The lack of a definition for sexual abuse in the Lebanese Penal Law.
- The Lebanese Penal Law does not criminalize sexual harassment.
- The Lebanese Penal Law still criminalizes adultery.
- The law penalizes prostitution and punishes the perpetrator of the offense but does not penalize the applicant for service; nevertheless, and by clear circumvention, the laws allow prostitution covered by the so-called «artists visa» which leads to trafficking victims and when arrested are punished as perpetrators of prostitution.
- As for abortion, the Lebanese law is very strict in this regard, however, it allows therapeutic abortion under exceptional conditions.
- In terms of human trafficking, Lebanon adopted the amendments of the Penal Law to include the trafficking crime and to determine the penalties of the traffickers as well as to provide indemnifications for the trafficking victims. However Law No (164) was not implemented correctly, as there is a limited number of convictions since the adoption of the Law in 2011. A number of gaps are detected in the Anti-Trafficking Law, including the need for the victim to prove its innocence in order to avoid the penalties that may arise from breaking some laws, knowing that the legal description should be adopted as it is a human trafficking victim. The law also fails to provide guarantees to protect the victim during and after the legal procedures and to follow special mechanisms for the protection of human trafficking victims aged less than 18 years old. As for the indemnification of victims, it is conditioned to establishing a fund managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and funded strictly by the proceeds of the crime.

Recommendations:

- To annul the discriminatory provisions of the Penal Law.
- To adopt the draft law regarding the annulment of article (518) and the amendment of the articles (505) to (519).
- To promote a law that criminalizes sexual harassment.
- To officially adopt the content of the model law by amending article (252), annulling the criminalization of abortion and adultery and criminalizing marital rape.
- In terms of human trafficking, Lebanon should adopt a national plan to fight and to prevent human trafficking and review its laws and policies in order to avoid any contradiction with the new law.
- To amend article (523) of the Lebanese Penal Law in order to annul the criminalization of persons committing prostitution and to intensify the penalties imposed on persons facilitating and exploiting prostitution in accordance with the human trafficking law.

◀ Law of labor, social security, taxes and trade ▶

- The law lacks clear mechanisms preventing and punishing gender-based violence against working women.
- The law excludes specific groups from its provisions, such as domestic workers and farmers with a female majority.
- Articles (26) to (30) of the Lebanese Labor Law specifically address women employment issues. Article (27) thereof prohibits the employment of children, teenagers and women in a number of jobs. The women and child issues are addressed in the same chapter of the Labor Law. Article (34) thereof provides for a one hour break following every five hours of continuous work for women and six hours of continuous work for men. Furthermore, article (59) allows women who have been working for more than one year to leave work "due to marriage" and to benefit from end of service compensation, while men are not allowed to leave work for the same reason. This article nudges women to prioritize domestic and family obligations over work.
- Migrant domestic workers are not included in the protection procedures of the Lebanese Labor Law which exposes them to different types of breaches and deprives them from protection. A special work contract is applicable in Lebanon for domestic workers, called the "Kafala System" which transforms work into a type of compulsory work, as per the International Labor Organization (ILO).
- Article (3) of the Labor Law and article (46) of the Social Security Law provide for care benefits for male workers and civil employees that are not applicable to women. For instance, a male employee may benefit from allowances for unemployed wives, while female employees do not benefit in the same circumstances when a husband who passes away or whose medical conditions do not allow him to work. Regardless of the employee's gender, an allowance is given for each child. Article (10) of the allowances and services regulations at the Cooperative of Government Employees and article (14) of the Social Security Law are discriminatory against women as their husbands cannot benefit from healthcare and hospitalization as well as other social allowances.
- Article (31) of the Tax Law for the year 1959 amended by virtue of the law for the year 2003 is also discriminatory against women in terms of the deductions and exemptions. In accordance to this article, married men may benefit from deductions for supported wives and up to five children, while married women may not benefit from the same, unless she manages to prove that she is the only financial provider in the family in case her husband passes away or is incapable of working. Furthermore, married women have higher tax burdens than men as they are treated as single women for tax purposes and cannot benefit from the tax exemption given to married men with children.
- Article (625) to (629) of the Trade Law for the year 1942 are discriminatory against women as they impose restrictions on the properties of the wife when her husband is declared bankrupted. In such a case, the woman is considered to be supported by her husband and the properties acquired during marriage are deemed to be acquired with the funds of the husband, unless the woman was capable of proving otherwise.
- Lebanon does not consider the care sector, including the domestic work a job with an economic value.

Recommendations:

- To certify the International Labor Organization Convention No (2011/189) pertaining to decent work for domestic workers.
- To put a mechanism for the recruitment of domestic workers in accordance with international standards.
- To approve the amendments suggested to the laws of labor, social security, trade and taxes.

◀ Woman Media Image ▶

- The Lebanese media still subjects women to commoditization and stereotyping. The commoditization of women and turning their bodies into means for material gain has become exaggerated, as the majority of ads adopt a stereotypical image of women, the image of beautiful, sexy and slim women satisfied with only their reproductive role or the image of a weak and submissive women facing all forms of violence without daring to speak about it.
- In Lebanon and in accordance with the standard book of terms of the media, television and radio institutions issued by the Lebanese Ministry of Information attached to Decree No (7979) dated on 29.02.1996, and specifically article (7) thereof relating to women and family programs, it is clearly stipulated that a woman should be given the necessary attention to promote her role in the society and to ensure the happiness of the family, thus reflecting the patriarchal and masculine perception of the role of women by ignoring her personality, value, rights and role and limiting her role to maintaining the satisfaction and happiness of her family and husband.

Recommendations:

- The Lebanese government should establish a specialized unit in charge of monitoring the advertisement companies and television stations in order to limit the objectification of women by using their bodies in promoting commodities.
- The concerned authorities (Ministry of Information,...) should be held accountable for binding the visual, audio and written media means to adopt a language reflecting gender equality, to stop generalization and to avoid sharing the opinions and statements undermining the value and capacities of women and inciting against them, whether it was the media host or guest and to adopt ethical and professional standards when dealing with gender issues away from excitement, exploitation, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination supported by the prevailing masculine culture.
- Being keen on activating the role and presence of women in decision making positions at the information and press syndicates.
- Amending the standard book of terms of the media, television and radio institutions issued by the Lebanese Ministry of Information attached to Decree No (7979) dated on 29.02.1996 and specifically article (7) thereof relating to women and family programs stipulating that a woman should be given the necessary attention to promote her role in the society and to ensure the happiness of the family.

◀ Syrian Refugee Women in Lebanon ▶

With the beginning of the Syrian crisis seven years ago, refugees, men and women, started fleeing to Lebanon, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the number of refugees reached 1,160,468 which is a third of the Lebanese population, distributed randomly across Lebanon. Women constitute 80% of the total refugees in Lebanon, who are subjected to all forms of violence and exploitation. The failure of Lebanon to sign the Refugee Convention does not exempt the state from its responsibility towards the refugees in its territories, in terms of acknowledging their rights and providing them with a decent accommodation and protection. As the Lebanese government is not carrying out its responsibilities towards refugees, which causes women refugees to be subjected to many violations.

- Sexual exploitation and abuse: the Syrian refugee women lack a safe resort in the private and public places: we witness an increase in the levels of sexual violence and sexual harassment on a daily basis when women walk on the streets, use bathrooms in camps and when waiting at the assistance distribution spots, such as food assistance and health and educational services.
- Early and compulsory marriage: Under the title of "protective marriage", early marriage is increasing gradually, although we do not have statistics for this matter as the marriage is not registered at the official departments. Furthermore, the laws fail to determine a minimum age for marriage in accordance with the obligations of Lebanon provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child determining the minimum age of marriage to be eighteen years old certified in 1989 and implemented in 1990. The multiplicity of religions and the absence of a unified personal status law in Lebanon do not allow to set a unified minimum age of marriage between religions.
- Lack in health services, especially reproductive and sexual health: Syrian refugee women in Lebanon suffer from serious medical problems, including increased premature birth and the effects thereof such as severe bleeding and weak immunity due to a lack of healthcare before the delivery, as an effect of the health sector is incapable of providing the necessary services due to the lack of resources.
- Educational services: The report of UNHCR issued in November 2014 states that 470,000 Syrian children lack

education services, of which 386,000 children are in primary school next to 275,000 Lebanese children, which makes it impossible for the public schools to accommodate this number of students and thus many of these children are not enrolled in schools and are employed instead. Language is also a challenge the Syrian children face, as the Lebanese curriculum uses the foreign languages in the scientific subjects, while the curriculum in Syria uses the Arabic language.

- Domestic violence: domestic violence is becoming more severe among refugees, as women and girls are subjected to many forms of gender-based violence: physical, psychological/moral, economic and sexual. A number of studies mentioned that the change in gender roles between women and men, such as the employment of women and the unemployment of men contributed to subjecting women to severer domestic violence, because of masculine perceptions and cultural values in the Syrian community.
- Weak reporting of violence and abstaining from claiming legal services: there are several reasons behind this reality, the most important thereof is that women do not trust the fairness of the Lebanese judicial system, and due to the fact that many of them do not hold valid residency papers which does not allow them to approach the court of law.

Recommendations:

- To take into consideration the recommendations pertaining to women protection at times of conflicts under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- To implement the resolution of the Security Council No 1325 and to push towards acknowledging and funding a national action plan to be implemented in Lebanon.
- To establish camps providing decent accommodations and taking into consideration the physical needs and health of women.
- To amend the laws in order to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years old in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- To coordinate between the Lebanese government and donor countries in order to ensure the equal access of refugees to medical services.
- To conclude contracts between the Ministry of Health and private hospitals in order to ensure the access of refugees to medical services.
- To allocate educational courses to Syrian children outside the official school hours in public and private schools in order to accommodate the needs of the Syrian refugee students.
- To adopt the Syrian educational curriculum in the classes of Syrian refugee students.

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< Child's rights >

- Manara Network for Child Rights
- Developmental Action without Borders – Naba'a
- ABAAD Association
- KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation
- Himaya
- ALEF – Act for Human Rights
- Najdeh Association
- Initiate

The Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights for Lebanon was completed during the plenary session of the Human Rights Council at the 31st session held in March 2016. In this session, the council approved the outcomes of the second review, which resulted in 219 recommendations given to Lebanon, of which 128 were accepted and 91 rejected. Lebanon received many recommendations relating to the protection of the rights of children, in particular in terms of combating child labor and improving the effectiveness and quality of social services, especially in the fields of education and health, noting that the efforts deployed in this regard do not meet the challenges in this context and therefore the State bears the responsibility for the related failures.

As for the action procedures of the UPR, the institutions of the civil society are entitled to execute the midterm report two years following the issuance of the recommendations of the session in question. Based on that, a national coalition was formed of the following institutions: ALEF Organization, ABAAD Organization, Himaya Organization, KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation Organization, Najdeh Association, Dar Al-Amal Organization, civil institutions union in Tyr, Manara Network for Children's Rights and Nabaxa - Developmental Action without Borders. It must be noted that 24 children participated in the preparation of the report, particularly in terms of the issues and the recommendations approved by Lebanon and the progress achieved in this regard.

Lebanon was one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child as it ratified the convention on 14 May 1991 (without reservations) and its optional protocol relating to children trafficking. Lebanon also signed the optional protocol relating to the non-participation of children in armed conflicts - . As for the third optional protocol relating to filing notices, it was neither signed nor ratified. In light of the absence of a political will to enhance the condition of human rights, the rights of the child in Lebanon face several challenges, which worsened since the first and second review.

Since the 1st and 2nd Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights for Lebanon and after the outbreak of the war in Syria in 2011, which worsened with time until the situation relatively calmed down towards the end of 2017 when the armed clashes witnessed an end in a number of regions, the crisis of Syrian and Palestinian refugees from Syria was one of the main changes and challenges facing Lebanon. The number of refugees is estimated currently at one million and two hundred thousand refugees as per the statistics of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and one and a half million as per the estimations of the government. The major flow of refugees imposed a huge humanitarian responsibility, including the provision of shelter, food, water, sanitation, healthcare, education, protection and other services in Lebanon, while it created important challenges resulting of political, security, economic and social risks.

Around half of the Syrian refugees and Palestinian refugees from Syria who sought refuge in Lebanon are children exposed to hazardous risks, including child labor, sexual exploitation, negligence, violence and recruitment with armed groups. A study entitled "Children wandering and working in the streets of Lebanon: specifications and excuses", focused on 1510 children living on the streets, out of which %73 are Syrian refugee children, was launched by the Ministry of Labor, International Labor Organization (IOL), UNICEF and Save the Children International Organization. The examples of "sex for life" are concerning as they are taking place to provide money and food for families .

In terms of the condition of children, UNHCR notices another main challenge facing the refugee children who do not access education as they are exposed to recruitment with armed groups involved in fighting in Syria .

A general count conducted by UNRWA recently showed a drop in the number of Palestinian refugees from Syria as of December 2014 registered with UNRWA in Lebanon, the number decreased from 41,413 to 32,000 refugees (by the end of December 2016) .

Despite the aforementioned updates, Lebanon was late in responding to the crisis as it did not adopt a comprehensive plan to deal with the repercussions of the crisis until December 2014. Also it did not establish a previously prepared and well-coordinated plan or strategy to deal with the distribution of refugees around the country, which led to issues in the allocation of resources and worsened the issues of lack of political and security stability which impacted the daily life aspects of the citizens. This problem also affected the education sector as the number of students doubled in public schools, while it is known that these schools suffer from quality and quantity insufficiency. In addition to the lack of sufficient sanitary facilities to respond to the needs of the increased population, there's an existing deficiency in the sanitation and water systems. Furthermore, we must note the increasing number of children living in the streets, who are deprived from basic life necessities and vulnerable to exploitation and recruitment with armed groups to fuel the conflicts.

Lebanon approved the following recommendations (Human Rights Council 31st Session – March 2016):

- 195-132: Taking into consideration the vulnerability particularities of immigrants and refugees in the country, especially women and children.
- 207-132: Continuous cooperation with international organization and donor countries to find solutions for the problems of refugees.
- 74-132: Continuous support to human rights issues and humanitarian efforts.

Based on the aforementioned and the reality of the refugees' conditions in Lebanon and despite the several attempts of the assigned ministries to work on this file, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Interior (General Security), as well as the participation of the departments of these ministries to coordinate the actions among the workers at the national level, we still cannot see progress in this file, particularly in terms of the recommendations previously approved by Lebanon while noting the weak international commitment to supporting the Syrian refugees.

◀ Promotion and Protection of Human Rights Obligations ▶

a. Cooperation with the established entities by virtue of Human Rights Conventions:

The Lebanese government lacks a clear notification mechanism to the UN Conventions entities and is delayed in submitting around 12 reports. In terms of the rights of the child, the government assigned the Higher Council of Childhood (affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs which is the national authority concerned with children problems and rights) to prepare the reports; these reports were submitted with a delay.

In this aspect, Lebanon approved the following recommendations (Human Rights Council 31st Session – March 2016):

- To ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to implement the national plan efficiently to make the education system available to all children with disabilities.
- To ratify the optional protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child pertaining to the involvement of children in armed conflicts.
- Reviewing the establishment of an independent mechanism pertaining to children and supplying it with the necessary human and financial resources.

No progress has been made on the aforementioned recommendations, even though Lebanon has accepted these recommendations

b. Human Rights International Obligations Execution:



Civil and Political Rights

◀ Right to Protection ▶

The basic law protecting children and juveniles is law no 2002/422 providing for the “protection of juveniles who broke the law or are exposed to danger”, which entered into effect on 6 June 2002. This law entrusts the Union for the Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon with a basic role and powers allowing it to interfere in their protection. The Union for the Protection of Juveniles is a non-profit organization of public interest focused on juveniles. Law no 422 aims at repairing the juvenile judicial system by establishing juvenile courts, focused on education, rehabilitation and protection rather than penalties. The main gaps in this regard include limited level of penal liability, remedy methods, juvenile arrest procedures, criminal record and other legal procedures.

Law no 2002/422 pertaining to the protection of juveniles who broke the law or are exposed to danger as per article 1 (paragraph 1) of the same law. The juvenile subjected to this law is the person who is less than 18 years old and committed a crime penalized by the law or is exposed to danger in the conditions provided for hereinafter. However, there is a major discrepancy between the text and the implementation of the law, particularly in terms of the arrest procedures and minimum age of criminal responsibility.

The international conventions and practices determined the minimum age of criminal responsibility to be between 12 and 14 years old. As for Lebanon, the age was set to be seven years old, which raised concerns regarding the capacity of the child at this age to support the psychological and social repercussions of the criminal responsibility, particularly since this is in contradiction with the international conventions and position, as well as the intellectual, mental, emotional and educational capacities. A child with legal issues should not be perceived as a criminal and be punished but rather a victim of the different circumstances and factors. A child is a victim not a criminal.

It should be noted that the psychological impact of a penalty imposed on a child leads him to develop in the future a criminal character. As per article 33 (paragraph 1) of the Juvenile Protection Law stipulated that “if a juvenile participated with adults in one crime or a series of crimes, he shall be subjected to follow-up, investigation and trial procedures before the ordinary authority”. This law is in contradiction with the basic principles of the UN standard minimum rules to manage the affairs of juveniles violating the law (Beijing Rules) adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution no 22/40 dated on 29 November 1985 regarding a fair and humanitarian trial of juveniles to maintain their safety, the principle of proportionality between act and procedure, separation of juveniles and adults in centers and respect of the child best interest in all procedures, as the ultimate goal of juvenile justice is to care for the child best interest.

Juveniles must be brought to trial under specific procedures different from ordinary courts, as the court is considered to be an educational therapy entity aiming at rehabilitating the juvenile offenders in the first place rather than punishing them. The judicial procedures opt for settlements and measures respecting freedom, while entrusting the judge with the most possible discretion possible within the scope of the law (major discretionary power to the judge). Once a juvenile is arrested, the parents or legal guardians of the child shall be informed immediately, then the security forces are expected to summon a social worker from the Juvenile Bureau at the Ministry of Justice to attend all the investigation session to make sure that the child is not subjected to pressure and to follow-up on his condition and circumstances. Based on the report of the delegate, the juvenile shall be referred to the penitentiary or Roumieh prison depending on the crime. As per article 13 of the Juvenile Protection Law, the juvenile must be given lessons and trained on a profession while following-up on their physical, psychological and moral affairs during the detention period. The trial shall always be confidential, noting that the child may be exempted from attending the trial if their best interest requires so, while being represented by an attorney. The judicial assistance system must be activated, the Bar Association in Beirut and Tripoli must be supported to provide the necessary funding, a system must be put in place to monitor and account the assigned attorneys from the Bar Association to plead and to defend the juvenile within the judicial assistance system.

The proceeding and investigation procedures are not being implemented, as juveniles are being arrested for undetermined periods of time or detained with adults or in unhealthy prisons. A number of arrested juveniles waits for more than two years to be brought to trial, although the instructions insist on the need to make to go as fast as possible with these cases, mainly due to the low number of judges and the lack of judicial serious judicial assistance, in addition to other measures related to juveniles. As such, a great discrepancy is detected between the law and its implementation.

The appeal right mentioned in article 44 of law 422 is a dilemma itself, as the judgment of the Juvenile Judge is final in the offenses cases. A judgment may be reviewed in a retrial in accordance with the conditions provided for in article 328 of the criminal proceedings law. As for the felony cases, the appeal of the judgments of the Juvenile Court may only be filed to the Court of Cassation.

A criminal penalty rendered by a judge (such as prison for instance instead of community service, etc.) listed in the criminal record of a juvenile raises many critics.

Recommendations approved by Lebanon on Child Protection:

- 137-132: Improving the conformity between the national legislation and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly the legal position from physical punishment of children and the provisions relating to the minimum age of criminal responsibility.
- 151-132: Increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 12 years as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- 150-132: Increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 12 years.
- 131-132: Limiting the marriages of children and amending law no 422 issued in 2002 pertaining to the protection of juvenile offending the law in order to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility as per the international standards.

Based on the aforementioned updates, we did not detect a progress towards increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility of children. We request the Lebanese government to work in the next two years on amending it, while taking into consideration all the violations against children at the investigation and detention process and their involvement with adults in crimes, in addition to determining the specifications of penalties and implementing them within the penitentiaries which work on developing and rehabilitating children in conflict with the law.

◀ Violation and Gender-Based Violence ▶

The dilemma of violence against children is a phenomenon existing in Lebanon in all its forms, starting from the negligence or treatment with negligence, meaning the failure to meet the physical and social needs of children, to protect him from danger, to provide him with medical services or to register births or other services, in addition to other problems relating to the communication between parents and children, discrimination, violence in all its kinds, ambiguity of the Lebanese laws in this regard (for instance article 168 of the penal law allowing to subject a child to a penalty if he deserves it, as per the common customs).

A study carried out in 2006 showed that %16.1 of children aged between 8 and 11 years old are subjected to sexual abuse, %54.1 of children are subjected to physical abuse, %40.8 of children are witnessing domestic violence, %64.9 of children are subjected to psychological abuse. The reason behind these figures is the failure to provide protection and care to children exposed to violence (lack in specialized welfare institutions in Lebanon); lack in the penal law in term of the offender punishment; a social mentality still refusing to admit the problem in fear of scandals; failure to activate the hotline of the Ministry of Social Affairs (1714); absence of a unified national referral system related to child protection; failure to raise the awareness of children on their rights and particularly their right to report abuse; failure to implement/adopt the Unified Child Protection Policy instrument of civil institutions and organizations working with children in Lebanon issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs in partnership with ABAAD Association and Association du Foyer de l'Enfant Libanais (AFEL) in all organizations concerned with children protection, as well as in government institutions and schools.

The national study on sexual abuse of children in Lebanon, which is the first study of its kind at the national level, showed that %4.1 of children in Lebanon were subjected to sexual abuse in 2013 and warned of the weak family conditions which formed a ground to commit sexual abuses against children. The field study carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Higher Council of Childhood in partnership with Dar Al-Amal Association in Lebanon, with the support of Diakonia Organization and ECPAT – France, revealed that %4.1 of the sample children were subjected to sexual abuse in 2013, which is a low rate compared to the sensitivity of the subject, %47.2 of the victims go to public schools, %19.1 are not enrolled in schools and %18 are workers.

The study showed that the highest rates of sexual abuse of children occurred in the North District (%33), then the South District (%22) and the lowest rates occurred in Nabatiyeh (%7). It was also noted that the rate of females in

the sample subjected to sexual abuse was %53.9 while the rate of males was estimated at %46.1. the study clarified the types of sexual abuse of children, noting that the most common type of sexual abuse was verbal, as %43 of the victims were obliged to listen to sexual words in person or over the phone or in the form of jokes and stories with sexual implications or conversations with a sexual subject, followed by preliminary sexual offences (%30) and visual sexual abuse (%30), such as making a child see pornographic images, books, magazines or movies.

Abuse is an obvious violation of the commitment of Lebanon mentioned in the introduction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued in 1948 and the international conventions protecting these rights, including the International Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20.11.1989 and signed by Lebanon on 20.11.1990. Law no 2002/422 provided for the implementation of these conventions. However, article 25 thereof is the only article tackling the protection of children exposed to danger, which gives the judge a discretionary authority based on the values, principles and traditions impacting thereby the issued protection decisions. Article 186 of the penal law allows "disciplinary beating of children by parents and teachers in accordance with the common customs". In this frame, PM Simon Abi Ramia submitted an urgent and repeated draft law to amend this article but the suggestion was rejected.

The problems facing child protection in Lebanon and the procedures to achieve an improvement in this regard are the following:

- Failure in providing protection, care and specialized services to children exposed to violence (lack in the number of welfare institutions / shelters in Lebanon – the need to have resort to alternative family arrangements).
- Lack in the penal law in terms of the punishment of the offender.
- Failure to activate the hotline of the Ministry of Social Affairs (1714).
- Failure to establish a sexual education suitable with the prevailing environment and Lebanese community in private and public schools.
- Follow-up and implementation of the unified referral system of child protection.
- Lack of trust and awareness of citizens in the efficiency and implementation of the laws in Lebanon.
- Absence of a specialized mechanism to activate the role of family through positive education patterns, which led to a social mentality focused on discrimination and gender-based violence, violent education methods and specialized positive education curriculums.
- Absence of non-academic activities targeting children on the non-violent communication with others, their rights and limits and others' limits.
- Annuling article 186 fully.

The recommendations approved by Lebanon are as follows:

- **137-132: Improving the conformity between the national legislation and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly the legal position from physical punishment of children and the provisions relating to the minimum age of criminal responsibility.**
- **135-132: Taking the necessary measures to ensure the full conformity of the national legislations with the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocol.**
- **142-132: Promoting the legal and policy protection forms to ensure the rights of the child in accordance with the provisions of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its optional protocol.**
- **141-132: Achieving an improvement in promoting and protecting the rights of the child, including the measures to fight sexual exploitation and labor exploitation.**
- **140-132: Achieving a progress in terms of the measures to be taken to provide specialized psychological and medical services for children victims of abuse, and to fight the worst types of child labor.**
- **195-132: Promoting the efforts aiming at ensuring the protection and the dignity of Syrian refugees, particularly in terms of healthcare, access to education and protection of children, women, elderly and persons with disabilities exposed to danger.**
- **126-132: Deploying efforts to fight domestic violence, sexual harassment and women exploitation, particularly teenagers and women supporting their families without a partner or girls raising their children.**
- **136-132: Promoting the measures aiming at protecting children and women from all types of abuse.**

Based on the aforementioned, Lebanon still suffers from all types of violence against children, despite law no 2002/422 and the law on the protection from domestic violence, the commitment of Lebanon to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and protection from gender-based violence. As such, the implementation of these laws must be prioritized in order to provide the necessary protection to children from violence.

< Right to Identity >

The law in Lebanon does not give women the right to give their children and foreign husband the Lebanese nationality, which is a major risk leading to stateless cases and related breaches of the rights of the child . The amendment made in 2001 to the legislative decree relating to the ownership of properties by non-Lebanese persons of 1969 intentionally excluded the stateless persons, impacting thereby the refugees and foreigners who do not hold a nationality from a recognized country .

Stateless children face problems due to the failure to register the child after birth or if the child is born to a Lebanese mother and foreign father. Furthermore, the Palestinian children not holding identity documents cannot be registered with UNRWA, and thus they are deprived from their human rights and basic services. Stateless children (and persons in general) cannot access health services, education and other social services, in addition to the labor market. They are incapable of moving freely and face the risk of arrest and detention . Article 1 of the Lebanese Nationality Law defines a Lebanese as a child born to a Lebanese father, as the Lebanese mother married to a foreigner cannot give her nationality to her family, while the man is entitled to give his nationality to his wife and children. This is despite the fact that the Lebanese Constitution stipulates that male and female citizens are equal before the law in rights and obligations without any discrimination whatsoever. This law is also in contradiction with the international conventions signed by Lebanon providing for equality between all citizens.

This issue is related to demographic balance, as well as political and religious considerations in Lebanon.

Furthermore, the children of immigrant workers also face discrimination. They usually do not hold identity cards or even birth certificates in some case as they are unrecognized refugee children or the children of immigrant workers with expired residency permits. Despite the ministerial resolution no 2003/47 exempting all students in public schools from registration fees in KGs and the 1st and 2nd grade of elementary school, the foreign children cannot be registered without identity documents .

The children of a Lebanese mother, particularly Palestinian refugees, suffer from several problems starting with education as the priority in schools is given to Lebanese students, deprivation from practicing free professions, joining syndicates and unemployment due to nationality. The property ownership law determines for foreigners a specific ownership rate, while those who come from unrecognized countries are not entitled to ownership. Furthermore, they have difficulties to travel abroad. The Lebanese officials are discussing the possibility of granting the Lebanese woman the right to pass her nationality to her family, while excluding the women married to Palestinians, noting that the number of these marriages is low and estimated at 3707 marriages as per the last statistic announced by the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, an official Lebanese authority.

Lebanese mothers give life to their children but not nationality. Depriving women from giving nationality to their children is not only a violation of women's rights but also of the rights of the child.

The same issue faces those threatened with becoming stateless due to the inability to register births in Lebanon, particularly due to the Syrian crisis. According to the UNHCR, Lebanon is witnessing around %70 of unregistered birth of Syrian refugees. This rate is high due to several reasons including the lack of required identity documents because of the war, in addition to other reasons such as the inability of the parents to get a valid residency permit and thus the newborn is a victim of the legal status of the parents in the country; failing to obtain a birth certificate from the physician or certified midwife, particularly since refugees who are not registered with UNHCR cannot benefit from child delivery medical coverage ranging between %70 and %100 and thus they are not capable of settling the fees of the physician. As a result, the hospitals abstain from issuing a birth certificate.

Furthermore, the number of stateless children is in a continuous increase due to the flow of Syrian refugees .

Recommendations on the Right to Identity and Nationality:

- **6-132: Withdrawing its reservations made to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – Portugal, Slovenia, Croatia, Paraguay and taking all necessary measures to also withdraw its reservations made to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – Republic of Korea – and article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as allowing women to pass their nationality to their children (Norway) and reviewing all the reservations made to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), including that relating to article 9-2 for the purpose of annulling it (Uruguay).**

- 9-132: Taking further measures to eliminate discrimination against women, as per article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), by withdrawing its reservation to article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and allowing women to pass their nationality to their children like men do (Sweden).
- 155-132: Amending the Law of Nationality to ensure that women acquired the right to pass their nationality to their children and husbands.
- 157-132: Making the necessary legislative amendments to allow children born in Lebanon to be recognized by the law through birth certificates.
- 30-132: Amending the legislations to treat women equally to men in terms of marriage, divorce, inheritance and the ability to pass their nationality to their children and husbands.
- 88-132: Deploying all efforts to eliminate discrimination against women in law and practice by amending the legislations of civil status and nationality and penal law.
- 132-153: Improving the birth registration system and ensuring that the system is available to register all children born in Lebanon.
- 215-132: Improving the condition of the refugees by facilitating their registration and renewing their residency permits, or by establishing an efficient birth registration system to avoid stateless cases of the newborn children; enabling the refugees, including the Palestinian refugees, to access some positions in the public sector.
- 154-132: Taking the necessary legal and administrative steps to ensure the registration of refugee children born in Lebanon and issuing the necessary documents to prove the registration, without prejudice to the issue of permanent residency or nationality.

Based on the aforementioned recommendations approved by Lebanon, we do not see any improvement relating to the amendment of the Lebanese nationality law and annulment of the discriminatory laws against Lebanese woman, in particular in terms of the custody of her children and civil status laws. Moreover, the birth registration of refugee children still requires a valid residency permit, leading to a number of stateless children, which will raise a legal problem when they return to Syria.

◀ Children Trafficking ▶

Lebanon took several initiatives to amend the laws by approving a number of international conventions: International Labor Organization Convention No 182 for the year 1999 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and the immediate measures to eliminate it (by virtue of law no 335 dated on 21 August 2001) and the attached Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2002 on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (by virtue of law no 414 dated on 05 June 2002. In 2005, Lebanon also signed a number of international conventions and protocols, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (by virtue of law 680 dated on 24 August 2005) Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (by virtue of law 681 dated on 24 August 2005) and Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (by virtue of law 682 dated on 24 August 2001).

In 2008, Lebanon also signed the Arab Charter on Human Rights ratified in Tunisia on 23 May 2004 at the Arab League Summit in its 16th session, preventing in article 10 thereof "all forms of slavery and trafficking in human beings", and "Trafficking for the purpose of prostitution as well as exploitation of prostitution of others, or exploitation of children in armed conflicts" (refer to law no 1 dated on 05 September 2008).

As per paragraph 1 of article 53 of the Charter, Lebanon reserved the right to implement its internal laws or the provisions of International Convention on Human Rights ratified by it which provide better rights, while in conformity with the aforementioned laws and conventions. Lebanon joined it the same year as the Optional Protocol of Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (commonly known as the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT)) (by virtue of law no 12 dated on 05 September 2008).

The Lebanese Parliament promulgated law no 164 dated on 24 August 2011 penalizing the crime of human trafficking, which made a huge progress in terms of the description of the crime, the identification of the victims and the definition of exploitation, promoting thereby the legal protection of trafficking victims. However, the nature of the law remained punitive, as it provided for penalties imposed on the perpetrator of the crime but without mentioning the victim protection procedures in the victim description part. The only protection given was witness protection, conditioned to the non-objection of the suspect defendant. Thus, the following reforms are needed:

- Adopting laws and decrees to ensure suitable protection and support to the victims, particularly children, and eliminating any contradiction or confusion with the previous legal texts.
- Ensuring that the trafficking victims are not treated like criminals: burden of evidence on the authorities not the victim.
- Guaranteeing the right of the victim to participate in the legal process, which may require the issuance of a residency permit.
- Requiring firmer mechanisms and procedures to ensure the confidentiality of the witness identity.

◀ Minor Marriage ▶

The civil status laws in Lebanon vary with the variety of the religions and sects, as each one of its 18 sects has its own law. The minimum age of marriage depends on the religion of the applicant. The minimum age of marriage also differs between men and women in the same sect and religion. For instance, some religions in Lebanon allow the girl to get married at the age of 9 (Shiite sect – Jaafari Denomination) or 12 years or 14 years for the Catholic and Orthodox sects (Armenian and Syriac) and Evangelical sect. Due to the particularities of the civil status of each sect, early marriage is still allowed legally, which is in contradiction with CEDAW, especially since Lebanon made a reservation of article 16 thereof. This situation is a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Early marriage comes in contradiction with the simplest rules of marriage. Minor marriage can be considered human trafficking as per article 586 of the penal law (early marriage is deemed as an exploitation).

A number of civil society institutions led campaigns requesting to set the age of 18 years old as the minimum age of marriage, by highlighting the disadvantages and risks of early marriage, as well as awareness campaigns targeting girls.

Although Lebanon acknowledged the Juvenile Protection Law no 422 for the year 2002, it did not tackle the subject of minor marriage.

We still have regions in Lebanon, particularly in the rural areas, registering early marriages of girls under 18 years old, which reflects the tragic reality impacting Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian women equally.

This reality is worsening with time due to the increase in the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, despite the lack of specific and clear statistics in this field.

Although article 522 of the penal law was annulled on 15 February 2017, which exempts the perpetrator of sexual crimes from punishment if he marries the victim, noting that the annulment was only of this article without the other articles attached to it. The most important thereof is the marriage of minors and article 505 pertaining to the sexual intercourse with a minor stipulating that "he who has sex with a minor aged between 15 and 18 years old shall be sentenced for a period ranging between two months and two years", the provisions of the annulled article were added to article 505 now stipulating that "if a valid marriage was concluded between the perpetrator and the victim aged between 15 and 18 years old, the pursuit shall end".

Thus, it is necessary to annul article 522 entirely without exceptions and to set the minimum age of marriage at 18 years old.

The measures taken by the Lebanese Government to protect women and girls from sexual abuse lack a comprehensive vision and clear policies, due to the existing link between the law and the religious, social, political and economic contexts. Violence against women is a result of the historical social structure characterized by the hierarchy and authoritarianism legally covered through the continuous dependency of women on men, which is a serious obstacle to equal human rights between men and women.

As for the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review 2015 on the amendment and prohibition of minor marriage, Lebanon noted the recommendations without approving them:

- 37-132: Adopting laws to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility and eliminating minor, early and compulsory marriage.
- 92-132: Adopting the draft law on minor marriage.
- 132-132: Adopting the draft law on minor marriage.
- 131-132: Limiting child marriage and amending law no 422 for the year 2002 pertaining to the protection of

juvenile offenders of the law, in order to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility in accordance with the international standards.

- 130-132: Prohibiting child marriage.
- 212-132: Taking measures to protect refugees, women and girls seeking refuge from economic and sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, including rape, as well as child marriage, compulsory marriage and discrimination.

Although Lebanon disapproved all recommendations relating to minor marriage, it is still liable for creating a conformity between the local laws and regulations of the conventions ratified by Lebanon, the most important thereof is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, meaning that Lebanon has to amend and annul all laws in contradiction with the conventions including minor marriage.

◀ Children in Armed Conflicts ▶

The Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child pertaining to the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts (OPAC), also known as the child soldier treaty, was submitted on 25 May 2000 and entered into effect on 23 February 2002. The rights of the child require special protection and continuous improvement without discrimination, given that a child must be raised in peace and security.

UN defined a child soldier as any child below the age of 18 associated with an armed force or armed group, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes. The recruitment of children in armed conflicts is a war crime and human trafficking crime as the child moves in the same country or between countries for exploitation purposes. The involvement of children in military operations is caused by several reasons, including the search for security, protection, food, intimidation, power, avenging the death of a family member and accessing education and work opportunities.

In order to protect and limit the involvement of children in armed conflicts, it is strictly prohibited to recruit children under the age of 18 years old and it is required to support their release from armed groups to reintegrate them in the civil life through reintegration programs and to consider these child soldiers as victims.

The Convention on Human Rights specifically requested to prevent the involvement of children below the age of 18 years old in armed conflicts. Lebanon signed the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts without ratifying it.

Recommendations approved by Lebanon in this aspect are as follows:

- 11-132: To ratify the Optional Protocol of the Convention of the Rights of the Child pertaining to the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts.
- 12-132: Reviewing the possible ratification of Optional Protocol of the Convention of the Rights of the Child pertaining to the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts.
- 135-132: Taking specific measures to ensure the conformity between the national legislations and the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.
- 142-132: Promoting the legal and policy protection forms to ensure the rights of the child in accordance with the provisions of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its optional protocol.

Based on the aforementioned, Lebanon has failed to make an improvement in ratifying the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts.



Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

◀ Child Labor ▶

Lebanon signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child provided in article 32 thereof that "States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the Child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development".

Child labor is one of the most important risks hindering the development as well as the physical and psychological health of children in Lebanon. In 2010, at the International Conference on Child Labor held in The Hague, the Lebanese government set a road map to eliminate the worst types of child labor by year 2016. As such, the Lebanese government, through the Ministry of Labor, adopted a national action plan to eliminate the worst forms of child labor prior to 2016.

The reality reflects However reflects the opposite given the gradual increase in the number of children trapped in child labor and street children and the aggravation of risks subjected to those children, particularly with the refugee crisis which increased these number dramatically. In this context, the last official statistics in 2003 revealed that 100,000 children are involved in child labor, while noting that the current estimations refer to 180,000 children, reflecting the absence of follow-up and planning .

Refugees were never in any form the main reasons of this phenomenon. There are main factors pushing children to streets such as marginalization or social exclusion, vulnerable family situation, flow of Syrian refugees, organized crime and children exploitation .

A study conducted by the International Labor Organization and Saint Joseph University revealed that %29.5 of child labor in the North of Lebanon and %36.5 of child labor in Bekaa are below 14 years old, which the minimum legal working age. The first involvement of most of the street children in the labor market happens between the age of 7 and 14. The percentage of working children between the ages of 12 and 14 is %39, very close to the %36 of working children between the age of 7 and 11.

Children are exposed to several risks when working in the streets, including lifting heavy weights (%39) and traffic accidents (%30). Around %29 of street children were fired or arrested by security and police, and %3 of children stated not receiving their agreed-upon daily wage.

Prostitution is within the activities practiced by children at a rate of %0.2 only, whereas %17 of the female children were subjected to sexual abuse or rape, and %46 of the children were subjected to sexual abuse by passengers. The majority of the street children are illiterate and/or were never enrolled in schools. The rate of illiterate children is %42, almost equal to the rate of children who were never enrolled in schools (%40).

Children are involved in dangerous labor, and labor that may cause diseases. They may spend long hours in unsafe facilities and receive low income. They are trapped in jobs that do not meet their physical and mental growth and skills. The workplaces employing children are not legally registered and are not subjected to a legal frame or inspection. The agricultural work is a seasonal work that overlaps with school time, and thus hinders children' academic development on the long term; these children will feel behind their classmates' level, which may result in dropping out of school. Children are also exploited in terms of wage and working hours, violence, beating and sexual abuse. Child labor is related to economic crisis, low income, lack of work opportunities and absence of education.

It is necessary to enable the management of the Ministry of Labor along with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the complaints mechanism, while imposing a penalty on the parents in case of allowing their children to work.

Recommendations approved by Lebanon on the protection of children from labor risks are as follows:

- 120-132: Taking the necessary measures to confront the torture of human beings, including the detained immigrants and the child labor phenomenon and to ensure the access of all children to education without restraints.
- 141-132: Promoting and protecting the rights of the child, including the measures to fight sexual exploitation and labor exploitation.
- 133-132: Establishing a strategy to combat child labor.
- 134-132: Executing the measures concerned with combatting child labor.
- 140-132: Achieving a progress in terms of the measures taken to provide specialized psychological and medical services for children subjected to abuse, and combatting the worst form of child labor.

◀ Education ▶

The public expenditure on education is continuously decreasing in Lebanon from %2 in 2008 to %1.6 in 2011 , which is less than half the expenditure allocated by Arab countries to education. As such, the public expenditure contributes to the discrepancy between the quality of public and private education and creates further inequality in access to education. In this frame and whereas the national action plan for educations aims at addressing the deficiencies in the educational system quality, the low education system quality in public schools pushes Lebanese families to accept the financial burden of private elementary school, due to the lack of trust in the public school, particularly in KGs and the elementary school. It should be noted that %54.5 of teachers in the public sector do not hold university degrees, %4.2 only hold a specialized university degree and more than %30 of the directors of elementary and lower secondary schools do not hold university degrees .

In the implementation of law no. 150 dated from 17 August 2011 tackling the necessity of mandatory education until the completion of the elementary school and in the preparation for the implementation of the new law, the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) carried out a study entitled "towards binding children to enroll in school between the ages of 15 – 6 years old" in 2012, but the mechanism was not announced yet.

In accordance with law no 2011/150 stating that education in Lebanon is mandatory and free for the elementary school only, it should also cover secondary school in order to ensure the maturity and capacity of the children to make the appropriate decision on whether or not to continue their education. In this frame, it is necessary to provide the books, stationery, transportation and uniforms for free to students, as the parents are not able to provide the educational requirements. In the meanwhile, the parents should be forced to enroll their children in schools, through a penal text imposing a financial fine on the parents if the case is otherwise.

The educational system in Lebanon suffers from different problems, including the verbalism in education, the need for private lessons, long hours of studying, etc. in addition to preferring the private education sector over the public one. The private sector gathers more than %65 of the total students in the different education phases, due to the low qualifications of the educational and administrative staff in public schools, absence of a suitable educational environment in terms of buildings and equipment, unconformity between the administrative and regulatory systems of the sector with the development requirements, weakness in foreign languages, lack of a curriculum supporting information technology and communication as an educational method. These add to the enrollment of refugees in public schools, as per the decision for the academic year 2018 – 2017 stipulating the conditions and regulations for the enrollment of non-Lebanese students conditioned to be old students, born to a Lebanese mother, Palestinian children residing in Lebanon since before the Syrian crisis who do not have access to UNRWA schools in the geographic scope of their residency and non-Lebanese siblings of students who may be transferred to the afternoon shifts. The Syrian students residing in Lebanon without residency permit cannot issue an official certificate upon completing the lower secondary school.

The issue of inequality between female and male is clear in the educational curriculums, as %60.7 of the language used in the Arabic language books in the elementary school addressed males versus %13.49 addressing females (book of exercises and activities to increase the interaction between students uses "us/are"). Children should be protected from institutional and domestic violence in cooperation with the council of parents and in coordination with the protection policy in public and private schools, code of conduct and complaints filing and follow-up. In this frame, the role of the Directorate of Guidance at the Ministry of Education should be activated.

The integration of children with special needs in public schools still lacks in light of the absence of a national strategy for the integration of children with disabilities in education. Although section 7 of law no 2000/220 on the right of persons with disabilities to education, a number of obstacles is still facing this access including: absence of statistics, data and studies relating to persons with disabilities, lack of suitable public and private schools with the infrastructure and environment suitable for persons with disabilities, lack of amendments made to the

educational curriculum and associated resources to become in conformity with the needs of students with visual, hearing and mental disability, and rareness of employees in the education sector and public sector and lack of appropriate training provided to them to deal with the needs of persons with disabilities.

As per the "Background Paper for Education for All" issued by UNESCO in 2010 , the great majority of children with disabilities are placed in private healthcare institutions, as private schools have a policy to automatically drop students with disabilities .

Recommendations related to the right to education:

- 19-132: Ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and executing the national plan efficiently to have the education system accessible to children with disabilities.
- 178-132: Improving the access to educational, health and social services, particularly for children and women.
- 185-132: Deploying further efforts to improve the life of persons with disabilities, by establishing and executing policy tools to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities.
- 190-132: Promoting the measures aiming at integrating the persons with disabilities in the mechanism of public schools.
- 173-132: Making the elementary school mandatory, free and accessible to all children.
- 175-132: Deploying efforts aiming at establishing a free and mandatory education to all children below the age of 15 years old.
- 176-132: Deploying efforts aiming at establishing a good, free and mandatory education to children below the age of 15 years old.
- 177-132: Providing sufficient and sustainable resources for education.
- 179-132: Promoting and expanding the educational infrastructure to allow good and comprehensive education to all children.
- 180-132: Continuing with the efforts aiming at improving the quality of education and establishing a free and mandatory education for all.
- 181-132: Ensuring a free, mandatory and good education for all children.
- 182-132: Establishing a free, mandatory and good education gradually and increasingly to all children below the age of 15 years old.
- 191-132: Executing policies focused on integrating children with special needs in the public education system, preparing the school buildings in accordance with their needs, providing training to teachers and other educational staff members in order to promote an enabling and comprehensive environment for all in the education field.
- 192-132: Intensifying the efforts aiming at integrating the persons with special needs in schools.
- 193-132: Promoting the education system and ensuring the access of children with disabilities to education equally with others.
- 139-132: Continuing the efforts deployed by the Lebanese Government to improve the education system work progress, by encouraging enrollment in schools and protecting street children from the worst forms of child labor.

The recommendations disapproved by Lebanon are the following:

- 217-132: Promoting the efforts aiming at ensuring the protection and dignity of Syrian refugees, particularly in terms of healthcare, access to education and protection of women, children elderly and persons with disabilities exposed to danger.

The recommendations insisting on making the education mandatory for children below the age of 15 years old is within the recommendation approved by Lebanon. However, in terms of the implementation thereof, there is no legal text binding parents to enroll their children in school. As such, a financial fine shall be imposed in case of failure to enroll children in school, especially as elementary education is free of charge in terms of fees, books and stationary in all public schools. Thus, parents do not have an excuse to abstain from enrolling their children in elementary school.

As for the integration of children with disabilities in regular schools, the obstacles in this regard are still present, which is why children with disabilities still attend specialized schools particular for their condition.

References

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6. <https://www.unrwa.org/>
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23. Arab Resource Collective [14 :2007].





◀ Palestinian Refugees 2010 and 2015 ▶

- Palestinian Human Rights Organization – PHRO
- Najdeh Association
- Mousawat Association
- Centre for Refugee Rights – Aidoun
- Women Humanitarian Organization – PWHO

Introduction:

Approximately, 500,000 Palestine Refugees are registered by UNRWA in Lebanon; however, more than half of them are no longer present in the country. "According to a study conducted by the American University in Beirut in Cooperation with UNWRA in 2015, between 260,000 and 280,000 Palestinian refugees currently reside in Lebanon (PRS), and there has been a decrease in the number of Palestinian refugees from Syria living in Lebanon (PRS) registered by UNRWA. A recent comprehensive head count carried out by UNRWA showed that between December 2014 and the end of December 2016, the number of PRS decreased from 41,413 to 32,000. And according to "The National Population and Housing Census of Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon", conducted by the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee LPDC in Dec. 2017, there are 174,422 Palestinian refugees (PRL) currently in Lebanon as well as another 18,601 (PRS) who fled the neighbouring conflict in Syria to camps and gatherings in Lebanon.

The LPDC since 2006, has issued several articles concerning the Palestinian refugees' situation, the most important of which are the «A unified Lebanese vision for Palestinian refugee issues in Lebanon « and "The National Population and Housing Census of Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon ", first-ever conducted by Lebanon in 2017.

This number, 174,422 refugees, includes all three Palestinian refugees PRL categories , who are deprived of rights and face anti-refugee sentiments propaganda , discrimination, restrictions related to their right to work , and prohibition to own property . The majority of them are marginalized, and live in tough socioeconomic conditions in 12 crowded refugee camps.

The Lebanese Government treats PRS as tourists rather than as refugees. Consequently, up until August 2014, PRS were required to secure residency permits in compliance with legal procedures governing entrance and stay in Lebanon. However, after August 2014, the Lebanese Government introduced a no stay policy specifically targeting PRS. As part of this policy, the Lebanese Government hindered the entry of PRS and the renewal of their residency permits. These procedures made PRS stay in Lebanon illegal; exposing them to the risk of arrest and prosecution. These policies are one of the main reasons for the sharp decline in the number of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon, roughly from 80,000 (in its highest) to about 18,000 currently.

The Palestinian NGOs coalition in 2015 has issued the Joint Submission: "Human Rights Violations Perpetrated against Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon" that addresses four categories of Palestinian refugees; the three categories relating to Palestinian refugees PRL and the fourth one being Palestinian refugees that fled from Syria PRS, who suffer from many forms of discrimination under Lebanese legislation. The Palestinian refugees' legal status has not been clearly defined and there is no obligatory legal framework which ensures their protection; consequently, they are subject to numerous violations and discriminations of their civil and socio-economic rights. PRL suffer from (a) ambiguous legal status and absence of protection; and (b) violations of their right to work, own property, adequate housing, health, fair trial, and freedom of association, opinion, expression and movement. Over the last 70 years, the ambiguous legal status and absence of protection for PRL has direly affected their wellbeing. Furthermore, numerous legal restrictions have hindered the enjoyment of their civil and socio-economic rights.

Moreover, Palestinian refugees face many other obstacles and social challenges that have been accumulated due to the: legislative restraints; standard double-handle; and lack of Lebanese consolidated concrete vision and policies, despite having been refugees in Lebanon for 70 years. Furthermore, they are subject to numerous violations and discrimination of their rights while leaving the entire burden to UNRWA , in conjunction with resource shortage, deficit and the absent of protection.

The Lebanese government response to implement the recommendations received in the UPR cycle 2015 was raised in the Palestinian NGOs joint submission, including the "Right to freedom of movement, travel and residence" (10.12 Recommendation 8: Issue machine-readable travel documents for PRL in compliance with international standards for travel documents) and "the General directorate of general security is declaring that starting 2016/11/01, Palestinian refugees are issued a biometric passport registered in the refugees' category in Lebanon" .

Overview:

This report seeks to assess the implementation of the recommendations that Lebanon received in UPR cycles in 2010 and 2015, and focuses on Palestinian refugees' recommendations status. Unfortunately, the UPR recommendations for Lebanon in 2015 , specifically those related to Palestinian refugees' , were all "noted", rather than accepted .

Therefore, there is no perceptible progress in the recommendations that are related to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, demanding to enhance their rights, legal framework, protection and well-being. This hardens the process of monitoring the progress over the reporting period, especially since the efforts that CSOs have made are in the direction of promoting both Lebanese obligations and the rule of law rather than monitoring the progress in improving the human rights situations of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

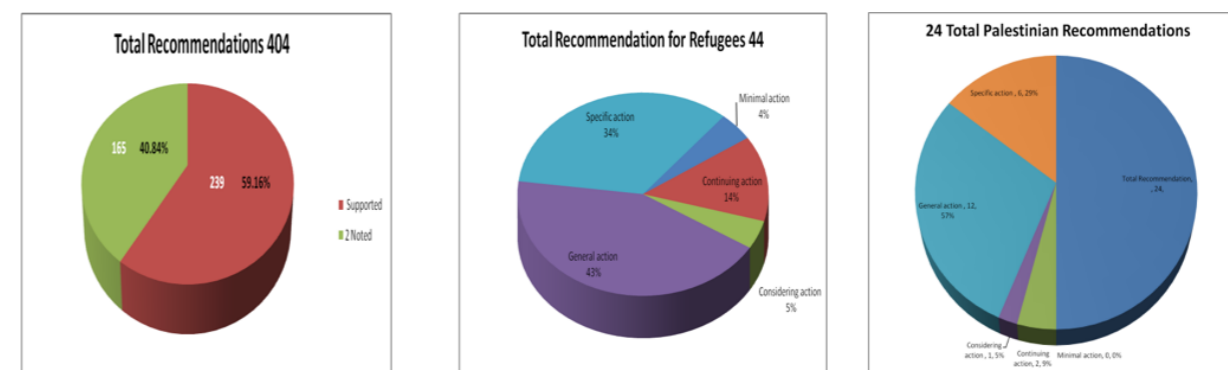
The HRC "delegation clarified that a high percentage of the noted recommendations could have been accepted; furthermore, they clarified that the majority of the noted recommendations had not been accepted because their implementation could not be ensured in the upcoming years. Simply, Lebanon has decided to accept what it thinks can fulfil" .

In this context, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, despite their refugee status for over 70 years, are facing the dire human rights situation especially related to their right to work, right to own property, discrimination against women, and human trafficking, while a few inadequate advanced measures have been taken, only relating to the right to work, with partially amending labour law 2010/129 and social security law 2010/128. Moreover, Lebanon's Palestinian camps suffer serious problems, with varying degrees of poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, poor housing conditions and lack of infrastructure.

Despite accepting Recommendations 11-6-5-4-3-2-1) 80], outlined in A/HRC/18/16 Report (17 March 2011), of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Lebanon (WGUPRL), and the Lebanese Government did not fulfil these recommendations and there is no tangible progress in their implementation. The Lebanese Government has therefore failed to uphold its commitments to the Human Rights Council (HRC). Similarly, despite claims to the contrary, the Lebanese Government has failed to implement the recommendations of A/HRC/18/16 Report (17 March 2011) of the WGUPRL. The Lebanese Government has made progress in implementing Recommendation 6)81] by implementing Law 2011/164 which criminalizes human trafficking. However, Recommendations -15-14 -10-2-1)81 26-25-17) have still not been implemented and little progress has been made in implementing Recommendations 21-16-13-9-8-7-4)81]

Overview Assessment of Implementation:

There has been not much positive progress since Lebanon's UPR first cycle in 2010 and the second one in 2015. In both cycles, Lebanon received in total 404 recommendations, out of which only 44 recommendations are related to refugees (11 of them supported and 33 noted), with only 24 direct recommendations (18 in 1st cycle in 2010 and 6 in the 2nd cycle 2015) relating to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In the 1st cycle in 2010, six recommendations were supported and 12 noted; in 2015, all the six direct recommendations were noted.



Follow-up on supported/noted Recommendations of 2010 and 2015

The Palestinian NGOs coalition has focused in the joint UPR midterm report on both the supported and noted recommendations. Our priority is to assess the progress in five main themes as follows:

Legal Personality

Twenty recommendations were received (16 in 2nd cycle and 4 in 1st cycle), with only one recommendation directly related to Palestinian refugees in cycle one under asylum-seekers – refugees, freedom of movement and Labour issues.

Response to received recommendations

- Further improve the enjoyment of all human rights by Palestinian refugees, granting them a legal treatment no worse than to other non-nationals, especially with regard to right to work and to freedom of movement taking into account the responsibility of the international community. (82.34) Noted
- Develop a comprehensive policy at the national level, consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, with the view to achieving gender equality and to combat gender violence. (80.24) Supported
- Pursue its efforts to put an end to remaining discriminations against women and Palestinian refugees (132.211) Noted

Brief Assessment

- Lack of clarity concerning the legal personality of PRL and PRS No Progress
- The Lebanese legislation does not provide a legal definition for the status of PRL, neither referring to their rights nor duties.
- Depriving PRL from owning property, as they are considered as holding the nationality of a non-recognized country, making them stateless. Situation Regressing
- Unsustainable solution to the Non-IDs' crisis. No Progress
- Discriminating against women, including depriving Lebanese women from passing on their citizenship to their children. No Progress
- Denying PRS the right to secure legal status, as refugees, in Lebanon. Minimal progress
- Depriving new-born children of PRS from being registered and securing documents. Minimal Progress
- Discriminating against Palestinian refugee women married to Lebanese husbands, in terms of hindering their acquisition of the Lebanese nationality according to article 5 of the Lebanese Nationality Law of / 1 / 11 1960, stating that «the foreign woman married to a Lebanese shall, upon her request, become Lebanese after one year from the date of registration of the marriage in the Personal Statute office» No Progress
- Depriving Palestinian refugee women, who are resident inside camps, from benefitting of Lebanese law 2014/293 «The Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence», whereby the implementation of this law at the camp level is challenged due to the absence of Lebanese authority control in the camps. Palestinian refugee camps are generally controlled by Palestinian factions, and coordination among them is limited to matters related to security. No Progress.
- Depriving Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon from family unity, whereby the woman married to a PRS husband is not allowed, according to the regulatory measures of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities dated 2014/12/31, the right to grant her husband and children access to Lebanon, like the PRL husband who is allowed the right to grant access to Lebanon for his family. No Progress.

Recommendation

- The Lebanese Government must issue a law clearly defining the legal status of PRL; guaranteeing them their civil and socio-economic rights and the right to live in dignity.
- The Lebanese Government must issue official identification documents to Non-IDs, in a sustainable manner to ensure their legal personality, dignity and equality with the rest of PRL.
- The Lebanese Government must remove its reservations to Article 9 of CEDAW and amend all relevant domestic legislation to eliminate all forms of discrimination.
- The Lebanese Government should recognize the legal status of PRS, as refugees in Lebanon and eliminate all forms of discrimination against them.

Right to work

Nine recommendations directly related to Palestinian refugees' right to work were received (3 in 2nd cycle and 6 in 1st cycle); all recommendations in 2nd cycle were noted, and two recommendations in 1st cycle were supported. In 2010, the Lebanese Government supported Recommendation 32-25)80) of 1st cycle related to strengthen its efforts to eliminate discrimination against women in law and practice. However, Lebanese labour and social security legislation continue to discriminate against refugee women and PRL.

Response to received recommendations

- "That amendment to the Labour Law and the Social Security Law granting Palestinian refugees the right to work be made operational as soon as possible". (80.32) Supported
- "Take further measures to improve the working possibilities and working conditions of the Palestinian refugees". (84.10.)Supported
- That the Ministry of Labour accelerate passing the executive decrees of the Labour Law to facilitate access to employment for Palestinians and open the prospect of work in all professional fields. (132.162) Noted
- Remove the discriminatory restrictions on access to the labour market for Palestinian refugees (132.203) Noted.

Brief Assessment

- That amendments to the Labour Law and the Social Security Law granting Palestinian refugees the right to work be made operational as soon as possible Partially Implemented
- 1. Despite the Lebanese Government's stated commitment to improve the socio-economic rights of Palestinian Refugees by amending Article 59 of Labour Law 2010/129 and Article 9 of Social Security Law 2010/128, it has not published any of the Council of Ministers' (COM) amendment decisions. Thus the implementation of these laws remains subject to decisions by consecutive labour ministers.
- Depriving PRL of working in "Liberal professions" Not Implemented
- 1. PRL are deprived from working in the so-called "Liberal professions», which require syndicate affiliation, due to legal regulations. Some of these professions require Lebanese nationality.
- Depriving PRL workers from benefiting from social security services No Progress
- 1. Article 9 of Social Security Law 2010/128 was amended, cancelling the condition of reciprocity. However, the current law still deprives PR workers from social security services and familial benefits, including maternity benefits, which negatively affects working PRL Women. Not Implemented
- Deprivation and restrictions on Palestinian refugees with disability on labour, employment and social benefits Not Implemented
- 1. The Lebanese government denied the Palestinian persons with disability from the rights enjoyed by the Lebanese people with disabilities, even though law 2000/220 does not exclude the Palestinian refugees. Section 8 article 68 in the law stated «the right of the person with disabilities in work, employment and social benefits»

Recommendation

- Amend Law 2010/129 in terms of terminating the working permits and granting PRL the right to practice so-called "Liberal professions", and issue Council of Ministries decrees to ensure the implementation of the law.
- Amend laws and bylaws that regulate syndicate professions to be in harmony with labour law and complete the abolition of reciprocity as well as abolish conditions for practicing the profession in the country of origin.
- Amend Law 2010/128, so as to allow PR workers to enjoy their full rights in social security, guarantee maternity benefits to employed PRL Women, and issue Council of Ministries decrees to ensure the implementation of the law.
- The Lebanese government has to implement and enforce law 2000/220 and guarantee the right of Palestinian refugees with disabilities to enjoy the rights and privileges granted by law 2000/220 instead of being subject to the labour law 2010/129.



◀ Right to Own Property ▶

Lebanon received five direct recommendations; three recommendations in 1st cycle and two recommendations in 2nd cycle, and all of them were noted.

Response to received recommendations, Not Implemented

- Amend its legislation to ensure that Palestinians in Lebanon have the right to inherit and register property, including the right to own land, as previously recommended. [132.40] Noted
- Consider amending legislation, which limit Palestinian refugees from owning property, considering the suffering of our people there and facilitate their lives and meet their human needs, with emphasis on the right to return as one of the basic rights to the Palestinian refugees. [132.167] Noted
- Grant Palestinian refugees the right to own land. Noted
- Take legislative action to ensure the right of the Palestinian refugees to inherit and register property, including the right to own land. Noted
- Amend legislation that restricts the ability of Palestinian refugees to own property, specifically the Presidential Decree of January 1969, as modified in April 2001. Noted

Brief Assessment

- Depriving PRL of owning real estate, under the pretext of naturalization, Law 2001/296 deprives PR from owning property, because they do not have a recognized nationality. Situation Regressing
- Expropriation of the property of PRL who owned property prior to 2001 but did not register their properties at the relevant departments. Situation Regressing
- Restrictive procedures in registering property for foreigners married to PR women. No Progress

Recommendation

- **The Lebanese Government must end discrimination against PRL by amending Law 2001/296 to allow PRL to own property.**
- **The Lebanese Government must desist from arbitrary actions that prevent the registration of property purchased before the amendment of Law 2010/296, and remove barriers to transferring the ownership of inherited real-estate, and end time limitation for surveyed sale contracts.**
- **Desist from discriminatory actions which hinder foreigners married to PRL Women from owning property.**

◀ Human Trafficking ▶

Lebanon received 15 recommendations; seven recommendations in the 1st cycle and eight recommendations in the 2nd cycle, and all of them were supported. In 2010 UPR cycle, the Lebanese Government accepted recommendations 20-19-18)80), and voiced its commitment to issue Law 2011/164. Minimal Progress

Response to received recommendations

- Adopt a National Action Plan on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and pursue measures aimed at preventing trafficking and providing appropriate protection to victims Supported
- Take adequate measures to ensure full compatibility of national legislation with the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols Supported
- Identify, protect and support victims of trafficking and forced labour
- Continue efforts on achieving gender equality and fighting against human trafficking Supported

Brief Assessment

- PRL, and PRS, have been subject to crimes against humanity. There is a concern that crimes of extermination are being perpetrated against them. In addition, they are being exposed to the worst forms of exploitation and

trafficking by fraudulent displacement brokers. Displacement brokers subject them to inhumane treatment and to the risk of death by natural disaster during their death march over land and sea, in search of asylum in safe countries. In addition, many traffickers and smugglers intend to kill the refugees through deserting them in deserts or boats, or sometimes by shooting them. Sometimes refugees fall victim to organ trafficking as well. Minimal Progress

- Protection and support for victims of trafficking; Lebanon received seven related recommendations, Minimal Progress
- Human trafficking: Particularly pertaining to women and children. Minimal Progress
- Law 2011/164 criminalizes human trafficking, while limiting the responsibility of victims forced to commit actions against the law, as stated by Article 8) 586) «a victim who proves that he was forced to commit actions punished by law or against the conditions of residence or work shall be exempted from punishment»; however, the law fails to protect victims from penal responsibility, thereby violating international standards of treatment for trafficking victims. In addition, the law lacks a human security approach and the legal protection for PRL;
- The no stay policy employed by the Lebanese Government against PRL and PRS (through its arbitrary procedures), and the exploitation of refugees' vulnerability, has contributed to the emergence of new patterns of trafficking and exploitation of women and children. These forms of exploitation include (a) forcing women and children to work long hours without payment in receipt of shelter; (b) providing payments or benefits to persons in control of PRS who exploit these refugees through begging, prostitution or domestic work - in practices similar to slavery.
- The law 2011/164 did not directly protect victims nor implement victim identification and referral procedures, which resulted in authorities arresting, detaining, and deporting trafficking victims, despite being among the most vulnerable groups, for crimes committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking. NO Progress
- Ambiguities and complexities still surround the issue of trafficking in human beings as a crime. This crime is often hidden and intertwined with other migration related matters. In the Lebanese context, policies and actions against human trafficking cannot be dealt with separately from policies and actions related to the status of migrant domestic workers and migrants working under the 'artist's visa'. The anti-trafficking response needs to be part and parcel of a wide-ranging response mechanism, which will ensure coordination between the actions taken by the authorities involved in anti-trafficking activities and those responsible for tackling broader migration issues.
- Lebanon holds a strategic location in the Mediterranean region, and its position contributes to making it simultaneously a country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking. The main issue pertaining to Lebanon as a country of origin is internal trafficking, whose victims are predominantly Lebanese children who are subjected to forced labour in street begging, sexual exploitation through child prostitution and early marriages.
- Men, women, and children among the estimated 1.5 million registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon are at risk of sex trafficking and forced labour. Restrictions on Syrians' ability to work legally in Lebanon, as well as strict enforcement of visas and residence permits, increase this population's vulnerability to trafficking. Child labour among the Syrian refugee population continues to increase, particularly in agriculture, construction, and street vending and begging; these children are highly vulnerable to forced labour, especially in the agricultural sector of Bekaa and Akkar and on the streets of main urban areas such as Beirut and Tripoli.

Recommendation

- **Lebanese Law 164 should be amended to introduce new mechanisms for the protection of victims and victim witnesses.**
- **Ensure trafficking victims are not arrested, detained, deported, or prosecuted for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking.**
- **Take steps to establish greater oversight over artiste visa holders allowed in the country, a program that contributes to the vulnerability of women to sexual exploitation.**
- **Establish a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) as a co-operative framework through which state actors fulfil their obligations to protect trafficked persons.**
- **Take adequate measures to ensure full compatibility of national legislation with the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.**
- **Adopt a National Action Plan on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and pursue measures aimed at preventing trafficking and providing appropriate protection to victims.**
- **The Lebanese Government must amend Law 2011/164 to ensure protection without discrimination for all categories of PRL and PRS who fall victim to human trafficking; with particular attention to women and children.**

◀ Palestinian Person with disabilities ▶

Lebanon received 30 recommendations; eight recommendations in the 1st cycle and 22 recommendations in 2nd cycle: 29 recommendations were supported and one recommendation noted, relating to the efforts to ensure the protection and dignity of refugees, in particular Syrian refugees, especially with regard to health care, access to education and protection of children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities in situation of risk.

Response to received recommendations

- Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Supported), Positively consider ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to fully ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to education, employment and their participation in political and public life (Supported),
- Ensure the effective implementation of the National Plan for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, especially regarding access to education and employment (Supported),
- Strengthen the efforts to ensure the protection and dignity of Syrian refugees, especially with regard to health care, access to education and protection of children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities in situation of risk (Noted)

Brief Assessment

The Palestinian refugees with disabilities are exposed to multiple forms of discrimination and deprivation within the Lebanese laws and procedures. They are faced with restrictions that keep their legal status free of any clear and binding framework to provide them with protection, although law 2000/220 states the definition of a «disabled person» and not a Lebanese person with a disability.

The law does not limit the practice of rights granted to any nationality, although it deprives the Palestinian refugees with disabilities of benefiting from the services and privileges granted by law 2000/220, which exerted a huge burden on Palestinian refugees with disabilities, making them one of the most marginalized groups and increasing the volume of suffering and deprivation.

Moreover, they are exposed to marginalization and exclusion within their community. The negative repercussions of their legal personality status as disabled persons include the freedom of movement, travel and residence, the right of accessing the facilities independently, the right to health and rehabilitation, the right to work, the right to education, the right to adequate housing, the right to own a property, the right of founding associations, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right of protection for Palestinian refugees with disabilities within the family, and respect of privacy.

- No ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Not Implemented
 - Denial of the Palestinian person with disabilities from the «disabled personal card.» Not Implemented
1. Deprivation of Palestinian refugees with disabilities who lost their identity documents from all the services and from obtaining an evidence for their personality and proving their disability. Situation Regressing
 2. Denial of the Palestinian persons with a disability fleeing from Syria to Lebanon to benefit from the contributions of the Lebanese government. Situation Regressing
- The right of moving, accommodation and travel
1. Difficulties in the movement of the Palestinian refugees with disability because of putting barriers not equipped for crossing people with disabilities to and from the Palestinian refugees camps. Situation Regressing
 2. Deprivation of people with disabilities in the camps of equipped public facilities
 3. Putting social restrictions on the Palestinian refugee women with disabilities which limits and thus prevents her from the right to move. Situation Regressing
- The right to access facilities with complete independence
1. Deprivation of Palestinian refugees with disabilities from accessing, living independently and participating fully in all aspects of life. Situation Regressing
- The right to health and rehabilitation
1. Deprivation of the Palestinian refugees with disability from medical care and rehabilitation. Situation Regressing
 2. Deprivation of Palestinian children with disabilities from medical care and health care.
- The right to education
1. Depriving Palestinian refugees with disability from education and sports activities. Situation Regressing
- The right of Palestinians with disabilities to be protected within the family
1. The Palestinian refugees with disabilities are deprived from protection of the law 2014/293 «the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence». Situation Regressing

- Privacy Respect
1. Palestinian refugees with disabilities are deprived from privacy. Situation Regressing

Recommendation

- The Lebanese government has to enforce law 2000/220 and ensure that the Palestinian refugees with disability are enjoying the rights and privileges granted by law 2000/220.
- The Lebanese government has to issue a «disabled personal card» for the disabled Palestinian refugee as part of enforcing the law 2000/220.
- The Lebanese government should grant official identification as sustainable documentation and a personal disabled card for disabled Palestinian refugees which ensures their legal personality and protects their human dignity equally to other people with disabilities in Lebanon.
- The Lebanese government should enforce law 2000/220 and equip the check points with the necessary equipment and training needed to deal with the Palestinian refugees with disability and facilitate their passing and movement during the entry and exit to camps.
- Amend law 2014/293 «Protection of women and other family members from domestic violence» in order to ensure protection for Palestinian people with disabilities within families.
- The Lebanese government should take the necessary action to ensure that the Palestinian refugees with disabilities coming from Syria enjoy the rights and privileges granted by the applicable laws and regulations, specifically the right to choose their legal representative or their right to be represented by a legitimate guardian or a family member who is civically capable.
- The Lebanese government should enforce law 2000/220 and approve procedures and decrees to ensure that Palestinian refugees with disabilities access anywhere they can independently.

◀ Conclusion ▶

Since the conclusion of the 2nd UPR cycle for Lebanon in 2015, the Government of Lebanon has reneged on many of its accepted recommendations in the 1st cycle in 2010 in the field of civil and socioeconomic rights of Palestinian refugees PRL, whereby all recommendations in the 2nd cycle were noted.

Lebanon has not yet exerted any efforts to improve the human rights situation, amend laws, or issue Council of Ministries decrees which could improve the human rights situation of Palestinian refugees in terms of legal personality, right to access the labour market, especially in the area of free professions, the right of own property and inheritance, protection and non-criminalization of the victims of human trafficking; the rights of refugees with disabilities, and the elimination of discrimination against Palestinian refugees women. There is a lack of a human security approach, as well as legal protection for PRL inside the camps, particularly women. In addition, there is exploitation of refugees' vulnerability, which contributed to the emergence of new patterns of trafficking and exploitation, especially of women and children.

Regarding the status of the rights of Palestinian refugees from Syria, PRS are still facing the absence of a legal status and the lack of protection. Moreover, they are facing bad living conditions, and restrictive measures in residence permit and renewal procedures, in their right to work, and their freedom of movement. All these conditions also continue to impact the host population of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Regarding security issues in camps, experience proved that this is the normal result of marginalization, isolation, overcrowding and deprivation of rights, causing a chaotic spread of outlaw weapons and the frustration of young people due to the lack of hope and job opportunities.

Finally, the real number shown by the census debunks allegations of danger on demography, especially since the issue of naturalization is out of the picture. We stress, however, that human rights are not related to numbers, whether it was the number of Palestinian refugees in the records of UNRWA and the Ministry of the Interior, or the outcome figures declared by the last census.

Consequently, the sovereign state of Lebanon must:

- Grant all rights to the Palestinian refugees as stipulated in the bill of Human Rights
- Assume responsibility of the Palestinian camps as part of the Lebanese territory; and to establish just security procedures, starting from a human security and safety approach.
- End racial incitement and hate speech against Palestinian refugees in media outlets.
- In cooperation with UNRWA and the international community: support the Palestinian refugees to become a productive community, regardless of the political solution that will be agreed upon or imposed.

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3. <http://www.lpd.c.gov.lb/DocumentFiles/unified20%vision636365069171725661-.pdf>
4. <http://www.lpd.c.gov.lb/selected-articles/lebanon-conducts-first-ever-census-of-palestinian/401/en>
5. The refugees of 1948, whom registered (R) with UNRWA and the Lebanese Authority, b) The refugees of 1967, whom are not registered (NR) with UNRWA, they are only registered with the Lebanese Authority, and c) the (Non ID's) most vulnerable one, whom are not registered neither with UNRWA nor with the Lebanese Authority, and those came to Lebanon after the 1970, due to the troubles of September 1970 in Jordan.
6. saying that Palestinian Refugees are heavy burden on the socioeconomic, security aspects and responsible for the outbreak of the civil war 1975
7. Despite having been refugees in Lebanon for 70 years. The amendment of Article 59 of labour Law 2010/129, exempted Palestinian Refugees from the reciprocity principle and work permit fees. However, the requirement of work permits (which need to be annually renewed) and other obstacles increases the difficulty of Palestinian Refugees accessing work; in addition the amendment did not reflect itself in the syndicates' by-laws. Consequently, Palestinian Refugees continues to be deprived of syndicate affiliation and forbidden of practicing "Liberal professions", Ref: to PHRO report related to UPR Lebanon 2015 <https://tinyurl.com/ycu5rxqr>
8. Under the pretext of naturalization, Law 2001/296 deprives Palestinian Refugees from owning property (because they do not have a recognized nationality), this not only forbidden Palestinian Refugees to own property since that date, it also put in front the Palestinian Refugees who purchased before the date of law and not completed the entire registration, and in-front those who inheriting an own property many obstacles it could reached expropriation. Ref: to PHRO report related to UPR Lebanon 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/ycu5rxqr>
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◀ Rights of Persons with Disabilities ▶

- Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU)
- Darb Al Wafaa Association for Disabled People
- Association of the Blind Persons

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) remains the most important platform for the organizations of persons with disabilities in Lebanon, in light of the failure of the Legislative Council to ratify the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), although the Lebanese government approved it in June 2007 and submitted it to the Parliament at the time among other law decrees. However, the political disagreement between the leaders deprived the persons with disabilities in Lebanon (%10 of the population) and their organizations from monitoring and follow-up mechanisms provided by the Convention and its annexed Protocol.

Lebanon's UPR was completed at the plenary session of the 31st session of the Human Rights Council in March 2016. The Council adopted the results of the second review, during which 219 recommendations were given to Lebanon, 128 of which were accepted and 91 rejected. As for the recommendations on disability issues which were approved by Lebanon, the most prominent thereof are still under discussion since 2010, particularly regarding the ratification of the International Convention and its attached Optional Protocol, and thus the development of a national strategy for the implementation of this Convention. Eighteen years have passed since the promulgation of Law 2000/220 on the rights of persons with disabilities in Lebanon, yet the relevant ministries did not take the initiative to issue the implementing decrees thereof, for several reasons including the following:

- **The government is failing to ratify the International Convention and its annexed Protocol including the process of upgrading domestic legislation to create the appropriate ground for its implementation.**
- **Absence of a national strategy to implement Law 2000/220 and to ensure access to equal opportunities in the community.**
- **Lack of comprehensive standards to be set by the departments, councils and decisions of ministries; lack of awareness in the public sector on disability issues and the rights and needs of persons with disabilities.**
- **The absence of disability issues from the local development agenda or from the criteria of public or formal social studies and statistics.**
- **Lack of coordination between the concerned ministries regarding the implementation of the law, which is affecting the potential of its implementation.**
- **Failure to include the basic needs of persons with disabilities in the general budget, which is also hindering the implementation of the law in terms of the right to work, education, health, inclusive environment, civil and political rights.**
- **Failure to access information and absence of transparency in the information provided by the ministries.**

In light of this reality, the persons with disabilities representing around %10 of the population in Lebanon (meaning nearly 400 thousand citizens) are marginalized and deprived from their basic needs. The concerned ministries present from time to time initiatives with limited impact, term and funding which are the local initiatives which impact's fades away with the end of funding and does not turn into a national strategy allowing the integration of persons with disabilities in their local communities. The report details the right to work, education, health, non-discrimination [architectural equipment and political rights] and the rights of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, in accordance with recommendations approved or noted by Lebanon in March 2016.

Recommendations approved by Lebanon / Persons with Disabilities:

17 – 132: Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Sierra Leone, Honduras and Portugal), completion of ratifications of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Turkey), acceleration of the ratification process of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Thailand) and facilitating the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Republic of Korea).

20-132: Ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol and raising the awareness of society and institutions on the right of persons with disabilities to equality and non-discrimination in all aspects of life (Mexico).

23-132: Ratification of different international human rights instruments and conventions, including the Rome Statute and the Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, International Labor Organization Conventions Nos. 87 and 89, 169 (Ghana) - (partially accepted - Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

18-132: Positive consideration of the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure their full rights to education, labor and involvement in the political and public life (China).

19-132: Ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and effectively implementing the National Plan to make the education system accessible to children with disabilities (Italy).

186-132: Providing the human, institutional and financial resources required for an efficient implementation of the national plan for the integration of persons with disabilities (Honduras).

186-132: Continuing with the implementation of the national plan for the integration of persons with disabilities (Pakistan).

189-132: Deploying all efforts to protect the persons with disabilities through awareness campaigns on the rights of persons with disabilities (Islamic Republic of Iran).

184-132: Ensuring the efficient implementation of the national plan for the integration of persons with disabilities, particularly in terms of education and labor (Finland).

185-132: Enhancing the efforts aiming at improving the life of persons with disabilities, through the development and implementation of policy tools to meet the education needs of persons with disabilities (Singapore).

187-132: Continuing in the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities, including their right to education within the national plan for the integration of persons with disabilities adopted by the (Russian Federation).

192-132: Intensifying the efforts aiming at including the persons with disabilities in schools (Amman).

188-132: Taking further steps to ensure the protection of persons with disabilities (Greece).

It is also noted that Lebanon took note of a number of recommendations, as follows: 217-132: to intensify the efforts aiming at ensuring the protection and dignity of Syrian refugees, particularly in terms of healthcare, access to education and protection of children, women, elderly and persons with disabilities vulnerable to risks (Chile).

Extent of Lebanon's abidance by the approved recommendations:

It was noticed that Lebanon failed to implement the approved recommendations in terms of the rights of persons with disabilities. As such, it can be said the abidance by the content of these recommendations was formal, similar to the promises given by the concerned ministries but never implemented. The domestic law pertaining to the rights of persons with disabilities 2000/220, which preceded the issuance of the International Convention by six years and a half also failed to be implemented along with its implementation decrees, decisions and ministerial circulars issued in the recent years, including the following:

- **Decree no 2009/2214 pertaining to the procedures and measures on facilitating the participation of persons with disabilities in the parliamentary and municipal elections;**
- **Decree no 2011/7194 pertaining to the implementation of the provisions of law no 2000/220, particularly Article 23 thereof and Article 13 of the Construction Law No 646, dated on 11 April 2004.**
- **Circulars and ministerial resolutions issued by the Minister of Interior and Municipalities relating to the partial municipal, mukhtar and parliamentary elections for the year 2016, and parliamentary elections for the year 2018.**

It is also noted that the rights of persons with disabilities are interlinked, including mainly the right to access places and information and non-discrimination towards persons with disabilities in the locative environment that must respect diversity. However, the general budget did not include specific expenditure items to equip the public spaces in order to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities and other citizens. Furthermore, Law No 2007/28 pertaining to the access to information was conditioned to the obstacles facing its implementation. At the municipal and Mukhtar elections 2016, the Disability Rights Movement was given a promise by the Minister of interior regarding the implementation of the law and related decree which did not happen. The Prime Minister also promised on 6 May 2018 to allocate an expenditure clause in the next general budget for the architectural equipment to ensure the independency and dignity of persons with disabilities to access places. As such, the partial progress achieved in 2009 – 2008 faded away, particularly at the level of political rights of persons with disabilities in terms of candidacy and voting, including the right to access the location itself. Recently, major violations against the political rights of persons with disability were committed as the architectural study of ten model polling centers in Lebanon submitted by "Hakki/My Right Campaign" failed to be executed, and the ballot paper was not adapted to the Braille method that allows blind individuals to vote. The aforementioned two models were the main references to achieve an integrated general election in 2022.

In terms of rights, we conclude the following:

◀ Right to work ▶

Law 2000/220 pertaining to the rights of persons with disabilities stipulates the obligation to employ them at a cut-rate quota of %3 in the public and private positions. This rate is accompanied with incentives for the employers such as tax exemptions while the employers who fail to comply will be subjected to fines. However, the public sector failed to abide by the aforementioned employment system and the private sector complied in a very limited percentage mainly through civil initiatives , noting that the rate of unemployed persons with disabilities is %83, due to the following:

- Absence of integrated architectural equipment, which deprives most of the persons with disabilities from the ability to leave their houses independently and incurs additional financial burdens on those of them who wish to be employed.
- Lack of equipped public transportation means, although Law No 2000/220 stipulates the obligation to equip %15 thereof, which results in depriving those who are capable of working from reaching the workplace and incurs additional financial burdens on them.
- Rare architectural equipment and structural adaptation in the educational institutions, as well as the lack of professional qualification and training for the person with disabilities in technical educational institutions, which deprives them from the basic and university education and thus a decent employment opportunity or an independent technical job .
- Failure to enable, qualify and train the human resources at the concerned institutions in order for them to provide positions for individuals with disabilities in the public and private sector, leading to the failure of these institutions in providing jobs and the suitability thereof with the capacities and the needs of the persons with disabilities.
- Major difficulties facing the persons with disabilities in getting an insurance which makes them along with their employers attempt rarely to hide the disability and to manipulate the system to get an insurance.
- Absence of a strategic plan to equip the educational and training institutions as well as the public and private workplaces, which leads to another generation of unemployed persons with disabilities.
- Absence of serious official statistics, surveys and studies on the labor of persons with disabilities, occupational adaptation, benefits of the employment of persons with disabilities and diversity at the workplace; failure to include the disability criteria in the studies of the market and the unemployment; as for the available studies, they were mainly carried out by organizations of persons with disabilities.

◀ Right to Education ▶

The interventions of the State are limited to fragmented initiatives which are mainly limited projects dependent on foreign funding, in the absence of a clear strategy for education integration . Although 18 years have passed on the promulgation of Law No 2000/220 which guaranteed under its 7th section the right of a person with disability to education and equal opportunities in order to overcome the prevailing idea considering that a disability is an obstacle hindering the possibility of benefiting from this service, only a small number of public and private schools is implementing this law whether at the level of locative environment, curriculum or at the provision of a qualified educational staff-member to deal with students with disabilities in the classrooms . The reality indicates the following:

- Absence of serious statistics and studies on persons with disabilities, in numbers, types of disabilities and schools surrounding them, noting that the needs must be met depending on the disability.
- Scarcity of suitable architectural equipment in public and private schools, absence of an inclusive environment for persons with visual, hearing and mental impairment, which deprives the majority of these individuals from education and pushes them towards isolated institutions.
- Failure to adapt the curriculum or resources related thereto with the needs of persons with visual, hearing and mental impairment, and the obsolescence of the ordinary curriculum without any development since 1997, which deprives students with disabilities from integrating in these institutions, except for rare cases where the parents are able to pay large sums of money in educational institutions that adopt the integration policy in their vision .
- A lack of qualification and training of educational staff in the public and private institutions to be able to deal with the needs of persons with disabilities, which makes teachers, administrators and workers in educational institutions not concerned with students with disability and their needs.
- The allocation of a large financial funding to isolated institutions from the government, which contributes to the exclusion policy, to the absence of a national policy aiming at turning all schools into inclusive schools thereby depriving the parents of students with disability from the right to choose the type of education for their children. This leads to a number of parents refusing to send their children to isolated institutions that are located far from their residencies.

◀ Right to Health ▶

Although Law No 2000/220 provides that the comprehensive health coverage and requalification services are at the expense of the State, and the law was followed by a circular issued by the Ministry of Public Health on 7 January 2010 and two circulars issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health on 29 July 2011, the actual access of persons with disabilities to health services is still dramatically limited, noting that the medical care in Lebanon is highly expensive compared to the low coverage standards, due to the following:

- The access to the service is subject to discretionary and favoritism, and is not covered by the concerned ministry; the obvious discrimination in dealing with a person with disability when carrying out the requested formalities does not allow a large percentage of disabled persons' holders of this card to access these services before paying large sums .
- Provision of rehabilitation, physical, or occupational therapy, and other types of therapies, to a limited number of persons with disabilities, resulting in depriving a large number of persons from rehabilitation and therapy, which are available only for people who can afford it. In addition, the obligation to stay in the institution while receiving treatment leads to further isolation and disrupts the life of the person with disability, making it more difficult to benefit from the service.
- Considering that the Disability Card is insufficient in all formalities and as such requesting more documents, although only %25 of the persons with disabilities were given this card in Lebanon; consequently, the legal value of the card is lost which is why the majority of persons with disabilities do not issue it.
- Failure to be firm with hospitals in the standards of prevention, especially in terms of listing the criteria of inclusion; resulting in the loss of an ideal environment to access health services in these institutions.
- Failure to raise the awareness on the available services or qualification of the medical staff towards the needs of persons with disabilities; resulting in the inability of the medical staff to address the different needs, leading to new disabilities, or multiple disabilities, not to mention moral and psychological harm and human abuse.
- Although a "Health, Qualification and Support" Committee was formed by virtue of the law, it did not hold any meeting ever; this refers to the absence of serious intentions of the concerned ministries in implementing the law .

◀ Non-Discrimination ▶

Architectural Equipment:

Law 2000/220 binds the public and private institutions to conduct the necessary architectural equipment in order to ensure the independent movement and access of persons with disabilities. However, the concerned ministries failed to carry out the necessary measures for this purpose and to issue the implementation decrees thereof. The civil studies showed the equipment can be done at a low cost ; the civil survey showed the rareness of the architectural equipment of public spaces ; after the destruction following July 2006 War, the government failed to rebuild the infrastructure in an inclusive manner respecting human rights. Although decree no 2011/7194 was issued that pertains to the implementation of the provisions of Law No 2000/220, particularly article 23 thereof, and article 13 of the Construction Law No 646 dated on 11 April 2004, this decree was never implemented. The situation shows the following:

- Conflict of powers between the ministries and public departments concerned with the architectural equipment, hindering all serious steps for the implementation of the law.
- Absence of financial allocation for the architectural equipment in the general budget particularly for the public and private buildings and spaces of public use, which deprives the local departments from the necessary funding for the equipment and keeps it limited to individual or civil initiatives.
- Impossible access and use of information on the inclusive environment by the disabled persons as well as their organizations committed to the inclusion policy, as well as the majority of places, jobs and social roles independently, which promotes the isolation and marginalization policy.

Political Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

In Lebanon, the right of persons with disabilities to run for elections and to vote was consecrated by virtue of Law No 2000/220, Boutros Commission Project 2007 , Electoral Law No 2008/25 , Electoral Law No 2017/44 , and implementation decree no 2009/2214, in addition to the mandatory circulars issued by the Ministry of Interior and

Municipalities and mayors to encourage the implementation of the law in order to facilitate the voting process and a motivation circular addressed to the municipalities which were providing the best facilities for this process between 2016 and 2018. However, the persons with disabilities are still marginalized from the electoral process and their rights are subjected to several violations. "My Right Campaign" detected in its report regarding the elections of 2016 approximately 646 violations, mainly due to the absence of architectural equipment and the insufficient awareness of the experts in the electoral process. In general, the situation was still the same in parliamentary elections which took place on 6 May 2018. The current situation refers to the following:

- Lack of comprehensive statistics of disabled voters; meaning that the distribution thereof on the day of the elections cannot be anticipated by the concerned ministries.
- Failure to equip the concerned ministries and the polling stations in Lebanon, although it is possible to check the situation of each center as per the results of the comprehensive field survey. However, the concerned ministry ignored the architectural study submitted by "My Right Campaign" including ten polling stations as a model for the next elections in 2022.
- Failure to approve the open spaces, stadiums and ground floors as polling stations by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, whereas they were located on higher floors like the first or second floor meaning that the use of stairs was necessary, which deprived a large number of persons with disabilities from voting.
- Failure to adopt a unified voting card using Braille method (of which a form was submitted to the Ministry of Interior by the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union before the elections) or to include clarifications for the persons with mental disability and signals for the deaf and mute persons at the polling station.
- Failure of the municipalities to abide by the circulars of the Ministry of Interior in making the necessary possible preparations as per the inclusive standards. Furthermore, no volunteers were assigned to assist the disabled voters at any polling station.
- The comprehensive statistics of the polling stations revealed that %63 thereof were schools, %8 were unequipped fully, %0 were fully equipped, and the remaining stations only fulfilled one specification out of the five specifications of architectural equipment.

◀ Rights of Refugees with Disabilities ▶

Rights of Palestinian Refugees with Disabilities:

The majority of Palestinian refugees with disabilities are living in difficult economic circumstances, deprived from most of their rights and Law No 2000/220 on the rights of Lebanese persons with disabilities does not apply to them even if implemented. To meet their basic needs, they are mainly dependent on the assistance of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees – UNRWA and other international organizations. The rights movement of Palestinians with disabilities are active, despite the absence of political and social references, that are supposed to provide them with the necessary support.

- In education, the Palestinian refugees with disabilities can only access public elementary schools through UNRWA as they are considered foreigners, noting that the agency is incapable of applying the educational merge neither in terms of the curriculum nor the qualification of the educational staff to deal with the specific needs or locative environment, noting that these schools are mainly rented and were not designed to be schools in the first place.
- In health and rehabilitation, they cannot benefit from the public health services as they are considered foreigners. Thus, they may only benefit from the assistance of UNRWA and other civil organizations, which are weak and unsustainable services. Furthermore, the prevention and rehabilitation programs do not have sufficient resources to ensure the continuity thereof and to operate at a comprehensive development level for reasons related to the complicated legal status. Therefore, the nature of services provided by these programs is considered to be a temporary relief work.
- In labor, they are deprived from work opportunities by virtue of ministerial resolutions and firm laws imposed on Palestinians in general, which contributes to increasing the burden of the disability.
- In the environment and residence, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are not allowed to own properties outside the camps, while noting that they are living deplorable conditions in the camps lacking any architectural equipment.

Rights of Syrian Refugees with Disabilities:

In the last seven years, Lebanon welcomed the highest number of refugees in the world, spread across all districts. The number of registered Syrian refugees with UNHCR is more than one million two hundred thousand

refugees, noting that the number of Syrian refugees not registered with UNHCR is estimated at around one and a half million refugees. The majority of refugees are children and women, while the percentage of persons with disabilities among them is more than %10, in addition to a large number of persons suffering from war injuries. The facts refer to the following:

- In terms of the statistics, the UNHCR form is not a specialized form as it does not detect the type and level of the disability and is basically based on the statements of the refugees themselves (disability and needs) rather than on the observation of specialized trainers.
- In education, the refugee students with disabilities are deprived from alternative educational programs, due to the random provision of public and contractual educational services to refugees, as a result of the absence of suitable equipment, adapted curriculum and trained educational staff.
- In health and rehabilitation, the budget covering the expenses of medical care and hospitalization and treatment of chronic and incurable diseases was reduced to the minimum limit gradually last year, noting that the periodic reports did not detect rehabilitation activities allocated to the persons with disabilities.
- In labor, the refugees are not allowed to work and thus are dependent on the financial and in-kind assistance provided to them by donors.
- In shelter and residence, the majority of the refugees with disabilities are living in random camps lacking architectural equipment. They are hostages of improvised shelters or camps that lack the minimum standards of safety and hygiene.

Between Formal Commitment of Lebanon and Reality:

It is clear that the failure of Lebanon to commit to the execution of the approved recommendations deprives a category of the Lebanese population (estimated at around %10) from their basic rights provided under international legislations. If the elderly and persons suffering from temporary disabilities were added to the aforementioned category, then it can be said that %20 of the population lacks the right to access places and information, as well as the right to medical coverage, labor, education, sports and entertainment. The facts refer to the following:

- The parliamentary council recently elected (on 6 May 2018) shall ratify the International Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol in its first legislative session without any delay, after being ignored by previous parliamentary councils for a period exceeding eleven years.
- Promoting the local legislation represented by Law No 2000/220 pertaining to the rights of the persons with disabilities in Lebanon to the level of the international convention immediately, working on integrating the persons with disabilities in all aspects of life as per the social model, and promulgating the necessary laws and decrees.
- Establishing a detailed legal national strategy for the implementation of related laws, particularly the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Law No 2000/220 regarding the right to work, education, health, non-discrimination (architectural equipment and political rights) and rights of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, provided for this strategy to be accompanied by an action plan involving the participation of concerned ministries and departments, under the supervision of the Prime Minister and a timeframe. This strategy should be assigned a financial allocation in the general budget. The organizations of persons with disabilities to observe the implementation thereof.
- Proceeding with the execution of the promises made to the organizations of persons with disabilities in terms of equipping the public and private buildings of public use.

In brief, for the past 18 years the Lebanese governments has failed to work on a national plan for the implementation of Law No 2000/220 pertaining to the rights of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the parliament did not ratify the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities approved by the government in 2007. As for the initiatives of limited impact, term and funding submitted by ministries from time to time are locative, temporary and fragmented initiatives addressing the symptoms but neglecting the original problem and lacking actual impact in reality. As long as the general budget fails to assign a financial allocation for the implementation of a national plan of clear stages and deadlines, and as long as the ministries shed the light on initiatives here and there, persons with disabilities in Lebanon remain excluded from the development agenda and become hostages of chronic marginalization from their natural role in the economic and social life.

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