



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Country matrix – Lebanon 2024

The country matrix adopts and adheres to the coding standards adopted in the “Gender Justice and the Law” initiative.

General framework of the State

Has the State ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)? Does it have any reservations on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention?

Lebanon acceded to the Convention in 1997 but continues to file reservations to article 9 (2) (equal rights in regard to transferring nationality to children); article 16 (1) (c)–(d) and (f)–(g) (equality in marriage and family life); and article 29 (1) (administration of the Convention and arbitration in disputes).

Does the Constitution refer to gender equality and non-discrimination?

The Constitution of Lebanon does not address in any of its clauses the issue of gender equality and non-discrimination; it only addresses equality of all citizens before the law in article 7. The Constitution also does not define gender discrimination and does not explicitly prohibit it as required by article 2 (a) of CEDAW.

If customary law is a valid source of law under the Constitution, is it valid if it violates constitutional provisions on gender equality or non-discrimination?

Custom is a source of law but the Constitution doesn't address the issue of customary law and does not specify its ranking.

If personal law is a valid source of law under the Constitution, is it valid if it violates constitutional provisions on equality or non-discrimination?

The Constitution stipulates under article 9 that the State respects the personal status system of different sects and religious interests. However, it does not address the validity of personal status laws where there is a conflict with the provisions of the Constitution.

Do national laws clearly define the mandate and jurisdiction of informal justice systems, where they exist, in terms of their enforcement of formal and informal laws, both of which must conform to international standards, including non-discrimination?

There is no law that defines the mandate entrusted to informal justice systems and their legal jurisdiction, nor their position with respect to the Constitution if they conflict with its provisions relating to human rights and women's rights specifically.

Is there a law on discrimination that prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination against women?

Article 7 of the Constitution guarantees equality before the law but there is no normative law prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination against women.

Is there a national action plan or policy to address violence against women and girls that is overseen by a national mechanism with the mandate to monitor and review implementation?

The National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women and Girls (2019–2029) has been put in place. It respects the international standards, covering the five constituents of the principle of “taking the necessary care to combat violence against women” with which the State complies, including: prevention, protection, investigation, prosecution, punishment and victim compensation.

The National Commission for Lebanese Women must follow this strategy and monitor its implementation.

Are there budgetary commitments provided for by government entities for the implementation of legislation addressing violence against women and girls by allocating a specific budget, funding and/or incentives to support non-governmental organizations for activities to address violence against women and girls?

There are no budgetary commitments for implementing legislation addressing violence against women and girls.

Is there a national strategy or action plan currently in place containing measures to ensure full and equal access

to the entire range of sexual and reproductive health information, services and supplies, with budgetary, human and administrative resources allocated for its implementation?

There is no national strategy or action plan for sexual and reproductive health in Lebanon.

Are there laws that explicitly require the production and/or

dissemination of gender statistics?

The law does not stipulate that gender statistics must be available.

Is legal aid mandated and guaranteed in criminal matters?

Under the Lebanese Code of Criminal Procedure, if it is impossible for the defendant to

instruct a lawyer, the judge could instruct a lawyer for them or charge the Bar Association with instructing one.

Is legal aid mandated and guaranteed in civil/family matters?

According to the Lebanese Code of Civil Procedure, if one of the litigants is unable to pay the court fees and costs, he/she can apply for legal aid.

Legal capacity and public life

Do women and men have equal rights to apply for passports?

Lebanese women and men have equal rights to apply for a passport, without any special requirements.

Do women and men have equal rights to obtain an identity card?

Lebanese women and men have equal rights to apply for an identity card, without any special requirements.

In civil law matters and procedures, are women required to obtain permission from judicial or administrative authorities, spouses and other family members prior to initiating legal action?

Based on the civil procedures law, resorting to the courts is the right of every person, whether they are Lebanese or non-Lebanese, without discrimination on the basis of age, sex or race. The woman

does not have to obtain permission before initiating legal proceedings in civil matters.

In personal/family law matters, are women required to obtain permission from judicial or administrative authorities, spouses and other family members prior to initiating legal action?

This could be applied in some cases. For example, the permission of the male legal guardian is a condition for concluding a marriage contract among Muslims, according to the personal status law.

Does a woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's?

Notwithstanding that the Civil Code does not restrict the weight of a woman's testimony in court, the personal status laws of Islamic sects assign less weight to a woman's testimony compared to that of a man.

Can a woman enter into a contract the same way as a man?

Lebanese women enjoy full capacity under law to enter into a contract. Any person who has reached 18 years of age is eligible to enter into a contract according to article 215 of the Law on Obligations and Contracts. This law does not impose any restrictions on women.

Does the law allow for women to register businesses the same way as men?

Lebanese women have capacity under law to register commercial businesses without any restrictions. The Companies Law does not include any restrictions on women owning or registering businesses.

Do women and men have equal rights to own, access, and control or use property?

Lebanese women have full capacity under law for

ownership without any restrictions. Articles 215 and 473 of the Law on Obligations and Contracts address the control of property without imposing any restrictions on women.

Do women and men enjoy equal rights and access to hold public and political office (legislature, executive, judiciary)?

Under article 12 of the Constitution, every Lebanese has the right to hold public office

and no preference shall be given except on merit and competence according to the conditions established by law. Article 44 of Law No. 44 of 2017 on electing members of the House of Representatives permits anyone who fulfils the conditions to become a member of the House of Representatives to put forward their candidacy for any electoral constituency. However, there is no legal provision giving positive measure of the right of women to hold public and political office.

Are there quotas for women (reserved seats) in the national parliament?

There are no quotas for women for seats in the national parliament.

Is there a law that explicitly prohibits violence against women in politics and elections?

There is no law that explicitly prohibits violence against women in politics and elections.

Protection from violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres

Is there legislation on domestic violence that includes all forms of physical violence?

The law on domestic violence recognizes domestic violence as “an act, or act of omission, or threat of an act committed by any family member against one or more family members according to the concept set out in the definition of the family, related to one of the crimes stipulated in this law, and that results in killing or physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm”. Pursuant to Law No. 293 of 2014, a protection order may be procured, which is a request the victim can make to the court if he/she is subject to domestic violence. In this claim she requests a protection order, which will prevent the battered woman, her children and other family members living with her

from being at risk through a group of protection measures enforced for a specific period of time which can be amended or renewed.

Is there legislation on domestic violence that includes all forms of sexual violence?

The law on domestic violence defines it as “an act, or act of omission, or threat of an act committed by any family member against one or more family members according to the concept set out in the definition of the family, related to one of the crimes stipulated in this law, and that results in killing or physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm”.

As mentioned above, under Law No. 293 of 2014, a protection order may be procured, which is a request the victim can make to

the court if she is subject to domestic violence. In this claim she requests a protection order, which will prevent the battered woman, her children and other family members living with her from being at risk through a group of protection measures enforced for a specific period of time, which can be amended or renewed.

Although the law refers to sexual violence, it does not address all forms of sexual violence which occur within the family, including marital rape.

Is there legislation on domestic violence that includes all forms of psychological/emotional violence?

The law on domestic violence defines it as “an act, or act of omission, or threat of an act committed by any family

member against one or more family members according to the concept set out in the definition of the family, related to one of the crimes stipulated in this law, and that results in killing or physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm”.

As mentioned above, under Law No. 293 of 2014, a protection order may be procured, which is a request the victim can make to the court if she is subject to domestic violence. In this claim she requests a protection order, which will prevent the battered woman, her children and other family members living with her from being at risk through a group of protection measures enforced for a specific period of time which can be amended or renewed.

Is there legislation on domestic violence that includes all forms of financial/economic violence?

The domestic violence law defines it as “an act, or act of omission, or threat of an act committed by any family member against one or more family members according to the concept set out in the definition of the family, related to one of the crimes stipulated in this law, and that results in killing or physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm”.

As mentioned above, under Law No. 293 of 2014, a protection order may be procured, which is a request the victim can make to the court if she is subject to domestic violence. In this claim she requests a protection order, which will prevent the battered woman, her children and other family members living with her from being at risk through a

group of protection measures enforced for a specific period of time which can be amended or renewed.

Are there criminal and civil protection orders available for victims of violence for which a breach (constitutes a criminal offence) has legal consequences?

Under Law No. 293 of 2014, a protection order may be procured, and according to article 18, whoever challenges a restraining order shall be sentenced to up to three months’ imprisonment and a maximum fine of double their minimum salary, or either one of these punishments. If the offence is accompanied by the use of violence, the offender shall be sentenced to up to a year’s imprisonment and a maximum fine of four times their minimum salary. The punishment is doubled if it is a repeated offence.

Does the law allow mitigating circumstances for femicide?

Article 563 of the Penal Code allowed mitigating circumstances for the perpetrator of femicide using the excuse of “honour”. However, this was repealed in 2011.

Does the law criminalize female genital mutilation (FGM) or cutting if practised?

The law does not address FGM/cutting if practised.

Does the law criminalize adultery?

Articles 487 and 489 of the Penal Code criminalize adultery.

Do laws that criminalize rape act based on absence of consent without requiring proof of the use of physical force or penetration?

In order to criminalize rape, article 503 of the Lebanese Penal Code requires that sexual intercourse has taken place under coercion or by violence and threat, and it requires proof of the use of physical force.

Does the law include exoneration if the offender marries his victim?

Under article 522 of the Penal Code, prosecution was dropped against a perpetrator of the crime of rape or adultery if he married the victim; the exception was removed in 2017. Exoneration from punishment remains for anyone perpetrating other specific crimes whose circumstances fall within articles 505 or 518 of the aforementioned law if he marries his victim.

Does the law criminalize marital rape?

Marital rape is not criminalized. The definition of rape explicitly excludes sexual intercourse under coercion within the context of marriage, under articles 503 and 504 of the Penal Code of 1943. Law No. 293 of 2014 criminalizes harm resulting from marital relationship by coercion.

Is sexual harassment defined in any legislation?

The Lebanese House of Representatives passed the law on sexual harassment and the rehabilitation of victims on 21 December 2020. It defined sexual harassment as “any bad and

repetitive behaviour that is extraordinary, unwelcomed by the victim, and with sexual connotation that constitutes a violation of the body, privacy or emotions”.

Is there a provision in the law that criminalizes cyberviolence against women and girls?

In Lebanon, there is no law regulating cybercrime and prohibiting violence and sexual harassment within cyberspace, but these crimes are

investigated, and their perpetrators prosecuted based on other laws such as the Penal Code and Law No. 81 of 2018 on Electronic Transactions and Personal Information, as well as the law on sexual harassment, which encompasses sexual harassment that may occur through verbal statements, physical actions and electronic media.

Are sex work and prostitution criminalized?

Article 523 of the Penal Code criminalizes anyone who exploits or facilitates sex. Articles 526 and 527 of the Penal Code prohibit forced prostitution and using the “prostitution” of others to make a living.

Are there comprehensive provisions (punitive, protective and preventive) on human trafficking in any law?

Law No. 164 of 2011 prohibits all forms of human trafficking.

Employment and economic benefits

Does the law mandate non-discrimination against women in employment?

The Labour Law prohibits employers from gender-based discrimination between male and female workers in regard to the type of work, the amount of pay, employment, promotion, professional development and attire.

Does the law mandate equal pay for the same work as men?

The Labour Law prohibits employers from gender-based discrimination between male and female workers in regard to the amount of pay.

Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?

Discrimination in pay as a general rule is prohibited under the Labour Law, but the law does not address the issue of

equal pay for work of equal value.

Does the law allow women to do the same jobs as men?

The Labour Law prohibits the employment of women in certain jobs that are considered strenuous or dangerous such as work in mines and with industrial furnaces for melting, liquefaction and heating metal products, glass foundries, alcohol manufacture and skinning of animals.

Does the law allow women to work the same night hours as men?

The Labour Law does not include any restrictions on the right of women to work at night, but it does not include legal provisions asserting women’s right to work the same night hours as men.

Do national labour and civil service-related laws (labour codes, civil retirement acts,

etc.) discriminate between men and women in terms of retirement age?

Article 55 of the Labour Law permits any employee who reaches 60 years of age to retire but they also have the right to continue in employment until the full age of 64 years.

Do national labour and civil service-related laws grant men and women equal rights to pass on their pensions to their spouses?

Some provisions of the Social Security Law have been amended. The pension scheme now includes “the partner (husband and wife) who is not in paid employment or is not a worker or provider in any capacity and does not receive a retirement pension, and legal wives”. Therefore, the law now recognizes the woman’s right to obtain her husband’s pension on an equal basis with a man’s right to obtain his wife’s pension.

Does the law prohibit dismissal during pregnancy and maternity leave?

The Labour Law prohibits the dismissal of a woman due to her pregnancy.

Does the law provide for maternity leave that meets the International Labour Organization (ILO) standard of 14 weeks?

Under the Labour Law, women are entitled to receive 10 paid weeks of maternity leave from the employer, which is less than the ILO standard of 14 weeks.

Does the law provide for paid paternity leave available to fathers?

The law does not provide for paid paternity leave.

Does the State provide or subsidize childcare facilities?

Childcare facilities, publicly provided or subsidized, are not available in the public or private sectors.

Does legislation tackle sexual harassment in the workplace?

The law on sexual harassment and the rehabilitation of victims passed by Parliament on 21 December 2020 may be applied. Based on Law No. 205, the punishment for sexual harassment in the workplace is 6 months' to 2 years' imprisonment and a fine of 10 to 20 times the official minimum wage, or either one of these punishments, if the harassment offence occurred in the context of a relationship of subordination or a work relationship.

Are there provisions allowing for civil claims/remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace?

The law stipulates that there is no impediment to pursuing civil remedies for reasons including illegal dismissal from work, and victims are entitled to compensation for psychological, moral or material harm suffered.

Does the Labour Law provide protection for domestic workers?

Domestic workers are excluded from the provisions of the Labour Law.

Is there a public entity that can receive complaints on gender discrimination in employment?

The Labour Law sets out procedures for prosecution through labour arbitration boards described as the competent judicial authorities. The Ministry of Labour has a mechanism for receiving complaints through the Complaints Office but it does not specifically address gender discrimination. The National Human Rights Commission can receive complaints in regard to gender discrimination at work, but there is no public entity with direct jurisdiction for this type of complaint. There is no official organization authorized to receive complaints on gender discrimination at work.

Family matters (personal status)

Is 18 the minimum age at marriage, with no legal exceptions, for both women and men?

There is no law preventing early marriage. The minimum age for marriage varies between the religious sects, which harms girls. Despite the fact that many religious communities set the minimum age for men as 19, all religious groups in Lebanon

allow girls under the age of 18 to marry.

Is marriage under the legal age void or voidable?

Marriage under the legal age is not voidable.

Do women and men have equal rights to enter marriage (i.e. consent) and initiate divorce?

Women do not have equal rights to enter marriage and to divorce under the different personal status laws.

Does the law prohibit polygamy?

The personal status laws permit polygamy for Muslims, but it is prohibited by Christians and Druze.

Do women and men have equal rights to be legal guardian of their children during and after marriage?

Men have the right to be the legal guardian of their children even after divorce in all sects. Legal guardianship is not restricted to the father, as in his absence it is assigned to the grandfather or to a guardian of his choice or the legal guardian appointed by the court.

Does the law grant women and men equal custody rights of their children?

Women have custody of young children until a specific age, which is different between sects, and in many cases severe conditions are imposed which restrict the mother's custody rights.

Do women and men have equal rights to choose where to live?

Women do not have equal rights to choose where to live. Article 22 of the Personal Status Law for the Druze stipulates that the wife must live in the legal place of residence of her husband and move with him to any place he so wishes unless there is a justified reason. Article 8 of the Personal Status Law for Sunni Muslims stipulates that the wife may lose her right to alimony if

she refuses to move to live with her husband or to travel with him unless harm is proven. Article 69 (d) of the Personal Status Law of the Orthodox Church stipulates that the husband may ask for a divorce if the wife refuses to move to live with him.

Do women and men have equal rights to choose a profession?

Lebanese laws (including the Labour Law and the Civil Code) do not impose any restrictions on women's choice of profession.

Do women and men have equal rights to own, access, and control or use marital property including upon divorce?

The personal status laws of most of the Lebanese sects and faiths establish rights for men and women to own, control and use property.

Where rights to inheritance are enshrined by law, do women and men have equal rights?

The inheritance laws in the personal status laws for Muslims give women rights to inheritance but in many cases, they receive less than men. For example, girls receive half the share of boys.

Christian men and women have equal rights to inheritance under the Inheritance Law for non-Muslims.

Are there specialized civil courts or civil court processes for family law matters that provide for the equal rights of men and women?

There are no specialized civil courts or civil court processes and there is no guarantee of equal rights for men and women. Personal status cases are the responsibility of religious courts. Civil courts only consider civil marriages held outside Lebanon.

Do women have equal rights as men to pass their nationality to children?

According to the Nationality Law, Lebanese women cannot pass on their nationality to their children as Lebanese men can.

Do women have equal rights as men to pass their nationality to a foreign spouse?

According to the Nationality Law, Lebanese women cannot pass on their nationality to their foreign spouse as Lebanese men can.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that guarantee access to maternal health care for all women and girls, irrespective of marital status

and without third-party authorization?

The law does not guarantee the right to health care. However, the website of the Ministry of

Health includes a list of services provided for women.

Do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that guarantee access to contraceptive services for

all women and adolescent girls, irrespective of marital status and without third-party authorization?

There are no law(s) or regulation(s) which address contraception or contraceptive services. The Ministry of Health provides these services in limited way. All women and adolescent girls can access contraceptive services irrespective of marital status and without third-party authorization.

Do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that guarantee access to emergency contraception for all women and adolescent girls, irrespective of marital status and without third-party authorization?

No law(s) or regulation(s) exist which deal with emergency contraception.

Is induced abortion legal at least when the life or health of the pregnant woman is at risk and in cases of rape, incest or severe fetal impairment, and is abortion decriminalized in any case for both the pregnant woman as well as health-care providers performing it (when consent is fully given)?

There are no policies, laws or regulations in Lebanon in regard to safe abortion. Articles 539 to 546 of the Lebanese Penal Code criminalize abortion and remove the woman's right to control her body. Article 545 stipulates an exception in the form of a mitigating/attenuating factor or circumstance, which is the case of a woman who has an abortion to "save her honour".

Irrespective of the legal status of abortion, do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that ensure access to post-abortion care for all women and girls, independent of their marital status and without third-party authorization?

No law(s) or regulation(s) exist which deal with post-abortion care.

Do law(s), regulation(s) or national policies exist that make comprehensive sexual health education a mandatory component of the national school curriculum?

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Public Health ordered Decree No. 6610/11 (4 June 2010) which dictates that comprehensive reproductive

health and gender education be incorporated into the education curriculum. But this has not been widely applied in all schools.

Do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that guarantee access to voluntary HIV testing and counselling services for all women and girls, irrespective of marital status and without third-party authorization?

The national programme to combat acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in Lebanon provides counselling services prior to examination and testing. Lebanon is one of the countries which has put in place AIDS prevention policies.

Does the law criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct?

Article 534 of the Penal Code criminalizes "unnatural sexual intercourse". This clause has been used to make charges of homosexual behaviour. A series of judicial rulings were issued supporting the position that article 534 should not be used to prosecute consensual sexual behaviour between adults