



UN Human Rights Council, 47th regular session (21 June-9 July 2021)

Agenda item 6: *Universal Periodic Review*

Oral statement on Lebanon¹

WILPF strongly regrets that Lebanon did not support many recommendations that are essential to protect and promote the rights of women and girls, migrant workers and refugees, and LGBTQI+ persons. These include recommendations to “take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women;”² lift reservations to CEDAW;³ promote equal rights for men and women regarding marriage, inheritance, divorce, child custody and transmission of nationality to their children;⁴ ban child marriage;⁵ criminalise

¹ For more information, see joint submission to the UPR of Lebanon https://www.wilpf.org/wilpf_statements/joint-submission-for-the-upr-of-lebanon-january-february-2021/.

² Lebanon noted the reference to “Take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women” in recommendation **150.225** Continue necessary efforts to empower women economically, politically and socially, and take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (Nepal). (Source of position: *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Lebanon, Addendum, Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review*, A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

³ Lebanon noted, for example, recommendations **150.36** Consider lifting reservations to CEDAW and review current legislation to bring it into line with the Convention (Bulgaria); **150.37** Lift reservations to CEDAW (Croatia) (Germany) (Turkey); **150.39** Withdraw its reservation to article 9, paragraph 2, of the CEDAW and ensure women’s rights to pass on their nationality to their spouses and children (Portugal); **150.41** Lift the reservation to article 9 of the CEDAW and allow women to pass on citizenship to their children and spouses (Norway); **150.70** Intensify efforts to eradicate all forms of discrimination based on gender and consider revising the nationality law of 1925 to bring it into line with the CEDAW (Uruguay). (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

⁴ Lebanon noted, for example, recommendations : **150.39** Withdraw its reservation to article 9, paragraph 2, of the CEDAW and ensure women’s rights to pass on their nationality to their spouses and children (Portugal); **150.41** Lift the reservation to article 9 of the CEDAW and allow women to pass on citizenship to their children and spouses (Norway); **150.70** Intensify efforts to eradicate all forms of discrimination based on gender and consider revising the nationality law of 1925 to bring it into line with the CEDAW (Uruguay); **150.71** Promote equal rights for men and women regarding marriage, inheritance, divorce and transmission of nationality to their children (Brazil); **150.93** Adopt a unified law on the personal civil status guaranteeing equal treatment of citizens and eliminating gender-based discrimination (Switzerland); **150.173** Adopt a uniform personal status law by removing all discriminatory provisions against women (Belgium); **150.174** Adopt a unified personal status act, applying to all persons regardless of gender or religious affiliation, allowing for civil marriages (Denmark); **150.175** Establish a law on personal civil status with the purpose of ensuring gender equality as regards nationality of children, marriage, dissolution of marriage and responsibilities as regards children, as well as equal rights provisions between husband and wife (Spain); **150.216** Introduce legislation to ensure equal treatment of women in case of marriage, inheritance, divorce, and custody and nationality of their children (Germany); **150.237** Take concrete measures to advance in the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and their rights, especially in areas such as marriage, child custody, inheritance and the right to property (Chile). (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

⁵ Lebanon noted, for example, recommendation **150.239** Introduce legislation to criminalize marital rape and child marriage (Canada), as well as the reference to “ban child marriages” in recommendation **150.245** Ban child marriages and amend Law No. 422 of 2002 on the protection of minors in conflict with the law in order to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility in compliance with international standards (Czechia), and the reference to “Take necessary steps to prohibit child marriages” in recommendation **150.249** Take necessary steps to prohibit child marriages and combat the worst forms of child labour (India). (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

marital rape;⁶ adopt a uniform personal status law;⁷ and decriminalize consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex and expand its anti-discrimination legislation, to include a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.⁸

Participation in political and public life

We welcome that Lebanon supported several recommendations regarding the need for increased and equal representation of women in the public and political spheres,⁹ which is an important step towards addressing

⁶ Lebanon noted the references to “(Criminalize) marital rape” in recommendation

150.222 Criminalize domestic violence, marital rape and sexual harassment (Latvia); (Adopt legislation criminalizing marital rape in recommendation **150.232** Adopt legislation criminalizing all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, marital rape and sexual harassment, and put in place an action plan to ensure its implementation (Belgium); **150.238** Strengthen efforts towards criminalizing domestic violence, marital rape and sexual harassment (Fiji). It also noted recommendation **150.239** Introduce legislation to criminalize marital rape and child marriage (Canada). (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

⁷ Lebanon noted, for example, recommendations **150.173** Adopt a uniform personal status law by removing all discriminatory provisions against women (Belgium); **150.174** Adopt a unified personal status act, applying to all persons regardless of gender or religious affiliation, allowing for civil marriages (Denmark); **150.175** Establish a law on personal civil status with the purpose of ensuring gender equality as regards nationality of children, marriage, dissolution of marriage and responsibilities as regards children, as well as equal rights provisions between husband and wife (Spain). **150.93** Adopt a unified law on the personal civil status guaranteeing equal treatment of citizens and eliminating gender-based discrimination (Switzerland). It noted the part of the references to “Enact a unified personal status law, amend the nationality law to afford women the same rights as men” in recommendation **150.289** Enact a unified personal status law, amend the nationality law to afford women the same rights as men, and adopt a comprehensive legal framework to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and harassment (Australia). (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

⁸ Lebanon noted, for example, recommendations: **150.72** Introduce legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, sexual identity or gender expression (Canada); **150.73** Decriminalise relationships between persons of the same sex (Chile); **150.74** Revise Article 534 of the Penal Code so that its scope is clearly defined and that it does not discriminate against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity (Czechia); **150.75** Incorporate into its legal framework the prohibition and punishment of acts of discrimination or inciting hatred for any reason, including national or ethnic origin, and sexual orientation and gender identity (Ecuador); **150.76** Continue with efforts to strengthen the legal framework to ensure that it contains a comprehensive list of grounds for discrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity (Fiji); **150.81** Decriminalize consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex and expand its anti-discrimination legislation, to include a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (Iceland); **150.83** Abolish legal provisions that criminalize homosexuality and combat all forms of discrimination (Italy); **150.84** Repeal Article 534 of the penal code and enact legislation to protect the rights of LGBTI people (Australia); **150.85** Take all necessary measures both in law and in practice to combat inequality and discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation (Latvia); **150.86** Prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Luxembourg); **150.92** Pass comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity and give victims access to an effective remedy (Sweden). (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

⁹ Lebanon supported, for example, recommendations: **150.217** Continue its efforts to achieve an equitable representation of women in the public and political spheres, including in legislative and executive bodies (Greece); **150.219** Continue to implement legislation to empower women in decision making and create economic independence (Indonesia); **150.220** Continue strengthening women's rights in the participation of political and public life (Iraq); **150.225** Continue necessary efforts to empower women economically, politically and socially, and take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (Nepal); **150.227** Continue progress in increasing the participation of women in public life, including in elected government positions, the judiciary, and the armed service (Philippines); **150.231** Ensure greater inclusion of women in the various public administration structures and update the laws that support them (United Arab Emirates). However, Lebanon supported only the first part of recommendation **150.215** Take effective measures in order to accelerate the increase in the representation of women in all spheres of public and political life and amend its legislation so that it treats equally all women and men with respect to marriage, divorce and inheritance rights as well as conferring citizenship to their children and spouses (Czechia). It noted the part of the recommendation relating to amending “legislation so that it treats equally all women and men...”. (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

discrimination against women and promoting their meaningful participation. Concrete and immediate measures to implement those recommendations must be taken.

During the last two years, Lebanon has been witnessing a deepening economic, humanitarian and health crisis that is still unfolding. This has translated into rising unemployment, loss of social and care infrastructures and restrictions of movement within the COVID19 pandemic context, which have disproportionately impacted women and girls, including their ability to fully participate in political life.¹⁰ It is, thus, imperative for the government to:

- take concrete action towards amplifying the voices of all women, girls and marginalised groups and promote their representation in all leadership and decision-making bodies formed in the context of the ongoing crisis;
- include violence against women in politics in the mandate and competence of the Electoral Monitoring Body, so that it can monitor violence perpetrated against women active in politics and adopt an efficient complaint mechanism.

Addressing violence, exploitation and abuse

Moreover, the crisis aggravated by the pandemic and by the August 2020 Beirut explosion, has put many women and girls in further vulnerable situations, and increased their risk to be subjected to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse – a trend that usually spikes during conflict and crisis situations. Women refugees and migrant workers are at even greater risk due to the lack of effective protection, access to justice and redress and due to the growing racist political rhetoric adopted by several political parties and blocs. While we welcome that the government supported the recommendation to “Take measures to effectively combat domestic violence against women, in particular migrant domestic workers”¹¹ and several recommendations on combatting gender-based violence, including domestic violence, we regret that it did not support many recommendations aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women, protecting migrant workers fully from exploitation and abuse, and fully protecting the rights of refugees. For example, it did not fully support the recommendation to “implement Law No. 293/2014 on domestic violence and to reform relevant provisions in family law in order to comply with international human rights law;”¹² and recommendations to abolish the *Kafala* system.¹³ With regard to the *kafala* system, while we acknowledge efforts towards a “Standard Unified Contract” outlining basic rights for migrant workers, we stress that the *kafala* system should be abolished. Lebanon also did not support recommendations to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.¹⁴

¹⁰ International Rescue Committee, *Beirut:150,000 women and girls displaced following blast*, 14 August 2020, available at: <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/beirut-150000-women-and-girls-displaced-following-blast>.

¹¹ Recommendation 150.236 (Burkina Faso).

¹² Recommendation 150.82 Continue the efforts to ensure gender equality, including through the implementation of the 2019 action plan on women, the implementation of Law No. 293/2014 on domestic violence and the reform of relevant provisions in family law (Italy). **Lebanon noted the part of the recommendation** that reads “and the reform of relevant provisions in family law.” (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

¹³ **150.281** Abolish the kafalah system with regard to migrant workers (Finland); **150.282** Abolish the so-called Kafalah system and introduce a modern legal framework for migrant workers in accordance with ILO standards (Germany); **150.283** Protect the rights of foreign workers by abolishing the kafalah system (Italy); **150.284** Abolish the kafalah system and include domestic workers in their labour laws (Sierra Leone); **150.285** Expand labour law protection to domestic workers, provide access to effective legal remedies for domestic migrant workers and abolish the kafalah system (Slovenia). **Comments from Lebanon on recommendations 150.281, 150.282, 150.283, 150.284, 150.285.** “Partially accepted. Efforts under way to finalize the “Standard Unified Contract” for migrant workers”. (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

¹⁴ Lebanon noted, for example, recommendations **150.13** Ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (Togo). It also noted: the reference to “Ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol” in recommendation **150.2** Ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto, devoting special attention to children by developing child-appropriate reception procedures and ensuring that no child is placed in detention (Holy See); the reference to: “Take further

We urge the government to change its position. Fully supporting and implementing these recommendations is key to providing effective protection against all forms of violence against people in vulnerable situations. Implementation must be translated into serious and concrete actions, and carried out in consultation with women's groups and organisations.

Gendered impacts of small arms proliferation

Lebanon still ranks among the top countries for military spending and is a major importer of small arms and light weapons. This reinforces the patriarchal structure of society and of the political system, exposing women and girls to more risks of violence and exacerbating discrimination and violence against them. In this regard, we urge Lebanon to:

- amend Legislative Decree 137 of June 1959 (Weapons and Ammunition Law) to bring it in line with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and to take into consideration a gender perspective; and
- take the necessary measures to implement the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UN PoA).

Environmental issues

We welcome that the government supported recommendations relating to combating corruption and to tackling the environmental crisis.¹⁵ We urge it to:

- implement these recommendations without delay, including recommendation 150.96 to “Intensify efforts to develop and strengthen the necessary legislative frameworks, address cross-sectoral environmental challenges including climate change adaptation and mitigation frameworks and ensure that women, children, persons with disabilities and indigenous and local communities are meaningfully engaged in this implementation;”
- establish clear plans to tackle the environmental crisis for the benefit of public health and safety, and not in the interests of the political class in power. These must include solid waste and wastewater management plans and strategies that are inclusive of the views of civil society and scientists and that are human rights-based and gender responsive; and
- establish a clear strategy for fighting corruption in the environmental sector.

concrete steps towards the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrants Workers and Members of their Families” in recommendation **150.7** Take further concrete steps towards the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and towards upholding the rights of migrant workers, in line with the Global Compact for Migration, which Lebanon also joined (Philippines); and the reference to “Signing both the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees recommendation” **150.10** Consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) and signing both the ICPMW and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Argentina). (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).

¹⁵ Recommendations: **150.61** Continue efforts aimed at combating corruption in the public sector and promote the role of the national anti-corruption authority (Egypt); **150.62** Make a determined effort to strengthen governmental institutions, pursuing justice and accountability, while combating corruption at all levels (Holy See); **150.63** Improve the multisectoral approach to promote transparency and efforts to combat corruption (Indonesia); **150.64** Scale up efforts in the fight against corruption and poverty (Nigeria); **150.65** Continue making progress towards the more efficient performance of government institutions, including by continuing to combat corruption and enhancing transparency (Oman); **150.66** Intensify efforts aimed at promoting transparency and combating corruption (Bahrain); **150.134** Combat official corruption and increase transparency, including by appointing independent judges free from political influence, establishing an independent electoral commission and ensuring transparency, including through robust civil society engagement, in the allocation of public resources (United States of America); **150.96** Intensify efforts to develop and strengthen the necessary legislative frameworks, address cross-sectoral environmental challenges including climate change adaptation and mitigation frameworks and ensure that women, children, persons with disabilities and indigenous and local communities are meaningfully engaged in this implementation (Fiji); **150.202** Ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation to all (Malaysia). (Source of position A/HRC/47/5/Add.1, 23 June 2021).