

# SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF LEBANON

This joint report aims to provide up-to-date information to understand the reality of the death penalty in Lebanon, ahead of its upcoming review by the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in January 2026 (4<sup>th</sup> cycle).

## FACTS AND FIGURES

- Lebanon is currently under a moratorium, with the last execution taking place in 2004. This moratorium is not official. Death sentences are handed down every year.
- At least two prisoners were sentenced to death by military courts in 2024. Since 2020, the number of death sentences recorded each year has not exceeded five per year.
- At least 84 prisoners were under sentence of death at the end of 2024, including one woman.

These figures should be viewed with caution. Due to the difficulty of accessing court decisions and certain places of detention, as well as the lack of official data, it is very challenging to obtain accurate and disaggregated annual data on death sentences, the number of prisoners sentenced to death, their distribution in prisons and the reasons for death sentences.

### Recommendations:

- **Maintain the de facto moratorium on executions.**
- **Develop a policy of transparency by publishing data broken down by gender, age, nationality and other applicable criteria on: the number of prisoners sentenced to death per year and jurisdiction, the number of prisoners sentenced to death in first and second instance, the places of detention of prisoners sentenced to death, and the number of prisoners sentenced to death who have had their sentences commuted.**

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### National

- The Lebanese Constitution enshrines many human rights, but does not expressly recognise the right to life. However, its preamble refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which prohibits any act contrary to the “inherent dignity of all members of the human family”, guarantees the right to life and prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Lebanon has also stated on several occasions that the international conventions to which it is bound have constitutional value and are considered an integral part of its Constitution.
- Lebanese law contains more than 41 legislative provisions relating to the application of the death penalty. Most of these provisions are included in the Penal Code and the Code of Military Justice. Three articles are contained in special laws: one article in Law No. 673 of 16 March 1998 and two articles in Law No. 64 of 12 August 1988.
- The death penalty is prescribed for a wide range of crimes, including treason against the nation, espionage, intentional homicide, etc.
- Many of these provisions are not in line with Lebanon's international human rights commitments. Several crimes punishable by death in Lebanon do not involve “death as a direct and intentional result”.



- Only the president has the power to grant a pardon, but the president of the Council and the Minister of Justice can block the execution by refusing to sign the decree to carry out the prisoner's sentence. Since 2004, no Minister of Justice has agreed to sign, which explains the *de facto* moratorium.

#### **Recommendations:**

- *Expressly guarantee the right to life in the Constitution.*
- *Repeal provisions that provide for the application of the death penalty for crimes that are not considered «the most serious» crimes under international law.*
- *Reform the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure to bring them into line with international law.*
- *Amend legislation so that military courts are no longer able to try civilians.*
- *Amend legislation to make the presence of a lawyer mandatory from the outset of police custody and throughout the proceedings.*
- *Remove restrictions on the right to appeal against decisions handed down by military courts.*

#### **International**

- Lebanon is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). It is also a party to the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). Lebanon has also acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).
- Lebanon has not acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (OP2).
- During its last UPR in 2021, Lebanon received 22 recommendations relating to the death penalty and partially accepted one recommendation relating to the death penalty, with the noted part referring to OP2.
- In 2022 and 2024, Lebanon voted in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

#### **Recommendations:**

- *Ratify the Protocol to the ICCPR providing for the abolition of the death penalty (OP2).*
- *Incorporate the provisions of the ICCPR and CAT into domestic law.*
- *Continue to vote in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for a universal moratorium on the use of the death penalty in 2026.*
- *Implement the recommendations of international and regional human rights protection mechanisms on the issue of the death penalty.*

## **APPLICATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN LEBANON**

- There is no death row in Lebanon. Prisoners sentenced to death share cells with other prisoners.
- The majority of prisoners sentenced to death are held in Roumieh prison, located on the outskirts of Beirut.
- Prisoners sentenced to death for acts of terrorism are held in a high-security wing of Roumieh prison.
- Law No. 422/2022 requires minors to be held in separate cells, but this provision is not systematically enforced, particularly in small detention centres or rural areas.
- Some civil society organisations are authorised to visit detention facilities and interview prisoners, including those sentenced to death, but they are not allowed to visit high-security wings or interview those sentenced to death for terrorism.
- Prisoners sentenced to death by military and civil courts are held in the same prisons.
- Prisons are overcrowded and the situation continues to worsen due to the socio-economic crisis. In April 2025, Roumieh prison, designed to hold 2,800 people, housed more than 6,000 detainees. The overcrowding rate exceeds 250%.
- Access to hygiene, water and food is largely inadequate.
- Access to healthcare is also extremely difficult.



- Despite its international commitments and the adoption of Law No. 65/2017, concrete measures to prevent torture and other ill-treatment remain limited. Seven years after the adoption of a law on the implementation of the International Convention against Torture, there is still no monitoring mechanism in place. In July 2019, the government appointed members to the National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, the national mechanism established by the Optional Protocol. However, the Commission remains unable to carry out its duties due to the lack of implementing decrees, funding and adequate administrative resources.

#### **Recommendations:**

- *Ensure that all detainees, without exception or discrimination, benefit from the fundamental legal safeguards provided for in national legislation from the outset of their deprivation of liberty.*
- *Train key actors in the criminal justice system (police officers, gendarmes, magistrates, prison staff) to respect the minimum judicial guarantees applicable to all persons deprived of their liberty, including prisoners sentenced to death, in accordance with international standards.*
- *Combat prison overcrowding by making greater use of sentence adjustments and introducing alternative non-custodial sentences in prisons where overcrowding remains chronic.*
- *Take urgent measures to release defendants who are eligible for alternatives to detention.*
- *Transfer the internal management of prisons to the Ministry of Justice and entrust security to the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities.*
- *Ensure access to healthcare for all prisoners, in particular by conducting systematic medical examinations upon admission to detention facilities and by raising awareness and training doctors working in prisons to ensure prompt and unimpeded medical care for prisoners, particularly those prisoners sentenced to death.*
- *Ensure that foreign detainees can benefit from consular protection; alert diplomatic representations as soon as their nationals are arrested; inform foreign nationals of their right to consular assistance from the pre-trial stage and thereafter; contact the diplomatic representations of foreign detainees to inform them of the status of their nationals' cases and places of detention.*
- *Guarantee access to interpretation during legal proceedings.*
- *Guarantee free and independent access to all places of detention for Lebanese civil society organisations, the Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, the National Human Rights Institution and members of parliament.*
- *Systematically entrust the supervision of prisons to judges responsible for the enforcement of sentences, in order to guarantee independent and regular monitoring of detention conditions.*
- *Raise awareness and inform magistrates in civil courts, military courts and the Judicial Council, in particular on the consideration of mitigating circumstances, in order to promote a reduction in the number of death sentences.*
- *Ensure that magistrates conduct thorough investigations into allegations of torture and ill-treatment.*
- *Amend legislation to explicitly prohibit the obtaining of confessions under duress.*
- *Commute the sentences of all prisoners sentenced to death to prison terms.*
- *Take measures to ensure that all persons accused of acts punishable by death have access to the services of an experienced and adequately remunerated lawyer.*
- *Reduce the costs of appealing to the Court of Cassation and extend the time limits for appealing against a death sentence for a prisoner.*
- *Review as soon as possible the cases of the fourteen individuals still in prison who were prisoners under the former «Whoever kills will be killed» law, which was repealed in 2001.*



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