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The authorities failed to address key economic and social rights affected by the country's economic crisis, leaving residents without adequate access to healthcare and water. Impunity continued to protect perpetrators of torture and other crimes. Defamation laws were used against critics of the authorities. Migrant workers, particularly women domestic workers, continued to face abuse under the discriminatory *kafala* (sponsorship) system. Women still faced discrimination in law and in practice. Authorities stepped up their deportation of Syrian refugees to Syria despite risks of egregious human rights abuses there. The authorities banned public LGBTI events during Pride month.

Background

The authorities failed to address the economic crisis due to a political stalemate. In November, food cost inflation stood at 171.2%, according to

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the Central Administration of Statistics, placing the country's food insecurity in second place worldwide, according to the World Bank. Power shortages meant people only had state electricity one to two hours per day.

On 7 April, the International Monetary Fund announced an Extended Fund Agreement of around USD 3 billion contingent on government implementation of eight reforms. Only one of the reforms was accomplished by the end of year, with the passing of the 2022 Budget Law that came into effect on 15 November.

After parliamentary elections on 15 May, in which independent candidates supportive of the 2019 protests won 13 out of 128 seats, the new parliament named Najib Mikati as prime minister. However, he had failed to form a government by the end of the year.

On 31 October, the presidential term of Michel Aoun ended. Parliament held 10 electoral sessions in November and December but failed to elect a new president.

Right to health

Medication, including for cancer and other chronic diseases, remained unavailable and unaffordable to most of the population since the government failed to establish an adequate emergency social security plan to replace the subsidies that were lifted in November 2021. The number of patients seeking free or low-cost medication and treatment at public healthcare centres had increased by 62% since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2019. However, the authorities failed to increase funding to meet those needs.

Health workers protested throughout the year against low wages and lack of hospital funding, and cancer patients protested against shortages of

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medication.

The authorities failed to provide adequate medical care for prisoners, forcing their families to cover all their medical costs, including for hospitalization. At least three prisoners died between August and September after delays in transferring them to hospitals in a timely manner. The authorities announced an investigation into two of the deaths.

Right to water

The authorities failed to ensure adequate access to clean public water. Throughout the year, water supplies remained irregular due to power cuts, forcing people to buy increasingly expensive water from private, unsupervised entities, at prices six times higher than in 2019 and beyond the reach of most.

The government's failure to adequately maintain water infrastructure resulted in drinking water being mixed with sewage in some areas. Hundreds of new cases of hepatitis A were reported in June, and in October contaminated water led to at least 913 cases of cholera.

Impunity

Impunity continued to protect officials and security and military personnel from accountability for human rights violations.

The investigation into the 2020 Beirut port explosion remained frozen since December 2021 because of challenges filed against the investigative judge by politicians he had summoned for interrogation. Two of the politicians, Ghazi Zeaiter and Ali Hassan Khalil, were elected in June to the parliamentary Committee for Administration and Justice.¹

On 23 April, a boat carrying around 80 Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian migrants trying to reach Cyprus sank off the coast of the Lebanese port city of Tripoli. The authorities accused smugglers of deliberately overloading the boat, but survivors said Lebanese naval forces had caused the sinking by ramming the boat. Survivors and families filed complaints with the Office of the Public Prosecutor against one officer and 12 naval personnel on grounds of intentionally causing death. Despite this, prosecutors transferred the complaint to the military prosecution, where it remained frozen at the end of the year. The Army Intelligence Directorate announced in April that it had opened an internal investigation and found no wrongdoing by the naval personnel.²

Torture and other ill-treatment

Judicial authorities failed to investigate at least 21 complaints, citing the 2017 anti-torture law, filed against different security and military personnel, according to the Tripoli Bar Association.

In May, the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture visited Lebanon and found little progress in torture prevention since its initial visit in 2010.

On 30 August, security forces arrested Syrian refugee Bashar Abed Al-Saud at his home in Beirut, the capital. The family received a call four days later asking them to collect his body from State Security in southern Lebanon. Shortly afterwards, a newspaper leaked pictures and videos showing bruises and gashes on Bashar Abed Al-Saud's body, causing a public outcry. State Security issued a statement saying that he had "confessed" to being a member of the Islamic State armed group before he died. In September, the military justice system launched an investigation and ordered the detention of five State Security officers, but denied the family lawyer access to the case documents. The first court session was held in December.³

Freedom of expression

Defamation laws continued to provide grounds for security and military apparatuses to control expression critical of the authorities, with at least three summonses and investigations taking place in 2022.

On 24 June, the military court convicted comedian Shaden Fakih of “insulting” and “harming the reputation” of the Internal Security Forces and fined her LBP 1,858,000 (USD 50-70 at the market rate). The Office of Cybercrime first interrogated her in May 2021 following a complaint by the Internal Security Forces about a satirical call she made to their hotline during the Covid-19 lockdown, asking them to deliver sanitary pads to her house.

Women's rights

Women continued to face discrimination in law and practice, including in the right to equal custody of children. On 4 August, Liliane Cheaito, a mother who was injured in Beirut's Port explosion and remained hospitalized ever since, saw her two-year-old son for the first time since 2020, following an order from the Shi'ite religious court after a two-year hearing. Her husband had barred her from seeing their son, saying he did not want the baby to see his mother injured in the hospital, so her family filed a complaint before the court.

In the parliamentary General Assembly on 27 July, a number of MPs including the speaker verbally harassed three independent women MPs who were newly elected to parliament and critical of the authorities. One of the three, MP Cynthia Zarazir, said that parliament had not taken any action after she filed a formal complaint of harassment.

Migrants' rights

Unlike previous years, the minister of labour did not engage in discussions to reform the *kafala* system, which increases the risk of labour exploitation of migrant workers and leaves women with little prospect of obtaining redress.

On 4 August, the authorities attempted to deport a Kenyan migrant domestic worker to Kenya without informing her lawyer, even though she had applied for refugee status at UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. The General Security Office (GSO) had arrested her on 4 April and the investigation against her was closed on 21 April; yet she remained in detention. The Anti-Racism Movement, a local NGO, intervened at the airport to stop the deportation, and the woman was returned to the detention centre. On 7 October, following calls by local and international organizations, the GSO released her after she had spent six months in arbitrary detention.

Refugees' rights

Lebanon continued to host the largest number of refugees per capita globally, with an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees. According to UNHCR in April, Lebanon's economic crisis and Covid-19 had left 88% of Syrian refugees living in extreme poverty.

In September, in what amounts to "constructive refoulement", the prime minister charged the director of the GSO to resume the plan of returning Syrian refugees to Syria, treating all regions in Syria as safe for returns, despite the documented risk of serious persecution upon return. On 26 October, the GSO organized the first transportation back to Syria in 2022, involving 551 refugees who had registered their names on the GSO lists for return and had been accepted by the Syrian government.

LGBTI people's rights

The authorities continued to restrict public events of LGBTI people and organizations supporting their rights.

On 24 June, the minister of interior banned all gatherings during Pride month that it said aimed to promote “sexual perversion”. Two days later, LGBTI organizations and individuals called for a protest, but various religious groups called for a counter protest and threatened violence. The authorities did not offer protection to the peaceful marches, nor did they take action against those inciting violence, and the LGBTI groups cancelled their protest as a result. In August, local organizations Legal Agenda and Helem challenged the minister’s ban before the Shura Council, the country’s top administrative court, arguing that it incited violence and hatred against marginalized groups and violated LGBTI people’s constitutional rights to equality, free expression and free assembly. On 1 November, the Shura Council accepted the appeal and froze the minister’s decision.

Failure to tackle climate crisis

Even though the government had committed in March 2021 to a conditional emissions reduction target of 31% by 2030 and increased its unconditional emissions reduction target to 20%, it did not announce a new NDC in 2022.

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1. [“Lebanon: Authorities should lift immunity and allow interrogation of MPs into the Beirut port explosion”, 8 June](#)
 2. [“Lebanon: Joint letter calling on the Lebanese authorities for an independent, impartial, and transparent investigation into the causes of the recent shipwreck off the coast of Tripoli”, 13 May](#)

3. "Lebanon: Transfer investigation into death in custody of Syrian refugee to the civilian justice system", 6 September

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