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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Visit to Lebanon

Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz*

Summary

In the report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, on his official visit to Lebanon from 29 September to 10 October 2025, he examines violations of the right to life in the context of Israeli hostilities on Lebanese territory and assesses the legislative and institutional framework for documenting, investigating and prosecuting potentially unlawful killings, as well as measures to support victims and their families in seeking truth, justice and reparation.

* The summary of the report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself, which is annexed to the summary, is being circulated in the language of submission and Arabic only.



Annex

Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, on his visit to Lebanon

I. Introduction

1. At the invitation of the Government of Lebanon, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary Executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, conducted an official visit to the country from 29 September to 10 October 2025.
2. The visit was guided by a spirit of constructive dialogue, taking a victim-centred approach. The Special Rapporteur expresses his gratitude to the Lebanese authorities for the excellent cooperation and constructive engagement. He also welcomes the continued dialogue with State authorities and the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva and the commitment to work together to advance implementation of the recommendations, including through the designation of a focal point within the Ministry of Justice to that end.
3. The Special Rapporteur also expresses his sincere gratitude to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa for the invaluable support throughout the visit, as well as to the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, the Resident Coordinator and other United Nations country team entities.
4. During his visit, the Special Rapporteur travelled to Beirut, then to Naqurah, Tyre, Sidon, Nabatiyah, Baalbek and Tripoli. He had the opportunity to meet with State authorities, including the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Ministers of Defence, Justice and Finance, as well as representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Public Health. In addition, he met with the Director General of the Internal Security Forces, visited the Forces forensic laboratories and met with the Director of the Directorate of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. He also met with the members of the judiciary, including the Prosecutor General at the Court of Cassation and the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, as well as legislators from the parliamentary Human Rights Committee and members of independent institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission and the National Commission for Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons. The Special Rapporteur visited hospitals, including in the southern region, and Palestine refugee camps (Ein El Hilweh and Shatila), met with first responders and inspected sites of destruction resulting from Israeli strikes against Lebanon. Following the visit, he held a virtual meeting with the Legal Adviser to the President.
5. The Special Rapporteur met with staff of United Nations entities operating in Lebanon, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and national and international human rights organizations, and with journalists, lawyers, academics and medico-legal specialists. With the support of the European Union delegation in Beirut, he offered a briefing on his preliminary findings and recommendations to the diplomatic community, underscoring the importance of sustained international support for Lebanon.
6. The Special Rapporteur held meaningful exchanges with survivors and families of victims of unlawful killings and enforced disappearances. He extends his profound appreciation to survivors and families who, despite grief, fear, insecurity and trauma linked to ongoing hostilities, generously shared their experiences. He recognizes the pain and courage that such testimonies require and conveys his deepest respect for their dignity and perseverance in seeking truth and justice. He reaffirms that their voices will remain at the centre of his assessment and recommendations, and that he remains committed to addressing their cases with care, respect and humanity. The cases reflected in the present report are drawn directly from the accounts shared by survivors and families during those exchanges.

7. The Special Rapporteur reiterates his readiness to provide technical advice, as appropriate, including in his capacity as a forensic expert, on relevant international standards to strengthen investigative capacity and accountability processes, and to continue supporting survivors and families in their pursuit of truth, justice and reparation.

II. Background

8. The modern history of Lebanon has been marked by recurrent armed conflict and external involvement, from the 1975–1990 war to successive rounds of hostilities with Israel and periods of intervention by neighbouring States, alongside episodes of internal political upheaval as well as a prolonged economic and financial crisis. These overlapping pressures have strained State institutions, affected the administration of justice and public services, and compounded challenges in upholding the rule of law and protecting the right to life.

9. On 8 October 2023, cross-border hostilities broke out between Hizbullah and Israel, when the former opened a support front for the war on Gaza, triggering repeated exchanges of fire and air strikes across southern Lebanon. The conflict escalated significantly on 23 September 2024, when Israel launched Operation Northern Arrows, conducting extensive air strikes across Lebanon, killing and wounding thousands of civilians, including over 1,100 women and children, 241 medical personnel and several journalists, and displacing over a million people, at its height, primarily from southern villages that were entirely destroyed. A cessation of hostilities arrangement came into effect on 27 November 2024 and was subsequently transmitted to the Security Council on 29 November. Nevertheless, military operations, including air and drone strikes by the Israel Defense Forces, have continued on an almost daily basis, resulting in further civilian casualties and displacement.

10. In the meantime, political developments in early 2025, including the election of Joseph Aoun as President on 9 January 2025, the appointment of Nawaf Salam as Prime Minister on 13 January 2025 and the formation of a new Government on 8 February 2025, created a unique opportunity for Lebanon to restore sovereignty, rebuild national institutions, reaffirm the legitimate State monopoly over the means of force and revitalize the economy.

11. At the time of submission of the present report, hostilities had escalated in Lebanon, starting on 2 March 2026, when Hizbullah reportedly launched missiles towards Israel in response to the unlawful military attack by the United States of America and Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran. As at 12 March 2026, Israeli strikes on Lebanon had killed 687 persons, including 98 children and 62 women, and injured 1,774 others, including 304 children and 328 women, in addition to the killing of 18 first responders¹ and the displacement of 822,600 persons. The escalation of Israeli hostilities against Lebanon is of extreme concern for the protection of civilians and the right to life and threatens peace and security in Lebanon and the region. These developments are ongoing and could not be covered in the present report.

III. Scope of the visit

12. The aim of the Special Rapporteur's visit was to examine how allegations of unlawful killings in Lebanon, including in the context of armed conflict, are investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted, in accordance with applicable international standards. This included, inter alia, examining allegations of targeted killings and of attacks against civilians and civilian objects protected under international humanitarian law. During the visit, the Special Rapporteur paid particular attention to the rights of victims and their families to truth, justice and reparation.

13. In this connection, the Special Rapporteur assessed the adequacy of the legislative and institutional frameworks for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of unlawful killings, and for the protection, support and assistance provided to victims and their families.

¹ Lebanon, Ministry of Public Health, "Daily report on the aggression: death toll rises to 687", 12 March 2026.

He also examined the essential and complementary roles of relevant institutions, including the judiciary and prosecution services, investigative bodies and medico-legal and forensic expertise, in establishing the facts and in collecting and preserving evidence, with a view to ensuring accountability and facilitating access to effective remedies for victims.

IV. Contextual and legal analysis

14. The cessation of hostilities arrangement of November 2024 sought to de-escalate the situation and enable phased steps in accordance with Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).² Nonetheless, incidents have persisted. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) stated that Israeli air strikes in south Lebanon constituted violations of that resolution and warned that they “put the fragile stability ... at risk”. It called on the Israel Defense Forces to refrain from any further strikes and to fully withdraw from Lebanese territory.³ In 2026, UNIFIL continued to report violations of the resolution by Israel.⁴

15. Israel maintains its military occupation in five positions and two so-called buffer zones in southern Lebanon, preventing civilians from returning to their houses, and unilaterally continues its military attacks against Lebanon.⁵ The Security Council, in its resolution 2790 (2025), welcomed the cessation of hostilities arrangement, while noting with grave concern the “continuous violations” thereof, including air and drone strikes on Lebanese territory; reiterated its strong support for full respect for the Blue Line; called on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law; and called on the Government of Israel to withdraw its forces north of the Blue Line, including from the five positions held in Lebanese territory.

16. The toll on civilians since the ceasefire remains significant. According to OHCHR, between 27 November 2024 and 1 March 2026, Israeli military attacks resulted in the killing of at least 139 civilians, including 24 women and 25 children, in Lebanon. In addition to loss of life, attacks damaged or destroyed civilian infrastructure and hampered reconstruction and returns. There were no recorded civilian fatalities in Israel from Lebanese projectiles during the same period.⁶

17. Continued hostilities, destruction and displacement, and their cumulative effects on safety, education, healthcare and livelihoods, have caused profound suffering for families already living with loss and uncertainty and compounded a prolonged socioeconomic crisis that has weakened institutions and eroded public trust. Justice, health and social protection systems continue to face serious capacity and resource constraints, limiting access to timely investigations, medical and rehabilitative care, and support for bereaved families.

18. The Government of Lebanon has been pursuing efforts to implement the cessation of hostilities arrangement in a challenging and volatile environment, including amid continued security threats and humanitarian needs. With UNIFIL support, the Lebanese Armed Forces have continued to increase their presence in the south and take steps aimed at strengthening State authority in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. However, the security situation has remained fragile and has been further exacerbated by the escalation in hostilities since 2 March 2026.

A. National legal framework

19. The Constitutional framework of Lebanon affirms the State’s commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to embodying these principles “in all fields and areas without exception”. Domestic law gives

² See [S/2024/870](#).

³ UNIFIL statement, 19 September 2025.

⁴ UNIFIL statement, 2 January 2026; United Nations, UN News, “UN peacekeeping patrols suspended along Lebanon-Israel Blue Line”, 2 February 2026.

⁵ [S/2025/460](#), paras. 13–17.

⁶ OHCHR, “Lebanon: Türk urges renewed efforts for durable truce amid civilian suffering”, press release, 1 October 2025.

effect to the protection of life and physical integrity through the criminalization of unlawful deprivation of life and related offences under Legislative Decree No. 340 of 1 March 1943 (the Penal Code) and through the legal and regulatory framework governing the use of force by law enforcement, grounded in the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality.

20. The Penal Code criminalizes intentional and unintentional homicide (including through negligence) and provides for aggravating circumstances including, *inter alia*, premeditation, killings committed to facilitate another crime, and killings of ascendants or descendants. In addition, the Code of Criminal Procedure subjects public prosecutions to prescription, generally 10 years for felonies (including homicide), subject to the rules on commencement and suspension of prescription.

21. The domestic framework does not fully address serious violations of the right to life occurring in the context of armed conflict and other grave situations, including where conduct may amount to international crimes under international humanitarian law and international criminal law. The absence of provisions explicitly criminalizing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide creates an accountability gap, limits the ability of Lebanese courts to prosecute grave breaches as such and may hinder full recognition of victims' rights under international law.

B. International legal framework

22. Lebanon has ratified seven of the nine core international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It has signed but not ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides for both substantive and procedural obligations to protect the right to life.

23. Lebanon is Party to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and has acceded to the Protocol Additional thereto, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) and the Protocol Additional thereto, relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) of 1977, thereby binding itself to the core treaty framework governing the protection of victims of armed conflict. In addition, pursuant to article 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure, treaties ratified by Lebanon take precedence over ordinary legislation within their field of application in the event of conflict.⁷

24. Israel ratified the four 1949 Geneva Conventions on 6 July 1951 and the Protocol Additional thereto relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III) of 2005 on 22 November 2007. Nonetheless, it has not ratified Protocol I or Protocol II. It should be noted that key rules governing the conduct of hostilities, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack, form part of customary international humanitarian law, meaning that they bind all parties to an armed conflict, irrespective of treaty ratification.

25. International human rights law and international humanitarian law are considered complementary and mutually reinforcing in situations of armed conflict. The right to life under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is non-derogable, including in wartime, and States remain bound by obligations to respect and ensure the right to life in accordance with applicable international standards. Customary international humanitarian law also requires parties to an armed conflict, whether international or non-international, to cumulatively respect the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack.

26. The principle of distinction requires that attacks be directed only against combatants and military objectives; it prohibits direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects. Military objectives are limited to those objects which, by their nature, location, purpose or use, make

⁷ See the submission of Lebanon to the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, available at https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/65/StatProtGeneva_StatesComments/After%20Addendum/Lebanon_E.pdf.

an effective contribution to military action and whose destruction, capture or neutralization offers a definite military advantage. In case of doubt whether an object normally dedicated to civilian purposes is being used to make an effective contribution to military action, it must be presumed to be a civilian object.

27. Although Hizbullah is a party to the non-international armed conflict with Israel, not all of its members qualify as lawful targets at all times. Civilians are protected against direct attack unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities. Only individuals who are directly participating in hostilities, or who assume a “continuous combat function” within Hizbullah as an organized armed group, may be lawfully targeted. Persons whose involvement is limited to political, administrative, social or other non-combat functions, as well as civilian supporters, retain civilian protection unless and for such time as they directly participate in hostilities. Indiscriminate attacks and attacks directed at persons who retain civilian status on the basis of presumed affiliation alone violate the principle of distinction.⁸

28. The principle of proportionality prohibits attacks expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects that would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. The obligation of precautions requires that all feasible precautions be taken in the choice of means and methods of attack and in the conduct of attacks to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental civilian harm.

29. Serious violations of international humanitarian law may constitute war crimes and engage individual criminal responsibility. Where there are credible allegations of war crimes or other unlawful killings committed on Lebanese territory, Lebanon has an obligation to ensure prompt and effective investigations and, where appropriate, prosecution and redress for victims and their families.⁹ These obligations apply irrespective of reciprocity and regardless of the conduct of any opposing party. They are also not contingent on the existence of diplomatic relations or formal recognition between Lebanon and any State implicated in the allegations. Lebanon should therefore investigate such allegations, including those attributed to foreign armed forces and organized armed groups, and pursue accountability through available domestic and international cooperation channels.

30. Lebanon is not a State Party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In April 2024, the caretaker Cabinet in Lebanon instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to lodge a declaration under article 12 (3) of the Rome Statute accepting the Court’s jurisdiction over alleged war crimes committed on Lebanese territory since 7 October 2023. This decision was later retracted and replaced by a complaint submitted to the Security Council regarding alleged war crimes in Lebanon.

V. Impact of ongoing hostilities on the right to life

31. On 8 October 2023, military hostilities erupted between Israel and Hizbullah in Lebanon. While initially concentrated in border areas, Israel sharply escalated its attacks from 23 September 2024, including the launch of a ground offensive in southern Lebanon on 1 October 2024, operating in at least 34 towns and villages along the southern border area of Lebanon. By 10 December 2024, the cumulative number of attacks recorded across Lebanon had reached 14,775. During this period, 4,047 people were killed in Lebanon, including 1,106 women and children, 16,638 people were injured and more than one million were displaced. The destruction of civilian property and infrastructure was extensive: damage was recorded across 90,076 structures, including 23,489 that were completely destroyed, leaving many towns in southern Lebanon, together with critical civilian infrastructure, reduced to rubble.

⁸ Nils Melzer, *Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities under International Humanitarian Law* (ICRC, 2009).

⁹ Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck, eds., *Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume 1: Rules* (ICRC and Cambridge University Press, 2005), rule 158.

32. Despite the cessation of hostilities arrangement, Israeli air and drone strikes have continued,¹⁰ resulting in scores of civilian deaths and injuries and damage to civilian objects, undermining efforts by the Lebanese authorities to restore stability, State authority and the unity of the territory.

Attacks on protected individuals and groups

33. During the visit, the Special Rapporteur met with survivors and families of persons killed in Israeli strikes, including journalists, healthcare professionals and civilians from the south and other affected parts of Lebanon. Many relatives described having received little or no official information about the circumstances of the deaths, and limited support with asserting their rights to truth, justice and reparation. Survivors described long-term physical and psychological consequences, including life-changing injuries, without adequate medical, rehabilitative or psychosocial assistance.

1. Attacks against journalists

34. During the hostilities, journalists and other media workers came under attack while carrying out their professional duties across southern Lebanon, including in Hula, Khiam, Marwahin, Tayr Harfa and Yarun, resulting in at least eight deaths, severe and life-changing injuries, and damage to clearly marked press vehicles and equipment. Evidence examined confirms that the journalists were clearly identifiable as members of the press, had taken steps to coordinate their presence with relevant authorities, including the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL, and that no military objective was identified in the immediate vicinity, nor was there evidence of an active exchange of fire at the time of these attacks.

35. On 13 October 2023, in Alma al-Sha'b, southern Lebanon, while covering the hostilities at the Lebanese-Israeli border, seven journalists from Agence France-Presse, Al-Jazeera and Reuters were subject to a double-tap attack – a tactic whereby two attacks are launched in rapid succession at the same target, the second causing casualties primarily among emergency responders and medical personnel – within 37 seconds. The first strike immediately killed Issam Abdallah, a Reuters journalist, and severely injured Christina Assi, an Agence France-Presse correspondent, resulting in the amputation of her right leg at the knee. A second strike injured Carmen Joukhadar and Elie Brakhya, Al-Jazeera correspondents, Dylan Collins, an Agence France-Presse photographer (a national of the United States) and two other Reuters journalists.¹¹ The Special Rapporteur examined material, including forensic and open-source analysis of footage from the incident site, debris and weapon fragments, indicating that Issam Abdallah and Christina Assi were hit by a 120 mm Israeli-manufactured tank round and confirming that both strikes originated from the Israeli side of the border and were most likely fired from an Israeli tank.

36. All seven journalists were clearly visible on an elevated hill for at least an hour prior to the attack. They were wearing press vests and press helmets, at least one vehicle was marked with television signage and they were carrying cameras and equipment, making them clearly identifiable as journalists. The evidence suggests that they were visible to the cameras of a nearby unmanned aerial vehicle, most likely Israeli, and were within line of sight of Israeli observation posts and a helicopter above them moments before the attack. The journalists conducted at least three live broadcasts from that location.¹²

37. On 21 November 2023, in Tayr Harfa, southern Lebanon, an Israeli strike hit a clearly identified press vehicle, killing Farah Omar, an Al-Mayadeen correspondent, and Rabih al Maamari, an Al-Mayadeen cameraman, as well as Hussein Aqil, their driver, while they were covering the hostilities. Evidentiary material and testimonies indicate that the victims were carrying out journalistic functions and were clearly identifiable as press at the time of the

¹⁰ Until the escalation of 2 March 2026.

¹¹ See communications ISR 10/2023 and ISR 12/2023. All communications mentioned in the present report are available from <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>.

¹² Maya Gebeily and Anthony Deutsch, "Israeli tank in 'likely scenario' fired machine gun at reporters after deadly shelling, report finds", Reuters, 7 March 2024.

strike. No military objective was identified in the immediate vicinity of the press vehicle at the relevant time, nor was there evidence of an active exchange of fire.

38. On 23 September 2024, in Burj Rahhal, southern Lebanon, Hadi al-Sayed, a journalist working with Al-Mayadeen Online, sustained critical injuries when an Israeli air strike hit his family home. He died of his wounds the next day, following medical treatment. On 24 September 2024, in Qantarah, southern Lebanon, Israeli air strikes killed Kamel Karaki, a cameraman with Al-Manar TV, while he was carrying out his professional duties. Evidence and testimonies indicate that both victims were civilian media workers and that no military objective was identifiable at these locations at the time.

39. On 25 October 2024, in Hasbaya, southern Lebanon, Israel killed three journalists, Ghassan Najjar (Al-Mayadeen), Mohammad Reda (Al-Mayadeen) and Wissam Qassem (Al-Manar) and injured four others in an air strike on Hasbaya Village Club Resort, used exclusively by journalists. The strike occurred shortly after 3 a.m., when over a dozen journalists were lodged at the resort, considered to be a safe location. Forensic analysis of munition remnants, site damage and verified imagery indicates that the attack was carried out with an air-dropped bomb equipped with a United States-produced Joint Direct Attack Munition guidance kit. Despite claims by the Government of Israel, the information reviewed did not identify fighting or a military presence at or near the targeted building at the time. The information further indicates that the Israeli military knew or should have known that journalists were staying in a clearly marked area used exclusively by journalists, including due to drone surveillance.

40. Beyond fatal incidents, additional attacks and near-miss incidents affecting journalists occurred in southern Lebanon during the same period, raising serious concerns regarding the compliance of Israel with its obligations under international humanitarian law. Journalists carrying out their professional duties in situations of armed conflict are civilians and must not be made the object of attack.

2. Attacks against health personnel and facilities

41. Attacks affecting healthcare personnel and first responders caused extensive loss of life and severely degraded emergency response capacity. The Ministry of Public Health documented 237 attacks affecting emergency medical teams and services between 8 October 2023 and 27 January 2025, resulting in 201 deaths and 253 injuries among emergency personnel, and the damage or targeting of 67 centres, 177 ambulances, 59 fire trucks and 18 rescue vehicles. The Ministry further documented 68 attacks affecting 38 hospitals, killing 16 persons, injuring 74 others and damaging 25 vehicles.¹³ The World Health Organization (WHO) Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care¹⁴ similarly recorded the scale of attacks and their systemic impact, including 163 attacks between 7 October 2023 and 2 July 2025, resulting in 241 deaths and 296 injuries.¹⁵ The Special Rapporteur observed that, cumulatively, these attacks undermined life-saving care through loss of personnel, damage to ambulances and facilities, displacement of patients and staff, and repeated interruptions to emergency operations. This erosion of emergency medical capacity directly affected the right to life, increasing the risk of preventable deaths and irreversible harm. First responders and health personnel also described the profound personal toll of the hostilities, including the loss of loved ones in strikes.

42. Health workers were killed both in and outside medical facilities struck by drones or aircraft. Others were reportedly killed when homes or public spaces were hit, as well as during the pager explosions on 17 and 18 September 2024.¹⁶ On 21 November 2024,

¹³ Lebanon, Ministry of Public Health, "Israeli attacks on Lebanon's health sector from 8 October 2023 to 27 January 2025", 30 January 2025, pp. 26–46.

¹⁴ WHO, "Lebanon: a conflict particularly destructive to health care", news release, 22 November 2024.

¹⁵ WHO, "Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA): Lebanon", 22 July 2025, p. 19.

¹⁶ Insecurity Insight, "Attacks on health care in Lebanon, 13–26 November 2024", 5 December 2024; WHO reported that between 5 August and 8 September 2025, 163 incidents of attacks on healthcare were recorded, impacting 46 health facilities, 113 healthcare workers and 105 medical transport vehicles, and causing 241 fatalities. See https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/lebanon/Health_Briefs_10_August_10_September_2025.pdf.

Ali Rakan Allam (born in 1986), Director of Dar al-Amal Hospital in Duris, Baalbek, was killed in an air strike on his home together with five hospital colleagues whom he had invited for dinner; no survivors were reported. In addition, attacks affected the families of first responders. On 23 September 2024, at around 6.15 p.m., the home of a Lebanese Civil Defence member in Taraya, Baalbek, was reportedly struck, killing seven members of his family, four of whom were women, including an 85-year-old grandmother, and a 10-month-old baby.

43. Emergency medical workers were killed and injured while conducting recovery and rescue operations, including in double-tap incidents. In one large-scale incident, 15 paramedics were reportedly killed when a Lebanese Civil Defence centre in Baalbek-Hirmil governorate was struck, also causing damage to a neighbouring mosque. Double-tap strikes breach the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution under international humanitarian law and the obligation to respect and protect medical and humanitarian personnel and individuals hors de combat. Other emergency workers were reportedly killed inside emergency health centres hit by munitions.

44. Attacks affecting healthcare facilities continued after the cessation of hostilities arrangement entered into force. Between 27 November and 10 December 2024, an incident-based monitoring brief documented at least six attacks by Israel on healthcare facilities, resulting in deaths and injuries among medics and damage to medical transport and healthcare facilities.¹⁷ The Secretary-General also reported air strikes taking place after the entry into force of the arrangement, including near a hospital in Tibnin.¹⁸ The Special Rapporteur recalls that, under international humanitarian law, medical personnel, units and transport must be respected and protected at all times and must not be made the object of attack. Such attacks constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and, when committed with the requisite intent, war crimes.

3. Kill zones and denial of the right to return

45. Despite the cessation of hostilities arrangement requiring their withdrawal, Israeli forces maintained positions on at least five hills along the southern border of Lebanon, north of the Blue Line, and created so-called kill zones near these posts, which are not demarcated or formally notified, and where live fire has been directed at civilians attempting to return to their villages and land. On 14 August 2025, Israeli authorities announced a closed military area in Shab'a, barring residents' entry and further restricting access to farmland and livelihoods.

46. The Special Rapporteur heard testimonies from families in southern villages whose loved ones were shot at, killed or taken hostage by Israeli forces while peacefully attempting to return to their villages after the arrangement had been announced. On 26 January 2025, at dawn, near Markaba, a family – Fatima Karaki (20), her brother Hussein Karaki (28) and their mother, Tamara Shehemi (53) – set out for home and, on the road, were joined by another family – a father, Rabiaa Zaraqet (47) and his two sons (approximately 16 and 17 years old, respectively). Clearly unarmed civilians, they were ambushed by about 20 soldiers and fired upon at very close range: Mr. Karaki was shot twice (first in the lower arm, then in the lower back as he tried to stand); his mother was shot in the shoulder and died instantly of her wounds; the other family's father was killed. Mr. Karaki and the two boys were taken away by Israeli forces. Although the boys were later released, Mr. Karaki's fate and whereabouts remain unknown. Israeli forces had taken away Fatima Karaki's phone; when it was returned before they left the site, she called her father and the Lebanese Red Cross to seek medical help. Both the Lebanese Red Cross and the Lebanese Armed Forces were reportedly unable to access the location. Ms. Karaki's father arrived and the family had to transport the mother's body by motorcycle all the way to Wadi El-Hegar, and then to Tibnin hospital. On that day, 22 people were reportedly killed, including 6 women, and

¹⁷ See <https://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/6.-27-November-10-December-2024-Attacks-on-Health-Care-in-Lebanon.pdf>.

¹⁸ [S/2025/738](#), para. 8.

124 others were injured, including 14 women and 12 children, as residents were trying to return to their villages.

47. Furthermore, civil defence paramedic Khodr al-Fakih (25) was killed on 29 May 2025 while checking his house in his hometown, Kfar Kila, a southern village near the border line with Israel. He regularly travelled there from Nabatiyah and his movements were communicated to the Lebanese Armed Forces. On the day of his killing, he crossed the Lebanese Armed Forces checkpoint at Tal Nhas. Shortly thereafter, a colleague informed the checkpoint officers that he had seen a white van passing and heard gunshots. The colleague, who was subsequently interrogated by the Lebanese Armed Forces and then released, tried to call Mr. Al-Fakih, concerned for his safety, but there was no response. Mr. Al-Fakih was later found dead, with one bullet wound in his thigh and another in his stomach, and his body bore marks consistent with having been dragged.

48. In addition, the Special Rapporteur received consistent testimonies indicating that Israeli forces detained and took away residents from southern border villages, including in the context of attempted returns, with families reporting prolonged lack of information concerning their fate and whereabouts. UNIFIL publicly reported concern regarding casualties among civilians returning to villages where the Israel Defense Forces remained present, and further reported facilitating the return of Lebanese civilians detained by the Israel Defense Forces following coordination with relevant Lebanese authorities and ICRC.¹⁹ At least 22 individuals from southern Lebanon remain in Israeli custody in February 2026 and 42 others disappeared.²⁰

4. Attacks against civilians, including women and children

49. On 29 September 2024, an Israeli strike destroyed a seven-storey residential building in Ayn al-Dalb, Sidon, killing 73 persons, including 23 children, raising serious concerns about the proportionality and necessity of Israeli air strikes on residential buildings in densely populated areas in Lebanon.²¹ The Special Rapporteur spoke with Abdel Hamid Ramadan (63), a survivor who lost his wife, Jinan Ahmad El-Baba (59), and daughter Julia Ramadan (20) in the attack. Like other victims, he remains without a home, compensation or support. In addition, during the visit in Nabatiyah, on 6 October 2025, a blind man with disabilities and his wife were killed by an Israeli drone attack in front of a grocery shop. The man was a survivor of the pagers explosion, in which he lost his sight and his hands. Due to his disability, his wife was driving their vehicle.

50. After October 2025, Israeli strikes continued to result in civilian deaths and injuries in Lebanon. On 18 November 2025, an Israeli strike in the vicinity of the Ein El Hilweh camp for Palestine refugees killed at least 13 people, including 8 children, and injured others. Subsequent incidents recorded by Lebanese authorities included a strike on a vehicle in the Sidon district on 22 December 2025, which killed three persons. On 9 February 2026, an Israeli strike on a vehicle in Yanuh, Tyre district, killed three persons, including a child. In a separate incident the same day, Israeli fire reportedly killed one man in Ayta al-Sha'b.

5. Attacks with excessive civilian loss

51. On 20 September 2024, at around 3.45 p.m. local time, an Israeli air strike hit a residential building in the southern suburbs of Beirut (Dahiyeh), in the Jamous area, reportedly killing at least 45 people, including women and children, and injuring at least 68 others. Israel stated that the operation was a “targeted strike” and that the intended objective was a meeting of senior Hizbullah operatives inside the building.

¹⁹ Hussein Shaaban, “رمضان ثان خلف القضبان: الحكومة أمام استحقاق الأسرى والمختطفين لدى إسرائيل” (A second Ramadan behind bars: the Government faces the responsibility of prisoners and abductees held by Israel), *The Legal Agenda*, 24 February 2026.

²⁰ United Nations Peacekeeping, “UNIFIL facilitates safe return of Lebanese civilians detained by IDF”, 26 December 2024.

²¹ OHCHR, “UN experts alarmed by Israel-Lebanon conflict, strongly condemn escalation and urge immediate protection for civilians”, press release, 30 September 2024.

52. The Special Rapporteur recalls that, under international humanitarian law, civilian objects, such as residential buildings, are protected against attack unless and for such time as they qualify as military objectives. A building may become a military objective only if, by its nature, location, purpose or use, it makes an effective contribution to military action and its destruction offers a definite military advantage in the circumstances prevailing at the time. The presence of members of an organized armed group who assume a continuous combat function does not remove the protections owed to civilians and civilian objects in and around the target area. Even where a building, or part of it, is assessed as a military objective because of its use, the attacking party remains bound by the rule of proportionality. This prohibits attacks expected to cause incidental civilian death or injury, or damage to civilian objects, that would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. The attacking party must also take all feasible precautions to minimize incidental harm and must cancel or suspend the attack if it becomes apparent that it would be disproportionate.

VI. Documentation, investigation and prosecution of violations of the right to life

53. The duty to protect the right to life, as enshrined in article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, entails a comprehensive framework of obligations, including to prevent arbitrary deprivations of life; to ensure prompt, effective, independent, impartial and transparent investigations into potentially unlawful deaths; to prosecute and punish those responsible, where the evidentiary threshold is met; and to ensure victims' rights to an effective remedy, including reparation. These obligations are reflected in the Human Rights Committee's interpretation of article 6,²² the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions and the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016), as well as the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.

54. The obligation to investigate encompasses all deaths where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that deaths may have been unlawful, whether by acts or omissions of State agents, including in custody, in the context of the use of force, deaths caused by private persons acting with the consent or acquiescence of State authorities, and deaths caused by foreign armed forces on the territory of the State. Lebanese domestic law provides a framework for criminal investigations and prosecutions relating to arbitrary deprivation of life, including murder and aggravated homicide (Penal Code, arts. 547–550). The Code of Criminal Procedure assigns responsibility for initiating public prosecutions to the Public Prosecution and provides for civil actions by aggrieved persons, including as civil parties in criminal proceedings, thereby anchoring victims' participation and reparation claims within the criminal justice process.

55. Under Lebanese law and practice, investigations and prosecutions for unlawful homicide are judicially driven: the Public Prosecution and, where applicable, investigating judges direct the opening and conduct of criminal proceedings, supported by the Judicial Police within the Internal Security Forces, who undertake crime scene investigations and ballistic analysis, collect evidence and document all these details in a judicial criminal file. This domestic criminal-justice chain is central to ensuring that potentially unlawful deaths are treated as criminal matters capable of leading to prosecution, adjudication and remedies, rather than remaining at the level of administrative or operational reporting.

56. In contrast, in the context of hostilities and incidents qualified as threats to national security, additional institutions may generate or hold relevant information for operational, security or monitoring purposes. This includes the Lebanese Armed Forces and relevant military structures (including the military police, military intelligence and the Directorate of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights), which may collect operational information and, in some instances, refer matters to the competent judicial authorities; and

²² Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018) on the right to life.

UNIFIL, which, within its mandate under Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), monitors, records and reports on violations and liaises with parties in its area of operations in southern Lebanon. These bodies do not perform the same function: incident logging, operational reporting, intelligence collection, ceasefire monitoring and other forms of documentation may serve important purposes, but do not in themselves constitute criminal investigations capable of establishing individual criminal responsibility, ensuring victim participation or leading to prosecution and reparations. It is noted that the Government of Lebanon transmitted, on 26 January 2026, a formal complaint to the Security Council and the Secretary-General concerning the ongoing violations by Israel of Lebanese sovereignty, including documentation of 2,036 incidents recorded between October and December 2025.²³

57. The Special Rapporteur recognizes the efforts of the Internal Security Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces, as well as other relevant actors, in documenting incidents affecting the right to life. He notes that the destruction of approximately eight Internal Security Forces stations and killing of officers, in the context of Israeli hostilities, may have undermined the capacity to investigate crimes in a timely manner. However, he observed that in cases of alleged unlawful killings linked to strikes attributed to Israeli forces, documentation is frequently dispersed across parallel institutional channels and may remain confined to internal operational, security or monitoring purposes. For example, the information report (محرر معلومات) prepared by the Internal Security Forces in coordination with the Public Prosecution Office often records basic facts (e.g., date and time, location, casualties and material damage) without systematically triggering the opening of a criminal case file or the structured preservation of evidence for judicial proceedings. As a result, evidence is not consistently consolidated within a single judicial file and is not routinely structured or preserved for criminal proceedings, nor made accessible to families.

58. With respect to attacks affecting journalists and media workers, the Special Rapporteur received consistent accounts indicating significant investigative delays, fragmentation of evidence, and limited transparency for victims, survivors and families. In the case of the killing of the journalist, Issam Abdallah, and injuries to other journalists, the Lebanese Armed Forces reportedly arrived at the scene only the following day,²⁴ collected some material and departed, while additional fragments apparently remained at the site. The family and legal counsel requested a copy of the technical report prepared by the Lebanese Armed Forces and were informed that it was confidential. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the decision of 9 October 2025 of the Council of Ministers tasking the Ministry of Justice with examining appropriate judicial measures in response to attacks targeting journalists, including the killing of Issam Abdallah, and recommends that the independent investigations commissioned by Reuters, Agence France-Presse, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, which applied forensic and open-source methods to establish key facts relevant to accountability, be formally integrated into the judicial case file.

59. Furthermore, the injured journalists were interviewed by the Internal Security Forces only after significant delays, in at least one case, after one month. In addition, shrapnel removed from the body of Agence France-Presse photojournalist Christina Assi was taken by the Lebanese Armed Forces. Subsequent written requests addressed to the Ministry of Justice, the General Prosecutor and the Lebanese Armed Forces seeking clarification on investigative steps and the opening of any criminal proceedings were reportedly left unanswered. In some cases, families of victims reported that no governmental or investigative body contacted them at all.

60. The Special Rapporteur is particularly concerned by the reported lack of structured support for families of victims and for survivors. Families indicated that, in a few cases, they received limited financial assistance from the Council of the South (Majlis al-Janoub) and that the main support often came from associations, charities and informal solidarity networks. Survivors further reported that they did not receive adequate State support for medical follow-up and psychosocial care, despite the seriousness of the injuries and trauma.

²³ Lebanon, National News Agency, "Lebanon's MoFA files complaint to UN Security Council over ongoing Israeli violations", 26 January 2026.

²⁴ The attack occurred on Friday 13 October 2023 at around 6 p.m. The Lebanese Armed Forces arrived on Saturday 14 October at around 10.30 a.m.

Recurrent delays in conducting interviews, dispersal of material evidence across institutions, confidentiality barriers, limited or absent communication with families, and the absence of coordinated assistance illustrate how responses not anchored in a prosecutorial case strategy and a victim-centred approach can impede effective criminal investigation, accountability and access to truth, justice and reparation.

61. The Government of Lebanon has a duty to investigate all violations of the right to life and other serious violations affecting persons on its territory and, where appropriate and feasible, to pursue accountability through available domestic avenues as a matter of priority, while preserving evidence in a manner that also permits future cooperation with other accountability processes. The Special Rapporteur recalls that, where the factual and legal thresholds are met, alleged killings in the conduct of hostilities may require investigation, not only as intentional homicides under domestic criminal law, but also as possible war crimes and, where they are part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, as possible crimes against humanity.

62. While acknowledging the serious access and security constraints in parts of southern Lebanon, the Special Rapporteur encourages the competent Public Prosecution and investigating judges to open criminal investigations as soon as possible into allegations of unlawful killings and other serious violations affecting the right to life, and to ensure early preservation and consolidation of evidence under prosecutorial authority, including through scene management, witness accounts and digital evidence, forensic documentation and chain-of-custody measures. Documentation and monitoring mechanisms, whether security, military or international, should feed into, not substitute for, independent criminal investigations capable of establishing responsibility and securing victims' rights under national legislation.

63. Victims and families of victims are essential participants in investigations and prosecutions, as key sources of information and evidence and as rights holders. In accordance with international standards, families should be treated with dignity, enabled to provide information, informed – within the limits of lawful confidentiality – of key procedural steps and progress, and protected from intimidation or reprisals. Their meaningful participation is integral to the effectiveness of proceedings and to the realization of the rights to truth, justice and reparation.

64. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur notes the legal and institutional challenges in investigating and prosecuting violations of the right to life arising in the context of hostilities, including assessing alleged breaches of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in attack and building cases that may implicate war crimes and crimes against humanity. He underlines that preserving and consolidating evidence in a manner consistent with criminal proceedings is essential, including to enable cooperation with external accountability processes where jurisdiction exists, and in the light of the applicable cessation of hostilities framework.

65. Legal responsibility for serious crimes involving unlawful killings may be pursued through multiple avenues, including domestic prosecutions, proceedings in foreign jurisdictions where legal bases exist, and international mechanisms subject to jurisdictional requirements. The Special Rapporteur notes the prior experience of Lebanon when engaging with complex accountability arrangements, including the Special Tribunal for Lebanon established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1757 (2007), while stressing that any pathway must rest on a clear legal basis, institutional independence and the effective participation and protection of victims and witnesses.

66. Under international law, investigations are not discretionary: they are a core obligation and the primary avenue to truth, justice and reparation. All killings and injuries of journalists and media workers must therefore be investigated in accordance with the international standards set out above, with the participation of victims, survivors and families. Relevant material, including witness testimony, physical evidence and the findings of credible independent investigations, should be preserved and, subject to applicable evidentiary rules, integrated into national proceedings with a view to identifying those responsible, ensuring accountability and providing effective remedies, including reparations.

A. Medico-legal death investigation

67. Effective investigations into potentially unlawful deaths, in accordance with the Minnesota Protocol, require medico-legal capacity to establish the cause, manner and circumstances of death and to ensure that findings are documented and preserved in a form usable for criminal proceedings where warranted. Medico-legal capacity is also essential to ongoing efforts to identify missing persons from the civil war era and other periods.

68. The Special Rapporteur observed the lack of a structured, centralized medico-legal service in Lebanon capable of delivering consistent national standards for post-mortem work. Medico-legal tasks, including autopsies, are frequently organized on an ad hoc basis through prosecutorial instructions and carried out by physicians drawn from a roster maintained under the Ministry of Justice framework. Interlocutors reported that many designated practitioners are not specialized forensic pathologists and that examinations are often limited to what is necessary for certification of death purposes.

69. In criminal inquiries, the Judicial Police within the Internal Security Forces assist prosecutors and investigating judges with crime scene work and the recovery, preservation and interpretation of forensic evidence (criminalistics). Medico-legal examinations, including autopsies, are carried out by physicians designated under the Ministry of Justice framework upon instruction of the competent prosecutor (or, where applicable, the investigating judge). It was further explained during the Special Rapporteur's visit that the roster of forensic doctors is prepared through a process involving the Supreme Judicial Council and adopted by the Ministry of Justice, and that judges may, where justified by the needs of a case, appoint expertise outside the roster when additional or different specialized competence is required.

70. Interlocutors recalled that, following challenges in collecting, preserving and analysing evidence during the investigation into the assassination in February 2005 of the former Prime Minister, Rafic El Hariri, and related crimes, the Internal Security Forces and its Judicial Police underwent restructuring and intensive training, strengthening investigative capacity, including crime scene investigations, trace evidence analysis and DNA identification at the Internal Security Forces forensic laboratory in Beirut. By contrast, the medico-legal pillar remains underdeveloped. In the absence of a national medico-legal institute, hospital mortuaries – public and private – are used, often lacking specialized facilities and equipment. It was reported that approximately 200 autopsies are performed annually, with no more than around 30 per cent being full autopsies and the remainder primarily external examinations. This inconsistency undermines death investigations (including identification and determination of cause, manner and circumstances of death) and weakens the administration of justice. Similar gaps affect medico-legal assessments of the living (e.g., documentation of torture, gender-based violence or child abuse).

71. Across State authorities, international organizations, civil society and victims' groups, interlocutors expressed broad support for establishing a national medico-legal institute of a high standard. Discussions highlighted the availability of infrastructure, including at the Rafic Hariri University Hospital mortuary, and the presence of qualified medical professionals who could acquire specialized forensic competencies with appropriate support.

72. A centralized medico-legal institute – developed under a defined legal and regulatory framework involving the Ministries of Public Health and Justice and operational coordination with the Internal Security Forces – was repeatedly presented as a means to strengthen investigations into potentially unlawful deaths, including deaths in custody and deaths linked to hostilities, and to support the identification of missing persons in cooperation with the National Commission for Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons. Interlocutors emphasized the need for standardized procedures, quality assurance and control, training and certification, and secure data management (including data protection and retention), in accordance with the Minnesota Protocol.

73. It was further indicated that draft legislation relevant to the organization of forensic medicine and the criteria governing forensic doctors remains pending review in the parliament. Interlocutors stressed the importance of adopting an updated legal framework that strengthens standard setting, oversight, competence and independence in medico-legal work.

74. Governance options discussed during the visit included the establishment of a joint management and oversight commission bringing together the Ministries of Justice, Public Health, Education and the Interior (including the Internal Security Forces), tasked with institutional coordination, quality assurance and compliance with safeguards such as professional independence, secure retention of medico-legal records and data protection. The Special Rapporteur remains available to support further technical work and feasibility studies related to the establishment of a medico-legal institute in line with international standards on medico-legal death investigation.

B. Investigating violations of the right to life in Palestine refugee camps

75. Lebanon hosts 12 Palestine refugee camps. As of February 2025, approximately 222,000 Palestinians reside in Lebanon, around 45 per cent of them in the camps. During the Special Rapporteur's visits to Ein El Hilweh (Saida) and Shatila (Beirut), obstacles to preventing and investigating potentially unlawful deaths were linked to limited, delayed or conditional access of State security and judicial bodies to the camps, undermining timely scene preservation and evidence collection.

76. The governance and security exceptionalism of Palestine refugee camps has historical roots in the 1969 Cairo Agreement, which recognized a distinct camp status and Palestinian internal security arrangements. While the parliament declared the Cairo Agreement null and void on 21 May 1987, de facto arrangements have persisted, with internal security often managed by Palestinian armed factions and with limited State presence and enforcement inside camps. In Ein El Hilweh, the Special Rapporteur was informed that Lebanese authorities do not exercise routine policing inside the camp, while the perimeter is controlled through Lebanese army checkpoints. The camp operates under the Joint Palestinian Work Committee (هيئة العمل الفلسطيني المشترك), composed of armed factions, each effectively controlling a distinct area.

77. Security concerns in the camp include the widespread circulation of small arms; recurrent armed flare-ups, including the 2023 factional confrontations, resulting in civilian harm and displacement; and a persistent pattern of violence and impunity, including killings and reprisals, in which alleged perpetrators reportedly evaded accountability by temporarily disappearing. Serious gaps were also reported in prevention, safe reporting and effective investigation, particularly in relation to gender-related killings of women, including so-called "honour" killings, which were described as prevalent and frequently underreported or concealed, with limited accountability and no reliable protection pathways to prevent femicide or enable safe reporting for women and children. Only cases of serious injuries and killings where persons are transferred to hospital are reported to the Internal Security Forces.

78. In Shatila, the majority of the population are Syrian refugees. The Special Rapporteur was informed that limited coordination with police services may occur in certain serious incidents, including where ambulance services facilitate transfer to morgues and forensic procedures. However, the absence of a sustained police presence contributes to low reporting and intimidation, particularly in cases involving women and children. Perpetrators often remain at large or move between camps and adjacent areas.

79. The Government of Lebanon has recently pursued measures aimed at increasing State control over weapons held by Palestinian factions. A phased handover of weapons by factions linked to the Palestine Liberation Organization began in August 2025 following an understanding between Lebanese and Palestinian leadership, with subsequent handovers from additional camps later in 2025, a process likely to reduce some risks associated with the circulation of arms.

80. To protect the right to life and ensure effective investigations and accountability for potentially unlawful deaths, functional arrangements in the camps are required for: (a) timely scene preservation and evidence collection by competent judicial authorities and investigative services; (b) meaningful participation and protection of victims, survivors and witnesses; and (c) pathways capable of leading to prosecution and effective remedies, including reparations, and not informal settlements that entrench impunity.

C. Accountability for past violations

81. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the resumption of proceedings in emblematic cases, including the killing of Lokman Slim and the Beirut Port explosion on 4 August 2020, which killed 263 civilians. He notes with appreciation that, after a prolonged period of procedural obstruction, the Beirut Port investigation has resumed, and encourages its expeditious, independent and impartial completion, with timely submission to the competent courts for adjudication. He further welcomes the decision of the Court of Cassation enabling the reopening of proceedings in the assassination of Lokman Slim.

VII. Search for the missing from the past

82. Approximately 17,000 people remain missing as a result of the 1975–1990 war, and families continue to seek information about the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones. On 4 March 2014, the State Council of Lebanon issued a landmark ruling recognizing relatives' right to know the truth concerning the fate of the disappeared, including by ordering the authorities to provide families with a complete copy of the file compiled by the official commission of inquiry. While the ruling constitutes an important jurisprudential affirmation of truth as a right, progress in clarifying the fate of the missing has remained limited, including with respect to access to full information and the identification and protection of burial sites.

83. In November 2018, Lebanon promulgated Law No. 105 on Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons, which provides for the establishment of a formal legal framework recognizing the rights of missing persons and their families and the creation of the National Commission for Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons as an independent body with legal personality and financial and administrative autonomy. The Commission was granted a broad mandate, including to access information; receive reports and hear testimonies; verify, store and create a database of information; and identify and exhume burial sites. At the same time, concerns regarding the full operationalization and resourcing of the Commission and the meaningful participation of families, particularly female relatives, were shared. Notwithstanding these challenges, the Commission has taken steps to consolidate its institutional work, including the launch on 30 June 2025 of its first report covering its 2020–2025 term and the swearing-in of members before the President of the Republic on 15 October 2025. The Commission has further engaged on the file of Lebanese missing in the Syrian Arab Republic, including through direct institutional contacts and preparation of a memorandum of understanding framework with the corresponding Syrian body.

VIII. Death penalty

84. While Lebanon has observed a de facto moratorium on executions since 2004, this restraint is not codified in law, and capital punishment remains a lawful penalty. Courts can continue to issue death sentences for a range of offences, including crimes that fall short of the “most serious crimes” threshold required under article 6 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. There are approximately 84 persons on death row in Lebanon. The lack of formal abolition or legislative prohibition allows for the possibility to resume executions, particularly in response to public pressure or political shifts. The Special Rapporteur considers that Lebanon should abolish the death penalty, in accordance with the political will reflected in the vote of Lebanon in favour of General Assembly resolution 79/179 on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

85. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur welcomes the recent legislative momentum towards abolition. On 23 February 2026, the parliamentary Human Rights Committee approved a draft law abolishing the death penalty and referred it to the parliament for further consideration. The Special Rapporteur notes that the National Human Rights Plan (2026–2030) explicitly calls for ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. Recalling the recommendations previously conveyed to the Government,²⁵ he encourages it to ensure that the draft law and any accompanying measures ensure full compliance with the country's international obligations, including the protection of the right to life and human dignity, and that reforms secure abolition in law and in practice, with safeguards and remedies for persons currently under sentence of death.

IX. Positive developments

86. The Special Rapporteur welcomes recent institutional developments relevant to the protection of the right to life and the prevention of its arbitrary deprivation. These include the launch by the parliament in December 2025 of the second National Human Rights Plan (2026–2030) of Lebanon,²⁶ which links its international obligations to legislative and institutional reforms and strengthens the role of independent oversight bodies. The Plan expressly references the Minnesota Protocol as the applicable standard for investigating deaths in custody and other potentially unlawful deaths and calls for the establishment of specialized forensic and psychological examination centres in courts and detention facilities, modelled on the mechanism established at the Tripoli Palace of Justice in cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and the Restart Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture.

87. The Special Rapporteur further welcomes the inauguration of the official headquarters of the National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, on 12 February 2026, strengthening its ability to receive complaints, carry out monitoring and engage authorities. He also notes the swearing-in of members of the National Commission for Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons on 15 October 2025, an important step towards operationalizing Law No. 105 of 2018 and advancing families' right to truth.

X. Conclusion

88. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the opportunities created by the commitment of the Government of Lebanon to strengthening the rule of law and rebuilding State institutions, including through legislative reforms and renewed engagement with independent oversight bodies. At the same time, the persistence of killings and serious injuries in the context of hostilities, and the recurrent obstacles to effective investigation and victim support documented in the present report underscore the urgency of strengthening the capacity of Lebanon to prevent, investigate and prosecute potentially unlawful deaths and to ensure victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation. In a spirit of constructive engagement, and with a view to supporting these efforts, the Special Rapporteur makes the following recommendations and reiterates his availability to assist the Government in their implementation.

XI. Recommendations

89. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that Lebanon:**

(a) Document all potentially unlawful deaths and preserve evidence by establishing clear, standardized referral pathways so that all incident documentation

²⁵ See communication LBN 1/2026.

²⁶ See <https://nhrcb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Lebanons-National-Human-Rights-Action-Plan-for-2026-2030.pdf>.

generated by State bodies is promptly transmitted to the competent prosecution authorities, with minimum evidentiary standards (including secure retention, chain of custody and preservation of digital material) to prevent loss, tampering or fragmentation, and by ensuring that relevant material produced or held by the Internal Security Forces, the Lebanese Armed Forces and other security bodies, and by UNIFIL within its mandate, is systematically collected and consolidated under prosecutorial authority. Ensure also that credible material collected by journalists, media organizations and civil society (including open-source and forensic documentation), subject to evidentiary rules, can be received, preserved and assessed for inclusion in criminal case files;

(b) Ensure that all potentially unlawful deaths systematically trigger criminal investigative action by the competent prosecution authorities, including where the alleged perpetrator is a foreign armed force or an organized armed group, and irrespective of whether a formal complaint has been lodged. Where evidence has not yet been collected or consolidated, ensure immediate opening of criminal investigations and urgent evidence-preservation measures;

(c) Where evidence so warrants, effectively pursue prosecutions in cases of unlawful deaths before competent ordinary courts, ensuring fair trial guarantees and effective remedies for victims and families, and adopt measures to reduce delays and procedural obstruction in cases involving serious violations of the right to life, including by reforming the Code of Criminal Procedure to eliminate or otherwise disapply prescription (statutes of limitation) for serious crimes, including homicide;

(d) Where suspects are outside the reach of Lebanon, pursue international cooperation, including through international arrest warrants and, where applicable, extradition requests or requests for prosecution by other States, in accordance with applicable international standards, including in cases involving alleged war crimes and other serious international crimes;

(e) Designate or establish specialized prosecutorial capacity to investigate and prosecute serious violations affecting the right to life arising in the context of hostilities, including unlawful deaths and other alleged violations amounting to war crimes or other grave breaches, supported by specialized investigative and forensic expertise;

(f) Ensure that survivors and families are treated as rights holders, notably by enabling their meaningful participation in proceedings, provide timely information (subject to lawful confidentiality), ensure protection from intimidation and reprisals, and facilitate access to psychosocial, medical and other support as part of effective remedy and reparation. Ensure survivor- and witness-protection measures, including safe reporting pathways, particularly in cases involving women and children;

(g) Prioritize the establishment of a coherent medico-legal system aligned with the Minnesota Protocol, including by advancing the adoption and implementation of the draft law on the organization of forensic medicine and by developing standard operating procedures, training, accreditation, quality assurance and secure data management nationwide;

(h) Adopt and implement reforms to strengthen the independence, impartiality and integrity of the judiciary in line with international standards, including safeguards against undue interference and transparent, merit-based processes. Adopt reforms to restrict military court jurisdiction to strictly military offences committed by military personnel, ensuring that civilians are tried only before competent ordinary courts;

(i) Take forward the recommendations of the National Committee on International Humanitarian Law to accept International Criminal Court jurisdiction under article 12 (3) of the Rome Statute pending ratification, and to strengthen national accountability architecture, including by: (i) incorporating genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes into domestic law with modes of liability and penalties consistent with international standards; and (ii) pursuing international cooperation avenues;

(j) **Adopt the draft law aiming to abolish the death penalty and ensure its full compliance with the protection of the right to life and human dignity. Consolidate national efforts through steps contemplated in national planning towards ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;**

(k) **Provide the National Human Rights Commission, including the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, with adequate resources and the operational safeguards necessary to carry out its independent human rights monitoring and preventive mandate effectively, and provide the National Commission for Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons with adequate resources, including forensic capacity, and support to advance truth-seeking and identification processes and to ensure families' rights to truth and reparation;**

(l) **Empower national and international actors, including by concluding the Host Country Agreement with OHCHR to facilitate sustained technical cooperation. In addition, renew cooperation arrangements with the Restart Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture to sustain forensic/psychological examination services in courts (the Tripoli model) and expand such services where needed to strengthen safeguards against torture and ill-treatment, as identified in the National Human Rights Plan (2026–2030).**

90. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that the international community:**

(a) **Support compliance with international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians, in particular through the mechanism monitoring the 26 November 2024 cessation of hostilities arrangement, support efforts to ensure full compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law and the immediate cessation of attacks against civilians and other protected persons and objects in Lebanon. All alleged violations should be recorded, reported, investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted, with reparation for victims;**

(b) **Where national law permits, consider domestic investigations and prosecutions under universal jurisdiction for grave breaches of international humanitarian law committed in Lebanon;**

(c) **Increase support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in Lebanon to strengthen protection work in Palestine refugee camps, including for investigation and prevention of potentially unlawful killings, such as those linked to gender-based violence, in coordination with the Lebanese authorities;**

(d) **Monitor and ensure de-escalation, including by maintaining and, as needed, strengthening the monitoring and liaison functions of UNIFIL to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in promoting full compliance with Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and in preventing further escalation.**

91. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that Israel:**

(a) **Ensure immediate and full respect for its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including by complying with the cessation of hostilities arrangement and ensuring the protection of civilians and civilian objects through strict adherence to the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack, and by facilitating accountability for alleged violations;**

(b) **Release all Lebanese persons detained in connection with the hostilities who are held in the custody of Israel and disclose the fate and whereabouts of all Lebanese persons arrested or detained from southern Lebanon, including by providing information to families and to relevant authorities, and ensuring protection against enforced disappearance;**

(c) **Withdraw forces from the five positions Israel continues to occupy in southern Lebanon, in accordance with its obligations and commitments under the cessation of hostilities arrangement and Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).**
